

Highland Perthshire Communities Land Trust

Minutes of Meeting of Trustees held on Monday 30 June 2008 at 7:15 p.m.

At the OEF

(Observation and Educational Facility, Dun Coillich)

Present: Bill Hoare, Rob Coope, Tim Fison, Julie Gardiner, Robin Hull (Chairman), Paul Jarvis, Margaret Jarvis, Ann Partridge, Richard Paul.

1. Apologies: Gordon Evans, Clare Thomas.

2. Minutes of previous meeting of 27 March 2008: Approved. Proposed by RH, seconded by MJ.

3. Matters Arising: --RH has done the sign for the car park and it is now in place. It was agreed that another sign should be put up to say that no overnight camping is allowed. **RH will do it.**
 --The sacrificial crop has been seeded.
 --PJ has sent CT a list of all the HPCLT reports in his possession. **CT will say at the next meeting what else she needs for the archive.**

4. Reports from Groups:

a) Woodlands and WGS: JG reported that the survival rate of the trees in most areas is between seventy and eighty per cent, which is encouraging, although in some areas that have been browsed there is virtually no survival.
 PJ reported that bracken will be sprayed in about ten days' time. Some repeat spraying will be in two areas: the uphill side of the path to Whitebridge, and the slopes facing Sandy McAdam's land, between Dunbeag and the caravan site. Two new areas to be sprayed are: the area between the bridal path and the Allt Mhor, and a small area adjacent to the Schiehallion fence. In answer to a question raised concerning the value of spraying a small area, JG stated that while other spraying was being done elsewhere on DC, it was beneficial to include this area.

In response to a question about deer on DC, BH said that recently two deer had been taken off live, and four reds and four roe bucks had been shot. In a meeting with the Deer Management Group, which PJ attended, it was agreed that an annual fee of £20 a year would be appropriate for HPCLT, as a non-sporting estate.

RH asked for suggestions about where on DC 10 mature trees might be planted and what species they might be. He and his wife are planning to donate 10 mature trees in the autumn to celebrate their golden wedding anniversary. **RH, JG and MJ will meet to discuss.**

b) Visitor Access: Footbridge: Some digging has been done on each bank where the new footbridge will be built to establish the quality of the rock. The poles that are to be used as a base for the bridge are too big for Alistair Henderson to move, so possibly Willie Grieve will move them. **BH will discuss with Jimmy Stewart about the design of the bridge and its construction.** **Stiles:** The stiles are ready for installation. One stile will be placed in the northern corner of DC, as agreed at the last trustees' meeting, but an assessment must be made first about how much fence reconstruction needs to be done. **PJ will investigate.** It was agreed that all stiles will include a dog gate. The location of the second stile will be considered later.

c) Observation and Educational Facility (OEF): The OEF was officially opened on 10 June 2008 with a party of approximately 50 guests. BH welcomed the guests and thanked all those who had assisted, especially the major donors, Perth & Kinross Quality of Life Fund, and the James Thin Trust. RH has written a press release about the opening of the OEF.

RH reported as follows on the OEF subcommittee meeting held on 23 June 2008:

--The subcommittee will continue to advise on the use and maintenance of the OEF.

--Keys of the OEF will be held by members of the subcommittee, some trustees, and any others approved by the committee.

--The OEF will be used by schools, walking groups, bird watchers, etc., under the guidance of a key holder.

--RH will prepare a printed handout about the OEF to be distributed to hotels in the area.

--There is still work to be done on the OEF, such as painting, tiling, etc. Shelves are planned so that items can be displayed. A cupboard is needed for storage. MJ and PJ said they have a cupboard, which might be a possibility. **RH and BH will view the Jarvis's cupboard to see if it might be used in the OEF.**

--There were discussions about whether there should be power in the OEF. Maybe a microscope lamp? A solar panel? These will all be investigated.

--Security is a concern. Should the OEF be anchored? The builders suggested it was necessary, but most other advisors thought not. This will be reviewed.

--A suggestion that there should be shutters on the windows will be reviewed next winter.

--Further funding is being considered.

TF made a vote of thanks to RH and BH and others for their hard work and success in making the OEF a reality. All concurred.

The CSV Action Earth Day was a great success.

TF will ask Malcolm Gosling for a receipt for the timber.

d) Maintenance and Fencing: PJ and TF have repaired the fence on the Allt Mhor where possibly the red deer came in.

TF and his wife put staples in the fence along the road.

The estimate from Willie Shorthouse to make the fence between the FC and DC roe proof is over £6,000. Since this amount is not available at present within the WGS funding, this project is on hold for now. If we continue to shoot the deer along the northern boundary as now, this additional fencing may not be so necessary.

A discussion then followed about funding. Bracken spraying is a priority and we shall again need to use FC payments for spraying an additional 10 hectares. RH suggested that we should consider raising additional funds. Another source of annual funding will come from the hydro scheme, once it is operational.

The reseeded of the sacrificial crop has not been successful.

A discussion about silage and grazing followed. BH suggested we think of the RSS as divided into four quadrats: the sacrificial crop area, the knoll, the section adjacent to Sandy's land, and the Whitebridge area. Since the planting of trees on some of the field, it is now more difficult to cut silage and to graze. Silage was taken too late last year. It should be done as soon after July 31 as possible. BH knows a farmer who might take a silage cut in the NE and SE quadrats. **BH will look into this.** If all else fails, topping it will be considered. RC has equipment that can be used for this.

A discussion about the Whitebridge RSS followed. What should be done about it? There is no plan at present. It is a species rich grassland and should be encouraged to increase in richness. Possibly light grazing? At present there is an encroachment of heather. It could possibly be topped by a flail behind a quad. A tractor might cause damage. **RC, JG and BH will consider.**

e) Natural and Cultural Heritage: In CT's absence, this topic was left until the next meeting.

f) Keltneyburn Hydroscheme: The scheme has been approved by SEPA, but no action will be taken until September, when it will be sent to the government. SNH has already approved it, however, so Jimmy Stewart can expect consent in September. No work can be done before October at the earliest. Since the hill is restricted from May for wildlife concerns, the opportunity is short for any action.

A new otter report may be required, so any information should be recorded.

An agreement with the FC has been reached for a helicopter loading zone to be used for the incoming pipes.

PJ explained that the initial 100 metres of pipe from the intake was to have been on our land, but now the water intake will be on the south side of the Allt Mhor and only the initial 12 metres of pipe from it, will be on our land. This is a huge advantage for us. Disturbance will be much less and there will be no pipes crossing the burn. Final terms have not yet been finalized with the landlords by the lawyers acting for KBH. Nearer the time, our terms will be further revised through meetings with Colin Liddell.

g) Education Activities: RP reported that the CSV Action Earth Day, held at DC on 30 May, was very much enjoyed by the 22 pupils and 4 staff who came. RP said he would like to involve the pupils again at DC, possibly as part of the Rural Skills course at the Pitlochry school. The pupils could assist with fencing and dyking, for example, if there are any such projects at DC in the future. They would need to work with an instructor. He suggested the possible fencing of the knoll area as a project. Rab Robertson, who has just started up a local fencing business, is a possible person to work on a fencing project as an instructor with the pupils. Other possible projects could include path making, painting, etc. **RP will email a list of the activities included in the course to the trustees so that they can suggest possible contacts and locations for such activities.** This is a practical course that meets every Thursday.

RH is writing a report about the CSV day. He hopes that the day can be repeated on another project. **MJ will send the article about the CSV day from Comment-on-line to our website.**

Other recent young visitors to DC include the Kenmore Primary School and the Aberfeldy Beavers.

h) Public Relations and Website: All present agreed that we should try to get the members more involved in DC activities.

Reminders to pay membership fees will be sent out. **MJ & GE**

The article about the OEF opening will be sent to the website. **RH will email to MJ. MJ will send it to the website.**

5. Treasurer's Report:

Reserve account	£ 63,385.46
OEF account	5,257.21
Current account	640.27

There was a discussion about our small income stream. Income needs to be raised. The hydro-scheme, when it is up and running, will generate a secure, annual income for us. Other possible sources of income might come from grants, walks, etc. As RH pointed out, the OEF shows what can be done if we are more proactive

6. Any Other Business: Glengoulandie: BH gave an update on the planning permission applications at Glengoulandie. The applications for planning for the houses have been approved by P & K, but not yet for the seven chalets, for which the council has asked for more details. The access onto B846 to the chalets has been moved about 50 metres north, which will make it more visible from DC. We have already objected to the building of these chalets and continue to do so. If planning is refused by the planning officer after further details are submitted, then the planning application will be sent to the full P & K Development Committee. If the planning officer approves, then there is no right of appeal. If planning permission is granted, then we shall have to consider what sort of screening to do. It is likely that P & K will also require some sort of screening.

Highland Safari Carbon Offset: BH reported that Highland Safaris has offered their tree planting package to us. This would consist of £300 worth of trees per year. PJ will send off this package to the Edinburgh Centre for Carbon Management for their review. **PJ**

Perth Walking Group: A Perth walking group, whom TF led on a four hour walk of DC, has donated £37 to the OEF. Some suggestions for how to use this donation were: bug boxes for youngsters visiting DC; books for the OEF; a pair of binoculars.

BH asked if there were any objections to his putting his beehive on DC this year. There were none.

7. Future Meetings: The next meeting will be held on **Monday 29 September 2008** at the home of BH at 7:15 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.