



Cormonachan Woodlands Association
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Minutes

A Committee Meeting was held on Tuesday 16th May 2017 at 4.30 pm at Cruach House, Carrick Castle, Argyll, PA24 8AF

- 1) Liz Evans (LE) welcomed the committee members, Douglas Locke (DL), Sheron Hambly (SH), Jimmy Sim (JS) & Donald Kamsley (DK). Simon Garnett (SG) & David Thorpe (DT) General Manager of AOEC Trust Ltd. sent their apologies.
- 2) Approval of the Minutes of the last Committee Meeting held on 28th March 2017 were approved and proposed by SH & seconded by LE and signed by the Chair. There were no matters arising from the minutes.
- 3) Chair's Report - LE advised that the car park lease had now been signed by LE, JS & DL for the CWA and we were now awaiting a copy signed by the three Campbell brothers of Drimsynie Estate. FES were offered the wind fallen trees at the SW corner of CW but the contractor clearing the trees south of Cormonachan Burn did not want them. LE & DL had a meeting with DT at Ardroy regarding the relationship with CWA. Ardroy would replace the shed with a 10 x 12 foot shed by Jan's Hideaway as the current one is rotten. DT will schedule work in CW for SG & Lewis MacKay (LM) under guidance from CWA as to priorities required e.g. strimming / chainsaw work. Whilst Ardroy staff are working in CW, they will be under Ardroy insurance and not CWA's insurance. The wind fallen oaks will not be part of this work but under CWA's organisation. It was confirmed that the agreement with FES covers 58.9 ha from Cormonachan Burn to Lochwood in the north including the 'PAWS' area that was replanted by Forest Enterprise Scotland (FES). Simon Franks (SF), Tree & Woodland Adviser from the National Park has prepared a 10 year Management Plan for presentation to FES for future funding. This was now to be sent to FES after a final check

through the contents. The SRDP form has now been completed and has been signed by FES and posted to the SGRPID office in Oban. This is a Scottish Government area of funding per hectare for Rhododendron ponticum clearance by professional contractors. Angus Bevan (AB), an Associate of the Native Woods Coop has yet to survey CW and give some advice on managing the Plantation on Ancient Woodlands (PAWS) that is within Cormonachan. This is a project supported by the Woodland Trust and he will be spending two days surveying Cormonachan Woodlands and sending us a free report.

- 4) Treasurer's Report - JS advised the current bank balance was £2,799.55 including advance payments for the renewal of membership for 1st June 2017 to 31st May 2018. The 'Car Park Fund' is also included in the total that remains at £1,694.81. Out of the CP Fund, Drimsynie's solicitors will be paid the legal fees for the car park lease. DL has agreed to pay for all the car park work until the funding is received from the LandTrust (£2,367.00) and EB Scotland (£2,192.00) when he will be reimbursed. JS suggested that the financial year should be changed from ending 31st May to 31st March. This was agreed by the committee and will be put to the members for voting on at the AGM in June. JS said the accounts will be ready for the AGM in June and DL said the summary ones with the donated time will be too.
- 5) The Secretary reported that there were now 62 members for the year ending 31st May 2017 of which 1 was a Life Member, 45 were Full Members, 11 were Associates, 1 was a Young Person Member, 3 were Child Members (free) and there was 1 Corporate Member. So far 24 members had renewed their memberships for 2017/2018 and of these there were two additional Life Members. The website is kept up to date and Facebook as well, with regular news. The last Members' Update No 18 was sent out on 13th May 2017. DL advised, he had spent 708 hours working for CWA this year from 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017. One of our members has offered to pay for another Husqvarna 129C Strimmer (value £195.50) for CWA volunteers to use which is greatly appreciated since we have six trained strimmer operator members but only one strimmer at present. JS said that he had a strimmer too that he didn't use and the CWA would be welcome to have that one too - again much appreciated.
- 6) The Management Plan for the next ten years was covered in item 3) with the update about the provision of National Park's Management Plan for the CWA. It was agreed with Ardroy prior to the meeting and at the committee meeting that we should obtain quotations for the proposed paths in order to know what funding would be necessary to go ahead with this project. As planning permission would also be required, it takes a long time to plan a big project like this. Carrick Estate have given the CWA a short

length of pipe to be inserted into the ditch at the entrance to CW at the Lochwood end that will make it easier to enter and leave the woodlands.

- 7) Car park development - DL advised that the Formal Offer of Funding from the LandTrust (SLCF - North Ayrshire Council) for £2,367.00 has now been received however following the signing of the car park lease, we are now waiting for a letter from the LandTrust authorising us to proceed with the work. This is due any time now and hopefully the work will commence in May 2017. The car park extension funding is £6,253.81. The costs - the car park work (Drimsynie) £3,600.00; Interpretation sign (Shelley Signs) approx. £945.00; 2 Gates (Woodford Timber) £325.43 and a short length of wire fencing (donated) and posts at little cost, total cost about £4,870.43. Then there will be the legal costs for the car park lease that we have taken over from the Lochgoil Community Trust of which the final figure is not yet known but likely to be close to £1,000. Hopefully we will have a small contingency fund left after all costs have been paid.
- 8) The CWA Interpretation Sign panel that is to be located in the car park on a lectern was then discussed with a draft layout suggested by DL. Stephen Gillen (FES) had prepared a new map of CW with proposed new paths added. DL explained that the panel had to be designed to cover its lifetime use of about 20 years. The committee members made a few suggestions and these would be taken into account and amendments forwarded to the committee for approval. Once approved the draft layout will be sent to the graphic designer for draft artwork to be prepared. The funders require their logos on the sign.
- 9) Update on Annual Maintenance Plan - Following having formal agreement to carry out our annual maintenance plan agreed with FES for 2017/18, work is progressing well after the first two Volunteers Days this year. The next being Sunday 21st May when we hope to have a good turnout of volunteer members to achieve more tasks.
- 10) Report on Volunteers Day on 22nd April 2017 from 10.00 to 16.00 hrs. Four volunteers helped in the morning with erecting an oak bench at the NW corner of CW; chainsawing up a tree that had been blown down by the wind over the NW path and strimming the path between Jan's Hideaway and the car park. In the afternoon, two volunteers from the morning continued and with two others erected another oak bench at the car park. The six volunteers were thanked on the day and by e-mail afterwards.
- 11) The next Volunteers Day will be on Sunday 21st May 2017 from 13.00 to 16.00 hrs. At the time of the meeting, six volunteer members had indicated they would be helping out. It was hoped that others would also say if they could attend too.

- 12) Training & Equipment Funding for 2017/2018. Two members had asked for Quad Bike Training however this is not training generally offered for funding. The FCS require NPTC Training for their own staff and that course would have to be taken by those requiring training to be able to volunteer using a quad bike in CW. Training that is fundable is for the clearance of *Rhododendron ponticum* and we will be applying for a training course or courses in the autumn. Another training course that we believe will be free to the CWA as members of the Argyll Small Woods Cooperative (ASWC) is a Mapping Software Course and we have indicated that the CWA would like two places when it becomes available. On 3rd November 2017 there will be a Plantlife Course in CW run by Ardroy at which CWA members can attend. Equipment required that should be grantable would be three footbaths at the currently used three entrances to CW and more Red Squirrel Feeders. We currently have three feeders in operation with feed supplied by Ardroy. LE suggested that CWA should have signs saying "Cormonachan Community Woodlands managed by Cormonachan Woodlands Association" at the south end by Cormonachan Burn and at the north end by Lochwood. CW now runs for one and a half miles on the west side of the road. A further sign opposite the Lower Cormonachan large lay by with the gate should say the same with "No Cutting Trees or Fires" added.
- 13) CWA Risk Assessments - LE asked if DK would look at the risk assessments we have and see if they could be standardised in format. DL to send DK the files for assessment.
- 14) Sculpture Trail - The committee were shown the tackle that has been made and acquired for the Totem Pole. The 3 stays were donated to the CWA by Scotia Marine in Linwood. The totem pole area is due for clearance of brash at the next volunteers day. Currently there are four sculptures in place and the three that are interactive are being used by visitors to CW.
- 15) Future Plans - Ardroy will be working with archaeologist on the old village of Upper Cormonachan. Interpretation boards to be placed around the woodlands. A leaflet to be prepared on CW. Wild life hide to be planned to view red squirrels with information, feeders, etc. - This will require a suitable location, funding and a project leader. Oak trees project - To locate and survey trees; improve habitat environment and take out over shading trees - Project leader required. *Rhododendron ponticum* removal 5 year plan - Project leader required. Detailed mapping of the woodlands using the compartment map prepared by LL&T NPA - training in autumn 2017 through ASWC for use of mapping software.
- 16) The date for the next committee meeting will be on the same date as the AGM in June 2017 at a date to be confirmed for the meeting room venue at Carrick Estate Lodge, Carrick Castle and requested as 20th June 2017 at 7 pm subject to confirmation.

17) Any other business - 1) The importance of having a sign opposite the Lower Cormonachan entrance was mentioned by LE & DL as another member reported that trees were being cut down with a chainsaw in CW for a camp fire. The culprits were visited and the situation that they were not allowed to cut down CW trees was explained. LL&T NPA were informed and FCS advised, who said in future anyone seeing such an activity should call the Police on 101 immediately. 2) Gala Day will be on 29th July 2017 and will be attended by CWA with its 6 m x 3 m marquee. Volunteers required. 3) DL suggested the CWA should have CWA bone china mugs for sale. These can be purchased for £3.30 each with a minimum quantity of 72 plus the cost of the screen print and £35.00 for our green colour print. These could be sold with a good profit margin at around £6.00 each. The CWA logo would go around the mug with 'Explore, Discover, Learn' below it. There would be no shelf-life problem and quantity manageable to sell within a couple of years. LE suggested plastic water bottles and SH suggested key rings. Other suggestions welcome.

The meeting closed at 18.30 hrs