

Highland Perthshire Communities Land Trust
Scottish Charity Number: SC032801

**Minutes of Trustees' Meeting held at West Tempar
on Monday 31 March 2014 at 6.30 pm.**

Present: Bill Hoare (chairman), Richard Paul, Harry Ross. Advisors: Margaret Jarvis (minutes), Tim Fison, Julie Gardiner.

Apologies: Jim Low, Ian Wilkinson, Rob Coope, Trish Waite.

Because the meeting was not quorate the three advisors present were co-opted as Trustees for the duration of this evening.

Minutes of previous meeting on 20th January 2014: Approved. (prop RP; sec BH)

Minutes of AGM held on 22nd March 2014 were considered for information and identification of action.

The Chairman and Treasurer were willing to continue in their posts (the Chairman for one more year only) and were re-elected unanimously.

At least 21 days before the AGM BH had sent or emailed AGM papers with appropriate covering letters to all who had paid for membership at any time. This resulted in some confirming that they no longer wished to be members; others paid as a result and more Standing Orders agreed. This also served to update Trust members' address and email records.

MJ suggested that an attendance sheet, including a request for email addresses, should be circulated at future AGMs.

ACTION Chairman

BH had produced post-AGM publicity; he will send it to RP to put on the Facebook page

ACTION BH, RP

BH will meet George Macdonald, who had noticed the problem of damp in the hut, at the hut on 3rd April. At the AGM GM had offered, as a joiner, to help. He had suggested a battery-powered extractor fan. The batteries could be recharged with solar panels.

Matters arising:

BH was discussing the display of a notice warning of guns on the hill with Rob Coope.

The post and rail fence at Whitebridge will be replaced.

The planters, Mitch and Stevie, will plant the pines for the Memorial pine wood on the side of Dun Beag as part of the current planting plan.

RP had not yet succeeded in enlisting the help of the army to build a 'deer leap'.

RC had sourced fire-fighting equipment (poles with rubber flaps). These would be put in the car park and at Whitebridge. A warning notice would be displayed only when there was a risk of fire.

Update on deer, planting, WGS etc Four red deer had been seen on DC on 27th March. A report of resultant heavy browsing, together with a delay in the delivery of rock phosphate had caused BH to postpone further planting. Fence lines were being checked and guns would be out. Following this, Rob Coope had been on DC on 28th but had no planting plan so failed to locate the newly planted trees and, more optimistically, had seen only one instance of fresh browsing (on a one metre tall pine). He thought the hill is in 'tremendous and recovering condition'. However he had been shocked to see that the underfilling of the fence between the water gate below the hydrointake and the Braes of Foss track gate was inadequate and therefore deer-porous. He recommends intensive underfilling as essential. He will be shooting with JS and also Alec Towns in the coming week and beyond.

A work party is proposed for 26th April to put chicken wire along the bottom of the Schiehallion fence where needed to exclude roe deer. RP will publicise on Facebook; HR and RP will source materials. **ACTION RP, HR**

RP and TF would repair the watergate to exclude red deer (an arduous task) **ACTION RP, TF**

Rob Coope considers that the new deer fence on the east side of the road is to our advantage, though it will 'funnel' any deer. A panicking deer will attempt our fence rather than the new one.

Mitch, the tree planter, had walked along fence lines. He had phoned BH to report; the old fence outside the roadside fence made deer leaping the fence very difficult though some strainers need replacing; and in one place along the FC boundary a fallen tree was leaning against the fence. He recommended the use of some bracing posts, supported by the old dyke.

RP reported seeing deer prints inside our fence; the deer were seeking a way out. They might possibly have got in through Whitebridge Cottage garden, which offers no barrier. A solution would be a deer fence behind the cottage on the high side of the burn; there would need to be a gate to allow the Smiths direct access to the hill. This would have to be done by a contractor. BH will contact the Smiths about this **ACTION BH**

A dead deer had been found trapped by its foot in the old fence, about 500 metres long, on the far side of the Allt Mhor. There were some signs of possible ingress there. The watergate was in a good state.

RP wondered if the cattle grid was a weak point. It must be empty to be effective. Gravel is carried into it by water running down the road. BH asked if roadside water could be diverted elsewhere than into the grid.

JG suggested that high visibility material on the fences might discourage deer.

There was thought to be no value in another deer count at present and a deer drive would not be practical.

A deer leap was discussed. It needs to be on the south side (FC and JMT would not welcome any deer!) RP thinks a wooden ramp would work; he will mark a suitable place, in the south-east corner. It might be possible to get the Army to help with construction of a leap.

ACTION RP

BH emphasised the need to keep up the pressure against deer ingress. There followed some discussion about W McG's idea of employing a professional stalker but this will not be followed up. **A big 'thank you' to Rob Coope for all his efforts in deer culling and his support generally was given by JG and everyone present.**

Tree planting: Two thousand have been planted; 8000 remain. JG had ordered the trees (pine, birch and rowan) and the order could not be cancelled, even though four red deer had been seen. Silver birch had been supplied instead of downy birch – this mistake had been rectified. JG will go on site with the planters, finalise a planting plan and circulate to Rob Coope; planting can be suspended until the rock phosphate is delivered (in granular form, so easy to apply). **ACTION JG**

BH will make contact with Matt Young's successor. **ACTION BH**

Grant applications update (Griffin, HLF, JMT Conservation Fund etc)

Griffin: The validity of last year's agreement in principle had expired. However, Willie McGhee had obtained a six-month extension. Griffin and HLF applications had gone in today (31st March), the former together with a letter of support from Simon Pepper. A bid for £1051 had been made to the JMT conservation fund: for two trail cameras, a modern hand-held GPS and a moth trap. These would all increase our educational material.

Use of social media to benefit HPCLT

RP had set up a HPCLT Facebook page. A young person at the AGM, Isaac Proudfoot, had pointed out that Facebook is essential for making contact with young people.

RP described Facebook to the meeting. He will make it open, as any risk is small and easily managed. 'Twitter' was not considered at present.

BH raised the idea of Junior Trustees. This was generally thought to be worth trying; it would be beneficial to pupils' and students' CVs. Revision of the Constitution may be needed. BH will investigate further, before approaching head teachers. **ACTION BH**

Visiting groups: Pitlochry HS had a very successful visit on 17th March. BH will thank Garry Leck and the head teacher Thirza Pupillo. **ACTION BH**

Aberfeldy Beavers are due to come on 16th May. They hope to do some pond-dipping. TF and BH will source kit and information. Heather McAffie will probably bring a group from Kindrogan Field Studies Centre.

BH will contact Bill McEwan, Strathtay Ramblers, to give him a printed map of marked routes, with information on the back, to encourage walkers to come.

AOB:

Suggested link with Breadalbane Heritage Society: BH will take this forward by meeting with Robin Hull, who made the suggestion, to find out what he has in mind. **ACTION BH.**

JG thought that a link with FC would be beneficial. It was pointed out that such a link already existed in 'Living Landscapes'; SWT should also be involved.

Footbridge celebration: the consensus was that this should be held after a fence work party, maybe at the summer solstice. The aim should be to generate publicity and to 'enhance corporate spirit'. **ACTION ?**

New Trustees: RP suggested Annie Benson and Roy Cameron (?). He will approach them and BH will follow.

The British Mycological Society will have a 'Mycology Day' in October. BH may organise an event on DC. **ACTION BH**

The meeting closed at 9.15pm with thanks to RP and EP for their hospitality.

Date of next meeting:

To be decided

At the hut (OEF) at 6.30pm