



Cormonachan Woodlands

Cormonachan Community Woodlands Ltd.
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MINUTES

A Board Meeting was held on Tuesday 27th October 2020 at 2pm at the Lochgoilhead Village Hall observing strict Covid-19 regulations.

- 1) **Welcome to our Board Members & any apologies.**
All board members in attendance - Douglas Locke (DL), Jimmy Sim (JS), Don Kamsley (DK), Frances Walker (FW), Alastair Moodie (AM) & Scott Black (SB). DL as Director & Co. Secretary, welcomed all to the meeting and AM & SB as new members to the Board of Directors.
- 2) **Approval of the Minutes of the last Committee Meeting held on 18th August 2020.**
The Minutes were approved, proposed by DK, seconded by JS and signed by DK.
- 3) **The Board Members to elect a Chair. There will be no Chair's Report however the Secretary will report on the CWA's AGM & SGM held on 21st September 2020, the minutes of which have already been published to be approved at this meeting as CWA now dissolved.**
Alastair Moodie was proposed to become the Chair. He agreed and was voted on unanimously by the directors. DL said there would be no Chair's report as the minutes for the AGM & SGM had already been published. As the CWA was now dissolved, the Minutes had to be signed off by the past Chair and this was done by DK.
- 4) **Treasurer's Report including bank account update.**
JS reported that the current bank balance was £12,076.25 with one payment outstanding of £103.95 making the actual balance as £11,972.30. *(Note: most of this balance is restricted for Upper Cormonachan Paths Project Fund at £9,989.74 Interpretation Sign £1,250.00 & Red Squirrel Fund at £65.55).* JS said that the Cooperative Bank now charge the company £10 per month bank charges and fees for cash receipts. DL pointed out that the bank refunded £50 this year as a gesture of goodwill. It was brought up that the accounts would have to be audited externally and it was hoped to have this undertaken by an

accountant without charge.

- 5) Secretary's Report including an update on the Forestry and Land Scotland Lease for the Cormonachan Community Woodlands. Preparation and agreement of the draft Memorandum of Association for the new company (*can be viewed on the website Reports page*) to be put to the membership at an SGM. Donations received to date for the "Upper Cormonachan Paths Project Fund"; donations received in the Red Squirrel Hide and update on the Co-op Local Community Fund. Grant received for 333 hours at £15 ph for clearance of *Rhododendron ponticum* by LL&T National Park and that the 'People Counter' from 'Paths for All' is now active. DL apologised in advance that he had a considerable list of items to advise the board about.

The draft lease for CCW would be ready in the next week or so from the FLS solicitors. This will be passed to the board for comment.

The job descriptions had been passed to the board for approval and only the treasurer's was slightly condensed, so all approved.

The Memorandum of Association would eventually have to be passed at a SGM of CCW members but only when OSCR have approved them if CCW decide to apply for charity status.

The Upper Cormonachan Paths Project Fund has now reached £15,256.51 as at 24/10/2020. This includes the £4,000 grant agreed with LGH Community Trust, not in our possession yet.

The Red Squirrel Hide balance for feed is £65.55, the donation box having raised £356.06 with feed having cost £293.64 to 24/10/2020.

The Co-op Local Communities Fund over the last year to 24/10/2020 has raised £1,068.04. Initially, we tried to raise £256 value for 15 signs and these were purchased and erected from an interim payment. The Co-op agreed that surplus funds could go to the UCPP Fund.

The LL&T National Park have agreed funding of £4,995 for 333 hours at £15 ph to clear *Rhododendron ponticum* from CCW. Gordon Fletcher and Tom Ducat have been awarded the work locally which starts this week and must be completed by the end of January 2021.

Paths for All have funded a 'People Counter' at the car park. The cost was £1,575 and CCW obtained a grant of £1,500 from them. This was installed at the end of September. Readings will be taken on the first of each month.

The 'Cormonachan Woodlands Art Trail' being run by Argyll Art Collective has been open since 3rd October and closes on 31st October 2020 with take down on 1st November. This has received 1,122 visits on our Facebook page with 205 engagements to date.

DL had a meeting with Arqiva prior to this meeting today regarding the TV aerial that is being replaced with a digital cable over the next two weeks.

This cable runs over CCW from the compound by the car park to the forest road. This will eventually improve TV reception in Carrick Castle.

There has been an enquiry about a forestry business purchasing three wind fallen oak trees in the Clach Bhadach area of CCW. The potential purchaser would have to submit a suitable plan for the removal of these trees and make a suitable donation.

An elopement wedding is to take place in the Contemplation Shelter on 20th November 2020. The Argyll & Bute Registrars have visited and highly approved the venue. CCW has requested a suitable donation. This was discussed about having a fee however it was agreed that we should see what donation is made for this first event before making any future decisions.

DL said that a new 'Scotland Loves Local' fund has just opened for grant up to £5k and suggested that the CCW apply for a donation post to be sited on the path behind the car park gates. The cost would £819 inc. VAT. Following discussions it was agreed that DL should seek this funding before the 25th November closing date.

6) **Report provided by the Membership Secretary on current membership to date will be given.**

DL reported that Dennis Bolt, CCW Membership Secretary, had advised the CCW Ltd. membership at 19th October 2020 was as follows:-

Full Members: 54 signed up & paid - 7 paid but not signed up.

Associate Members; 14 signed up & paid - 3 paid but not signed up.

Corporate Members: 2 signed up and paid.

Associate Corporate Members: 2 signed up and paid.

Life Members: Signed up (5 transferred from CWA & 1 new signed up and paid - 1 did not wish to be transferred and so transfer offer now lost).

The CCW Ltd. therefore has 78 fully signed and paid up members and 10 supporters who until signed up and who would have been able to vote, cannot do so. Of these members, 17 have offered to be volunteers.

7) **Update on the 'Upper Cormonachan Paths Project' including chainsaw operations work still to be carried out by FLS following the felling of the 92 trees, many into 3-metre lengths, to be cut up into man-handle-able sizes, along the new paths route and at the Settlement. Update on the Settlement's interpretation sign with funding in hand. Update on National Park's planning approval and current position on grant applications.**

DL reported that the FLS still had the cutting up of these trees on their list and it would be done but the CCW would have to cut up the trees at the Settlement. The interpretation sign for the Settlement was underway and we would shortly see a draft for comment and approval before production. LL&T National Park planning have now agreed all aspects of the conditions even though two of the conditions cannot be fully met until a month or so prior to construction work commencing.

Condition 1 - Archaeological Investigation - Approved, also by WoSAS, interpretation sign to be shown to NPA. Condition 2 - Construction Method Statement - Approved in cooperation with McGowan's of Aviemore. Any re-growth of *Rhododendron ponticum* to be re-sprayed annually.

Condition 3 - Road Opening - NPA want measurements for grill and ditch to stop water reaching the road from the new car park. (Anna Wynne kindly attending to this request.) At least one month prior to construction a Road Opening Permit must be obtained from Argyll & Bute roads department at current cost of £143. Condition 4 - Signage - NPA require submission of list of signs for commencements of paths and junctions showing distances and grading. This is not required until close to construction. Condition 5 - Private Water Supplies - Approved, also by EHO. Condition 6 - Compensatory Tree Planting - Approved, 105 native trees already planted to replace 92 felled Sitka spruce and Larch.

Condition 7 - General Protected Species - Following approved Survey, May 2019, as construction will now take place after October 2020, a walk through updated check will have to be carried out by an ecologist before construction commences. Condition 8 - Breeding Birds - Construction cannot take place between March & August so earliest construction could take place would be September 2021 subject to funding.

The current funding position is that the National Lottery Heritage Fund is currently only open to Covid-19 funding so until this re-opens in 2021, we have to bide our time. Most of the application form has already been

completed for up to £250,000. The CCW has to raise 5% of the construction costs locally and this has almost been achieved. DL has been writing to UK and Scottish Ministers regarding what is to replace the SRDP funding for paths that used to be funded by the EU. We have been advised that two large funds are to be re-opened hopefully in 2021; the AECS - Agri-Environmental Climate Scheme (£289 million) and Forestry Grant Scheme (£277 million) and other possible funds. There is also a new Community Fund called Visioning Rural Communities (Dream to Change the Future) to be run by the Social Enterprise Academy and this will be running from the end of October 2020 to March 2021. DL has signed up to attend the Argyll weekly Zoom meetings to see how CCW and our UCPP can benefit our paths project.

- 8) **Volunteers Leader's position is still open for a member to take over as DL gave formal notice to the Chair of his retirement from this position on 2nd June 2020. (See Job Description on website Volunteering page). DL is willing to give advice as required.**

This position is still to be filled. DL would be happy to hear from anyone interested in knowing more about what is involved - see job description on website Volunteering page. FW is currently checking the paths for any maintenance required.
- 9) **Pre-agreed Volunteers Dates for 2020 - the last Friday / Saturday of a month - 30/10 & 31/10 and 27/11 & 28/11. The next Volunteers Days to be agreed for 2021. We are also in urgent need of more Team Leaders for 2021.**

We currently have three active Team Leaders and need more for next spring. See website Volunteering page for more details. The 2021 early Volunteers Days dates are: 26th/27th February, 26th/27th March, 30th April & 1st May, 28th & 29th May and in National Volunteers Week - Saturday 5th June.
- 10) **Priority tasks for future Volunteers Days agreed with FLS for 2020/2021, included Rhododendron ponticum and Sitka spruce removal, path & ditches clearance, clearance of brash from new paths route, clearance of felled cut up timber in the Settlement buildings, pesticide spraying of the Rhododendron re-growth and painting structures, strimming paths, etc. These tasks were approved.**
- 11) **Charity Status - 'OSCR Meeting the Charity Test'. A discussion following the board members being sent these details on 4th (DK, DL, JS & FW) & 23rd (AM & SB) September 2020. If to be followed up with OSCR, a board member would need to be appointed to instigate the charity status in conjunction with the Secretary.**

DL explained that as a Charity, the company would save (deleted) £53,914 in VAT for the paths construction costs of £269,570 that with 20% VAT is £323,484. This would make it easier to obtain funding as a charity. Also, any gift-aid donations made would be eligible for an additional 25% from HMRC. It was agreed after discussion that the CCW should investigate with OSCR if the CCW would be eligible for charitable status.

AM agree to lead this investigation as he had previous experience, in conjunction with DL. This was put to the vote and agreed by the board of directors unanimously.
- 12) **Any other Business**

Argyll Arts Collective had been asked by CHARTS to prepare a video of

their work this week and undertake this mentioning CCW which was approved.

- 13) **Date of next committee meeting**
Tuesday 8th December 2020 at 2 pm - trialling Zoom for the Board Meeting.

The meeting closed at 15.55 hrs.