



Cormonachan Woodlands Association, The Secretary, Douglas Locke,
Cruach House, Carrick Castle, Argyll, PA24 8AF T: 01301 703098 F: 01301 703098
E: Secretary@cormonachan-woodlands.co.uk W: www.cormonachan-woodlands.co.uk

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at Lochgoilhead Village Hall on Tuesday 1st May 2018 at 7 pm

1) Welcome & Apologies.

Don Kamsley, Chair welcomed everyone to the AGM. He said he had the unenviable task of following in Liz Evans footsteps as Chair. Liz was one of the most passionate, hard working and giving people I have ever met and I hope that I will be able to live up to her expectations. In attendance - Douglas Locke, Don Kamsley, Calum Evans, Jimmy Sim, Richard Hall, Elaine & Gary Broadbent, Elizabeth Bain, Frances Walker, David Thorpe & Roddy Davies. Apologies were received from Susanna Miller, Gwyneth Evans, Cecilia Ferguson, Rodd Coutts, Katrina Evans, Anne Sim, Lorraine Kamsley, Sheila Davies and Sue Morris (FES).

2) Approval of the Minutes of the last AGM of the Association held on Tuesday 20th June 2017.

The minutes of the last AGM were approved and proposed by Jimmy Sim, Seconded by David Thorpe and signed by Don Kamsley.

3) Report by the Chair on an overview of the Cormonachan Woodlands Association for the year 1st June 2017 to 31st March 2018.

Don Kamsley gave the following report to the members:-

1. Activity report from 1st June 2017 to 31st March 2018 – work achieved
 - a) New committee members co-opted; Frances Walker and Cecilia Fergusson.
 - b) Training – 2 members trained for quad bike and trailer use completed and approved with limited usage given by Forest Enterprise Scotland (FES) & 4 other members trained for Strimmer usage.
 - c) Annual work by CWA volunteers / National Park / Fife Ranger Volunteers / Forest Enterprise / Ardroy – hours worked can be found in the supplementary information sheet with the accounts and non monetary donations – donors - voluntary hours worked and assets.
 - Rhododendron and brash removal.
 - Maintenance of pathways.
 - Survey of high risk trees.
 - Maintenance of facilities and tools at Jan's hideaway.
 - Sitka spruce and rotten oak tree removal.

- d) David Thorpe, Ardroy CEO and committee member, gave an insight to the work the primary school children put into Rhododendron ponticum removal in the community woodlands.
- e) Completion of the car park – opened on 14th September 2017 by James Fraser of Friends of Loch Lomond & Trossachs (FOLLAT).
- f) Ditches have been cleaned out by Drimsynie Construction.
- g) Installation of 5 new educational sculptures by Liz Evans around the woodlands.
- h) New interpretation boards have been erected throughout the woodlands giving information on both habitat and history.
- i) Installation of a new storage shed and red squirrel hide by Jan's Hideaway.
- j) Huge volume of paperwork completed behind the scenes, especially by Douglas and Liz.
 - New Risk assessments to cover all CWA activities – completed and approved by the committee team.
 - A myriad of planning applications for new structures and pathways including the Contemplation Shelter soon to be erected in memory of Liz Evans.
 - Grant applications
 - Liaising with both the National Park and Forest Enterprise on a regular basis
- k) Lastly, the Argyll Arts Collective held two Walking Theatre Company performances on the 15th April which were well received.

4) A presentation of the Accounts of the Association by the Treasurer.

Jimmy Sim, our Treasurer, asked the members to look at the accounts and explained their make up and asked for the accounts to be approved by the membership after questions were asked and answered. Douglas Locke explained the Supplementary Information to the accounts showing the Non-Monetary Donations, Volunteers Hours Donated, Assets and lists of monetary and non-monetary Donors that don't include very many anonymous donors. The accounts were approved. The current bank balance was £2,577 however £2,074 still has to be paid out for the shelter's groundwork from this balance.

5) Report by the Secretary on the year's work of the Association, including the website and Facebook.

Douglas Locke, Secretary, then explained that this year had been an even busier year than the previous one as Secretary of the Cormonachan Woodlands Association having had to put in 782 hours of volunteering time that averages over 2 hours a day every day in the last year. Fortunately being retired had been able to do this work and enjoyed doing it for the community woodlands.

The loss of my wife, Liz Evans who was the Founder and Chair of the Association and also a Director and Trustee of AOEC Trust Ltd. (Ardroy) on New Year's Eve 2017 after a short three month illness from cancer was unexpected. She was such a driving and inspirational force over the last 20 years for the conservation of the woodlands for education and a place of recreation for the community. She was held in high esteem by so many and we are proud to have raised over £7,000 in freely given donations for the 'Contemplation Shelter' in her memory.

The Cormonachan Woodlands Association's agreement with Ardroy in the "Memorandum of Understanding" with Forest Enterprise Scotland (FES) to 30th November 2026 is now in its second year. FES have tightened up what the Association can and can't do this last year and now we have to apply for additional permissions that take time. A lot of these permission requests can take a month for an event and 3 months for a felling licence to achieve and often have restrictions and requirements for additional risk assessments. We have a good working relationship with FES and so manage in the end to get the permissions that are needed even if we cannot do everything that we want to do. One such example has been the felling of 44 Sitka spruce trees between the Squirrel Trail paths under licence. 34 have now been felled with 10 more to be felled in the autumn.

The work of the Secretary has been complex this last year with obtaining donations and grants for the new car park that was opened on 14th September 2017; funding the Red Squirrel Hide and storage shed both erected on 12th March 2018 again by donations and a grant and obtaining the donations for the 'Contemplation Shelter' planned to be erected on 21st May 2018. In addition to these major achievements, we have also obtained funding for cleaning out the worst of the paths' ditches, replaced the website and made it Smart phone accessible and put up signs around the community woodlands. This last year alone, the Association has raised the funding by grants and donations for a new car park (£6,254.81), red squirrel hide & shed (£2,016.56), information signs around the woodlands (£250.00), volunteer training (£835.00), replacement website with Smartphone accessibility (£750), mechanical ditch cleaning (£1,250.00) and a 'Contemplation Shelter' in memory of our late Chair, Liz Evans (£7,000.00), a funding total of £18,356.37. Grants for these projects this year totalled £8,664.14 have been obtained from Scottish Landfill Communities Fund, Forestry Commission Scotland, Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park Authority, Friends of Loch Lomond & Trossachs, Lochgoil Community Trust, Carrick Castle Communities Trust, Lochgoil Community Council (The Wee Goil local monthly news) and local businesses and fantastic support from private donations amounting to £9,692.23.

Over the last two years, 18 members took 31 training places on eight training courses that were 100% funded through either the Forestry Commission Scotland's Seedcorn & Communities Fund or the Natural Heritage Fund Scheme run by the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority. The training included First Aid, Trimmer, Chainsaw, Pesticides and Quad Bike & Trailer certificated courses.

Each year the committee calculates via time sheets the amount of time its volunteers put into running the Association by its committee members, volunteer members and supporting members which assessed on a value of the minimum wage (FES rate) which this year totalled £13,829. The Cormonachan Woodlands Association is fortunate that it has volunteers that come long distances from Fife, Cumbria and Glasgow as well as locally because they enjoy working in the woodlands and knowing they make a difference. We do still need more local volunteers to help in the community woodlands. When I eventually retire as Secretary in the future, I don't want anyone put off applying for this post by the past work input of voluntary hours into the Association as these hours in the future will not be the norm. Once all the constructive work is complete and that will include the proposed path to Upper Cormonachan and the Cormonachan waterfalls, work in the future will resolve around the general running of the Association. It is a very responsible position being the Secretary of the Association and I have enjoyed the work and the challenge and am committed to making the Cormonachan community woodlands a successfully run organisation and don't intend to retire yet. So what has the Secretary done to accumulate all these hours? Perhaps it would be helpful to the members to understand what is involved.

The Secretary runs the Association for the committee and the committee for the members. As there are no paid employees, everything that is done for the Association is done voluntarily including administration and woodlands maintenance. In the last year, I have received 2,035 incoming e-mails and sent out 1,167 outgoing ones. Prepared the agendas for committee meetings and AGM and follow up Minutes of these meetings and kept members informed with Members Updates - 27 to date.

The Secretary runs the membership data base and at the end of the last financial year, we had 76 members including 2 corporate members, 5 life members, 55 full members, 11 associate members & 3 child members (free).

So far this year we have 73 members including 9 new members that consists of 3 corporate members, 4 life members, 53 full members, 11 associate members & 2 child members. 13 members to this meeting have yet to renew their membership since 1st April 2018.

Ten Risk Assessments (RAs) have been prepared and updated for all work carried out by volunteers in the woodlands with volunteer days set up and tasks prioritised. Our thanks go to Don Kamsley for their preparation and for the other committee members who have scrutinised and approved them.

We are still in need of more trained pesticide sprayers and need volunteers to come forward to be trained. Three members have offered to be trained so far but we need six for the course to be funded and go ahead.

Annual Work Plans are agreed with the partners annually and so far we have achieved our annual target with the help of our member volunteers. Member volunteers are essential to achieve the tasks we are committed to and those members who have been volunteering in the community woodlands say they enjoy helping that is much appreciated. The Association also has a ten year Management Plan approved by FES that is also required so that the Association can apply to the Scottish Government's SRDP scheme for woodlands funding.

The Association has no income stream other than from its annual membership subscriptions which pay for the running of the Association. All projects have to be funded therefore by 100% grants that have to be applied for and with donations from the members. The Association now has almost £12,000 worth of assets - structures, equipment and tools.

We have now started fund raising for a new project - a new path connecting the top south west corner of the Squirrel Trail by the Contemplation Shelter to the old village of Upper Cormonachan and the waterfalls that is currently being used by Ardroy as an 'Adventure Trail' for their visiting primary school children staying at Ardroy. It is expected to take a year or two to achieve as a significant amount of money for work to begin however we should be able to get a 100% grant for the path that is likely to cost £40-60,000. Planning permission will be required that will not be grantable so requiring donations.

The easiest way to achieve the funding is through a very simple method that costs members nothing. If you shop online, we ask you to help raise money for Cormonachan Woodlands Association and its projects by visiting

<https://www.goraise.co.uk/cormonachan-woodlands-association>. You buy the same things at the same price, the only cost is to the retailer and the retailer passes the Association a small percentage. So far this year, we have raised £85.52 through only 6 members with 65 online purchases using the scheme.

I would like to point out to members that the Association's website is kept up to date at www.cormonachan-woodlands.co.uk as is our Facebook page with Latest News. You will also find under History on the website, Minutes of all Meetings and Members Updates and much more.

To finalise this report, I would like to encourage members to volunteer in the community woodlands to help maintain the paths and help in other ways such as helping run the Open Days, Events and Gala Days. The next Gala Day is on Saturday 28th July 2018. Remember there are no paid staff to run and maintain the community woodlands, just volunteers who do everything!

A very big 'Thank You' to all our volunteers - you are just so important to Cormonachan Woodlands. By the way, we will be in need of the paths being strimmed through the summer when we don't have pre-programmed Volunteers Days. We will pick sunny, windy days at short notice to avoid the midges. The next Volunteers Day is on Sunday 6th May from 1 pm to 4 pm. Scheduled Volunteers Days will recommence in September, October & November.

6) Changes to the Constitution. The committee agreed to put the following amendments to the AGM for members to vote on.

Delete "Members of the Committee may serve for 3 years and be re-elected for a second period of 3 years. Any member who has served for 6 consecutive years must stand down for a period of 1 year after which the member will be eligible to stand again for election."

Replace with "At each annual general meeting, the members may elect any member (providing he/she is willing to act) to be a committee member. The committee members may at any time appoint any member (providing he/she is willing to act). At each

annual general meeting, all of the committee members shall retire from office - but shall then be eligible for re-election. Associate members or children under the age of 16 are not entitled to vote or serve on the committee."

Don Kamsley explained the reasons for the changes as continuity of keeping key personnel within the committee. A vote was taken and passed unanimously.

7) Plans for the year - April 2018 to March 2019 and beyond.

Annual recurring tasks as shown on the Annual Work Programme and compartment map with the supplementary information.

Annual project work is also shown to 31st March 2019:-

- Contemplation Shelter and link path to be completed in May.
- Cut down 10 Sitka spruce in Autumn – Fife Rangers – area 1 under FES licence.
- Apply for funding to train up personnel for Rhododendron removal by spraying / injection.
- Apply for SRDP funding for new paths and Rhododendron removal.
- New pathway installation from the south west corner of the Squirrel Trail to the Upper Cormonachan:-

Current status

- The pathway has been marked out by Ardroy and is in the process of being transposed onto the woodland map - refer to CW leaflet for map of new path.

To be completed

- Drimsynie construction to quote for work.
- Submit application to SRDP & SNH by 31st May for funding.
- Obtain planning approval from SNH and National Park.

8) Membership subscriptions are recommended by the committee to stay the same as last year.

A vote was taken to keep the subscriptions the same as 2018/2019 for 2019/2010 and approved.

9) Election of Officers

Current officers:-

Chairperson - Donald Kamsley

Secretary - Douglas Locke

Treasurer - James Sim

Member - Frances Walker

Member - Cecilia Ferguson

Corporate Member Representative - David Thorpe of AOEC Trust

As all current committee members agreed to be re-elected back on to the committee a vote was taken and all were re-elected by the members unanimously.

Note - CWA Constitution - The Association shall be managed by a Committee with a minimum of 4 members and a maximum of 6 who shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting.

The Secretary paid thanks to Tom Currie for his 'Birthday Presents Donations' made to the Association that raised £365.88 for the CWA Project Fund and said any legacies similar to Liz Evans request would be very welcome in future. A point was raised by the members that there were some slippery parts on the steep slopes of the paths. This will be brought up at the next committee meeting on 15th May to see what can be done about this situation. The Chair, Don Kamsley then thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and closed the meeting at 20.25 hrs.