



Cormonachan Woodlands Association  
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## Minutes

A Committee Meeting was held on Tuesday, 23rd April 2019 at 4.30 pm at Cruach House, Carrick Castle, Argyll, PA24 8AF

### 1) Welcome & Apologies.

The Chair (DK) welcomed everyone to the meeting. The committee members in attendance were Don Kamsley (DK), Douglas Locke (DL), Cecilia Ferguson (CF), Jimmy Sim (JS) & Frances Walker (FW) with guest member Dennis Bolt (DB). Apologies were received from David Thorpe (DT) & Sue Morris (SM) - Forestry & Land Scotland ex-officio member.

### 2) Approval of the Minutes of the last Committee Meeting held on 19th March 2019 & any follow up reports (see italic notations in the last Minutes).

The Minutes of the last meeting on 19th March 2019 were approved - proposed by CF & seconded by DK and signed by DK.

### 3) Chairman's Report.

DK said that DL & he, DK had had a meeting with SM & Rebecca Smith, (RS) Ranger, both of Forestry & Land Scotland, the new name replacing Forest Enterprise Scotland on 9th April to approve the Work Programme for 2019-2020 and to walk the proposed Upper Cormonachan Paths Project with DK. DL met them after the walk and discussed the project and how it was proceeding. SM & RS had no issues with the first part of the paths route to the forest road but had some issues regarding the paths at the old village and waterfalls

down to the proposed car park. Despite having Forestry Commission Scotland (now Forestry Scotland) approval from the Regional Visitor Services Manager in writing on 13th December 2018 with acceptable conditions approved by the CWA committee, SM & RS said they and the Forestry archaeologist did not want the path to run through the old village or have an interpretation sign that DL pointed out, that the archaeologist had described as "The farmstead of Upper Cormonachan survives as low ruins. **I would not normally advise that relatively common drystone-built ruins such as these were appropriate for onsite interpretation.**" DL said that locally the ruins were known as the 'old village' and comprised two farmhouses, two byres and livestock pens and garden walls and this was confirmed by the committee members. DL said that the Association had records of past inhabitants, their names, the type of livestock kept and the numbers. As such people visiting the 'old village' would expect to have this information available to be viewed on a sign and would seek to have this approval at the old village and if not at the start of the path to the old village if permission were not given for it to be in the old village itself. As the committee members said people visiting will still walk over the old village area whether the path be above or through and so it would be better to have a proper path than otherwise. DL said that SM, RS and another FES employee had previously visited this same area on 29th August 2017 with DL and Liz Evans and were at that time fully supportive of the proposed project. DK said that SM & RS wanted to have a detailed construction plan for the path down to the proposed car park via the waterfalls however McGowans of Aviemore, the hill contractors, had provided the initial proposal for the entire construction of the paths from the Contemplation Shelter to the proposed new car park which had not only been supplied to the National Park (NP) for planning approval but also to FES in December 2018 prior to applying for planning permission on 4th January 2019. DK said that McGowans had provided the design and build construction quotation without charge to the CWA and that the project would have to receive planning permission first before any alterations to the project were to be made under a non-material alteration request to the NP. SM & RS also said that the car park was not currently acceptable by them and the Forestry architect however DL said that he had made an agreement with NP and the architect that the NP would give their opinion as to the size of the car park and its layout first and alterations could be suggested after planning permission had been given using non-material alterations provided the size remained either the same or smaller. SM also said that the FLS would want a change to the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) as they felt that a Lease would be more appropriate in their opinion. DK & DL said that they would accept a lease for the car park but not for the land at Cormonachan Woodlands that they wished to keep under the

current MoU that is active until December 2026. It had always been agreed that the CWA would have to have an agreement for the paths and had been seeking this since November 2018. The committee agreed that it did not want a lease but would insist on keeping the MoU. If it were to be forced into a lease, it was agreed that the CWA would be better to pursue the right to buy the land. DK also mentioned to SM that DL had sent an e-mail with a photo of a dangerous branch on a tree by the waterfalls. He was told this was passed on to the person responsible to deal with however DK showed the tree to SM & RS and they said that since it wasn't by a path they wouldn't do anything about it. DK & DL both said at the end of the meeting that since there was a right to roam law in Scotland and that FLS were the owners of the land, the FLS had a duty of care to remove such a dangerous branch as if it fell, it could kill someone and the CWA had reported it to FLS. The matter is now in the hands of the FLS with no responsibility on the CWA as it had been reported. DL said he would follow this up. DK said more trees had fallen across the Cormonachan Burn from the south side since that was reported and photos of the other trees will be reported to FLS as well. DK said that DL had agreed a Pesticide Spraying Agreement with FLS for 2019-2020 and that for this year the CWA would not be permitted to use the adjuvant 'Mixture B' as suggested by the manufacturers of Roundup for maximum effectiveness. So this will be reconsidered after a year. In the meantime, DK with assistance from DB will test the use of Mixture B with Roundup on DK's own property in trying to eradicate Rhododendron. The first pesticide spraying sessions in CW will be in June at dates to be advised.

#### 4) Report on bank account position.

JS advised the bank balance was currently £3,389.66. DL advised the "Upper Cormonachan Woodlands Paths Project Fund" had reached a total of £3,472.45 from which £756.00 was paid out in planning fees and £400.00 would be paid out for the 'Endangered Species' survey being carried out on 26th April for the National Park's requirement prior to planning permission and also the Red Squirrel Hide donation box had received £133.39 towards squirrel feed that had cost £134.83. JS advised that the formal accounts for last year to 31st March 2019 will be ready for the AGM next month.

#### 5) Secretary's report including update on current membership, an update on the website, Facebook update, latest 'Members Update'. Update on Argyll Holidays video of Squirrel Trail Walk.

DL advised that 94 members had renewed their memberships to

date from 1st April 2019 including two free children and that eight members had yet to renew their memberships. Facebook was kept up to date with 190 followers. GoRaise has raised £157.15 in donations via eight members who have purchased 116 items online since 2017 which go to our project fund. DL asked to be considered by Forestry Scotland for two First Aid training grants for May and December 2019 and has received a reply saying that we would be supported when their budget is known. We have five members requiring this course and need a minimum of six so one place is still available. DL with the help of CF and Tom Ducat have helped to produce four wooden people sculptures for the LGH Primary School to paint during their summer term. These will be displayed in the woodlands when complete. They have taken 12 hours to produce and the hard wood was donated by DL and the paint, brushes and accessories have cost the CWA £111.61.

- 6) **Ardroy Report on use of Cormonachan Woodlands over the last months of January to March including an update on maintenance achieved around Jan's Hideaway and an update of programme of tasks for 2019.**

DT was unable to attend the meeting but sent the following after it. 19 Schools have undertaken rhododendron removal over the last couple of months; Jan's Hideaway has had a coat of wood preserve and been tidied inside. The double doors are still not locking and as they are used infrequently we may look to close them off permanently; The area around Jan's has been tidied and we will look to see what can be done to improve the steps leading up to it. DL added that Phil Thompson from Ardroy had advised that over the last year 1,000 children had undertaken the cutting down of Rhododendron ponticum accumulating 667 hours of work in CW.

- 7) **Update on Forestry & Land Scotland (FLS) previously called Forest Enterprise Scotland's MoU Programme of Works. Work plan for 2019 to 2020 agreed with FLS**

This was covered by DK in his Chair's report, Item 3) above.

- 8) **Report on 2 Volunteers Days of 22nd & 23rd March 2019.**

On 22nd, DK said that his team of 4 NP volunteers cut a huge amount of Rhododendron down by Cormonachan Burn in very wet conditions and DL's team cleared away the last Sitka within the boundaries of the Squirrel Trail and then cut up wood for the LGH school's project. On 23rd CF's team of 2 other CWA members cleared a ditch by the contemplation shelter and on the top path.

The committee were very grateful to those NP volunteers and CWA members for their work.

- 9) Next Volunteers Days are 26th to 28th April 2019. Leaders & First Aiders required in advance for all future Volunteers Days. CWA member volunteers needed.

DL advised that only three CWA members have volunteered for Friday 26th April and they would be tidying up the felled Sitka by the Contemplation Shelter. Saturday 27th has Young NP volunteers coming under the leadership of the NP volunteers leader to cut down Rhododendron whilst only two CWA members have come forward so will paint the shelter's floor. As there have been no volunteers come forward for Sunday 28th this day will have to be cancelled. Two Strimmer CWA members have already volunteered to strim parts of the paths on Friday 17th May with hopefully others to complete the first cut on that day or the next (approx 2 hour sessions).

- 10) Future Training - 2-Day Emergency First Aid Training for 2019. Two courses required one as soon as possible from May and another for renewals of certificates at the end of the year. Applicants on list for first course, 5 and need min. 6. Number of renewals for end of year (7 CWA members and 2 Ardroy staff who attended a previous CWA course). Grants applied for.

This has been covered in Item 5) above.

- 11) Update on the 'Upper Cormonachan Paths Project' (design of & new paths to Upper Cormonachan, forest road, old village, waterfalls and new car park from the Contemplation Shelter). Update on Letters of Support, the Planning Application & Funding Sources.

DL advised that most of the current situation had been covered in the Chair's report in Item 3) above. Three items were outstanding before the NP planning officer can put the planning application up for consideration and these are to send the NP the endangered species survey which is booked, to provide the details required for section E to G of the path by McGowans which is underway and to provide a replanting plan for trees felled along the paths route with deciduous trees away from the paths by FLS. As soon as this has been submitted the planning officer will ask for a decision to be made.

- 12) Date to be set for the AGM that will include changes to the Constitution increasing the committee membership up from six to eight. (See last Minutes for changes agreed).

The next committee meeting will be held on Wednesday 29th May 2019 at 6.30 PM in the Village Hall Library followed by the AGM at 7 PM in the small hall at the Lochgoilhead Village Hall.

- 13) Any other business & date for next committee meeting?

The only other business was that the Cormonachan Woodlands Mugs should be available for sale at the AGM at £7.50 each should any member wish to purchase some which are in aid of the 'Upper Cormonachan Paths Project Fund'.

(The meeting closed at 18.25 hrs)