



Cormonachan Woodlands Association

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Minutes

A Committee Meeting was held on Tuesday, 31st October 2017 at 4.30 pm at Lochwood House, Lochgoilhead, Argyll, PA24 8AE

1) Welcome & Apologies.

Don Kamsley (DK) Acting Chair, welcomed the committee members, Douglas Locke (DL), Jimmy Sim (JS), David Thorpe (DT) and Frances Walker (FW). Apologies were received from Liz Evans (LE) (Chair) who is unwell and Sue Morris (SM) from FES who was unable to attend due to being on a FES training day.

2) Approval of the Minutes of the last Committee Meeting held on 29th August 2017 & follow up reports.

There were no matters arising and the Committee Meeting Minutes of 29th August 2017 were approved and proposed by JS and seconded by DK and signed by DL on behalf of the Chair.

3) Report by the Chair on current position of CWA including meetings held since last committee meeting (the official opening of the car park; path survey meeting with Guy Keating LL&TNPA & the 'other' CWA Conference).

DL on behalf of the Chair (LE) confirmed the Official Opening of the Car Park went very well opened by James Fraser of Friends of Loch Lomond & Trossachs (FOLLAT) with a good attendance including representatives from Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS), other FOLLAT board members, local Trusts (Loch Goil & Ardroy) and CWA committee members and CWA members. LE was praised for her introduction to the event. After the opening LE took Guy Keating (GK) (LL&T NPA Access Manager) for a walk to survey the proposed path from the Squirrel Trail to the waterfalls and the old village. After the walk GK said he would investigate funding through SNH as CWA ticked the three boxes that are critical to obtaining funding. This will be chased up again even though the CWA is looking at this path project as a long term one.

4) Report on bank account position.

JS, our Treasurer, reported that the uncleared balance at the bank was £1,593.77 and cleared balance as £1,493.77. The £100 difference was a donation of £100.00 from Carrick Castle Community Trust towards the replacement website. The balance had increased over the last month [see Item 10) 3. website renewal] and Tom Currie's 50th Birthday Donations towards the Red Squirrel Project that grossed £380 in donations [£365.88 net after PayPal commission].

Item 5) Secretary's report including update on current membership, an update on the website and Facebook and latest 'Members Update'. Also ACT AGM, AWOO Meeting, Autumn Fayre Report & Argyll Holidays video.

Membership stands at 74 (55 full members, 10 associates, 2 corporate members, 4 life members and 3 children). Website is being replaced currently following the Content Management System (CMS) having been hacked. Facebook is updated regularly with news items. Last Membership Update was on 4th October 2017 (No 22), the next will be after the committee meeting but not before we have news of two funding decisions (LL&TNPA & FOLLAT). The Cormonachan Woodlands Management Plan for the next ten years has been approved by FCS which will mean more funding will be available in the future. ACT AGM attended. AWOO Meeting attended. Autumn Fayre attended. Argyll Holidays video made on Squirrel Trail. CWA Conference & AGM attended. ASWC Map Planning Event attended. GoRaise funding has now produced £50.31 of funding from still only 4 of our members who use it regularly (2 full & 2 associate).

Item 6) Ardroy Report on work committed to be carried out in Cormonachan Woodlands (Rhododendron clearance by instructors and primary school children in Area 6 as marked out; strimming of paths & use of chainsaws by staff trained under CWA funding).

DT reported that their woodlands work commences from November to March annually. He regretted that Ardroy hadn't been able to do the strimming work on the paths that it had hoped to this year but it would be prepared to have its two trained staff on an agreed paths strimming programme from March 2018. DL said that to strim all the paths properly takes 10 hrs with a minimum of three sessions annually through the year. There are 10 trained strimmer operators between CWA (8) and Ardroy (2) so about 3 hours per operator volunteer per annum should keep the paths in good order. *A programme to be prepared for 2018 (DL & DT)*. With regard to chainsaw work, Ardroy have 2 chainsaw operators and CWA 3. Tom Ducat (TD) has been exceptionally helpful in clearing fallen trees when asked and it is hoped that others will help when needed. DL thanked the CWA's anonymous donor for the mooring rope for the red squirrel ropeway and Phil & Cam from Ardroy for erecting the ropeway in the trees. DT said that Ardroy were not in a position to replace

the shed in the woodlands in the near future due to more pressing requirements. DL said that the shed needed to be replaced because the planning permission being applied for was for the hide and the shed and that once permission had been received, both would have to be erected in order to obtain a completion certificate and receive the funding payment. DT understood this and said that he would like to donate £250 towards the cost of the replacement shed and JS said that the balance of the cost of the shed (about £500 plus) could be paid by CWA as the red squirrel hide fund now had sufficient money to go ahead with the project once the LL&T NPA funding had been confirmed. DL said he would try and get a discount from LogSpan by ordering the hide and shed from them. He would also enquire if Logspan could offer pre-treatment of the units to save doing this after their erection. *(Following the meeting DL suggested to DT that he could become a Life Member of the CWA for the same donation of £250 and he agreed to this).*

Item 7) Risk Assessments - Discussion and agreement regarding the revised and reformatted RAs.

DK showed the list of and examples of the RAs on a large screen from a projector (the screen was donated to the CWA by a member). DK explained that each RA for each situation had to be gone over in complete detail and then approved by a team. It was decided that each RA would be examined by the priority of when it was next likely to be used e.g. Volunteers Day covering woodland work using tools on 18th November 2017 being next. SM had mentioned by e-mail that she would like each chainsaw operation to be site specific and RA prepared. DK suggested that TD be asked for his input as a chainsaw operator member volunteer. It was decided to have a meeting at Ardroy with DT, DK & FW on 7th November 2017 to start the RA approval process. CWA and Ardroy's RAs to be cross checked for each similar activity.

Item 8) Report on Volunteers Day on 15th October 2017 (DL)

Five members and two LL&T NPA Volunteers attended. One member cutting rhoddies for a morning and two members for a day with two NPA volunteers. Two other members, one a chainsaw operator, cut up the Sitka spruce that was felled on the training course in Area 1 into logs and they stacked them by the ST path. A very good day's work was achieved.

Item 9) Update on CW Annual Maintenance Plan to 31st March 2018.

The annual maintenance work plan was read through by DL and checked for progress. Items 1) to 8) are annual recurring tasks. 1) Rhododendron clearance in Area 6 was underway; 2) Strimming of the paths had been done through the year; 3) Maintenance of the ditches is required and funding is being sought from FOLLAT; 4) FW has been very regularly topping up

the red squirrel feeders for which she was thanked and Ardroy for supplying the feed. Items 9) to 19) in the annual project work has progressed well with 9) car park interpretation board erected; 10) 5 sculptures installed; 11) Licence to fell 44 Sitka spruce trees in Area 1 is ongoing with about a dozen felled earlier in the year during the chainsaw course and the Fife Volunteers hope to clear the remainder on their weekend of 11th/12th November 2017; 12) additional 5m³ felling per quarter has not been required at present; 13) CWA public and members notice boards all erected; 15) CW Management Plan for next ten years has now received FCS signed approval; 17) Ageing the oak trees in CW yet to be done; 18) The loop walk is not to be followed up since the proposed path to the waterfalls and old village are of higher importance; and the ATV track by the PAWS fenced off area by Upper Cormonachan could not be strimmed this year because of the tree felling by FES contractors in the area south of the Cormonachan Burn - this will be considered again in 2018 when the forest road can be used to access the area. FES will be coming to fell the ringed Sitka spruce trees around two ancient oak trees in the near future and will also take down the storm damaged branch by Jan's Hideaway. There are also going to fell two trees by the road side near Lower Cormonachan that were damaged in recent high winds.

Item 10) Update on Funding Applications to LL&TNPA (Red Squirrel Hide) & FOLLAT (Hire of Excavator for Ditch Cleaning) and other funding requirements (replacement website). (DL)

1) Red Squirrel Hide (& Ardroy/CWA Shed) planning permission approved as valid and await decision. Funding for the hide decision will be made on 17th November 2017. It is likely that erection of the hide & shed will now be in January 2018.

2) FOLLAT funding decision due end of October 2017. Have suggested if FOLLAT cannot manage two days hire funding (£504), CWA would like one day 2017 and one day in a year's time.

3) Replacement Website is under construction at present with the new website due to be live in about a week or two. Cost £750.00. Funds raised so far Argyll Holidays £100; D Locke £100; E Evans £100; CCCT £100; CWA £250 from subscriptions leaving £100 requested from The Wee Goil with decision on 7th November 2017.

4) Request was made to FCS for £410.00 funding for two members to have Quad Bike Training (T Ducat & M Wynne) so that a quad bike and trailer can be used in CW to bring down logs for sale - an income that we would otherwise not have. This has been agreed and we are now awaiting the formal funding offer due shortly. The Quad Bike Training will take place w/c 11th December 2017.

Item 11) Work plan for Volunteers Day on Saturday 18th November 2017. (DL)

DL will have to lead the next volunteers day as LE will not be available. The plan for the day agreed at this meeting was for a maximum of 2 teams lead by committee members and with a first aider in each team :-

Team 1: Clear the site for the Red Squirrel Hide and create a path to it from Red Squirrel Trail above. Four volunteers required for 3 hours. DL Team leader & first aider.

Team 2: Survey all the paths ditches for cleaning out by walking round the paths network and recording the worst areas where work is to be done. Two volunteers to record their findings led by FW with Cecilia Ferguson (CF) as first aider, for up to 3 hours.

NOTE: Regarding Fife Volunteers weekend of 11th/12th November 2017. DL & Sue Morris (SM) will meet them at 10 am on 11th November for a briefing with Dallas Seawright (DS) and the Fife Volunteers. The plan is for as much as possible of the remainder of the Sitka spruce on our felling licence (44 trees) to be felled and cut up into logs in Area 1 and stacked by the ST path over the weekend by 8 or 9 Fife volunteers. Dallas Seawright is their leader and first aider (Head Fife Ranger).

Item 12) Anonymous donation received for a bat detector - Discussion regarding dusk bat walks in CW. (DL)

DL showed the committee members the bat detector (£100) that has been donated to the CWA. Bat walks will probably commence once the red squirrel hide is up and in operation.

Item 13) Update on possible event with 'The Walking Theatre' visit to CW in April 2018. (DL)

Joni Brown is trying to organise this event for CW for April 2018.

Item 14) Any other business & date for next committee meeting.

Three items were mentioned by DL. 1) Attendance of the Community Partnership Gathering 2017 Heritage at Gartocharn on 4th November to exhibit Cormonachan Woodlands with a stand for 2 hours has had to be cancelled by DL in view of LE health. 2) ASWC Shared Forester Meeting in Lochgilphead on 7th November has also had to be cancelled by DL for the same reason. 3) The Community Land Scotland meeting in Arrochar on 10th November will now be covered by DT instead of DL. In view of our Chair's illness it was decided not to have another committee meeting this side of the new year. If any matters arise during the next two months, they will be dealt with by e-mail or telephone. The next committee meeting will therefore be held in early 2018 at a date to be decided.

Meeting closed at 18.40 hrs.