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## Minutes

A Committee Meeting was held on Tuesday 20th September 2016 at 4.30 pm at Cruach House, Carrick Castle, Argyll, PA24 8AF

- 1) Liz Evans (LE) welcomed the committee members, Douglas Locke (DL), Simon Garnett (SG) & Donald Kamsley (DK). Jimmy Sim (JS) & Sheron Hambly sent their apologies. David Robertson (DR) FES was in attendance. DK was co-opted on to the committee following Rowan Fraser's (RF) resignation. JS took over as Treasurer from RF.
- 2) Approval of the Minutes of the last Committee Meeting held on 4th July 2016 were approved and proposed by LE & seconded by SG and signed by the Chair. Matters arising from the last meeting had either been dealt with or are mentioned in the points that follow.
- 3) Chair's Report - LE advised that steady progress was being made by the Association and all is covered under various headings. The membership since the last committee meeting had risen by thirteen now standing at forty eight members. The Loch Goil Gala Day event was successful again with a net total of £165.35 raised which included three new members signing up (£30) and £135.35 added to the Car Park Fund through sales, competition entries and donations; the FCS Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has still not been agreed; Community Services returned again to clear more rhododendron from the Lochwood entrance to Cormonachan Woodlands (CW) to improve the sight lines to the entrance on the road on 4th August; Planning Permission had been granted by LL&TNP for the car park expansion; Friends of Loch Lomond gave the Car Park Fund a grant of £500; Applications had been made to two funders for funding the car park; an application has been made to FCS Community Fund for First Aid Training for interested

members; a meeting had been held with LL&TNP in C W with regard to help in the production of a Management Plan for CW with their assistance and funding for training (chainsaw and trimmers), rhododendron clearance & eradication of Japanese knotweed offering use of injector on loan; potentially dangerous trees over the path had been felled or de-limbed by FCS; LE & DL had attended 'A Wood of Our Own' event organised by the Community Woodlands Association on Mull and gave a presentation to their members on CW; LE & DL will be attending the 'other' CWA's Conference on 2nd/3rd October in Forres and finally all those who helped out at Gala Day and have done voluntary work for the CWA were thanked.

- 4) Treasurer's Report - JS, not in attendance, had advised the bank balance was £1,901.61 of which £1,395.35 was for the Car Park Fund and £506.26 was money for running the Association from membership subscriptions.
- 5) The Secretary reported that there were now 48 members of which 39 were Full Members, 4 were Associates, 1 was a Young Person Member, 3 were Child Members (free) and there was 1 Corporate Member. Much of his work apart from administration was applying for funding which follows in item 7). The website is kept up to date and Facebook as well with 74 followers.
- 6) David Robertson (DR) of Forest Enterprise Scotland (FES) gave the committee an update on the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that both the Ardroy Trust and CWA Committee had agreed to in MoU v8 with minor typographical errors required for amendment. DL & LE who had talked to Craig Miller, the FES Communities & Rural Development Coordinator at the AWOO event on Mull said that he no longer had any issues with the MoU and that he would ask DR to progress this long running agreement issue and apologised to us saying that we shouldn't have had to wait so long for an agreement that commenced nineteen months ago in March 2015. Having previously agreed the extended area of Cormonachan Woodlands from the Lochwood end to the Cormonachan Burn including Upper Cormonachan, the committee were shocked when DR announced that FES had now decided not to allow CWA & Ardroy to extend the area and that they would only allow the original area to be in the MoU with the area outlined in red excluded too. That area excluded had already been agreed when the extended area was previously agreed. Despite all that was said by the committee members, DR was adamant that the only area being offered now was the small area with the paths and the committee were not at all happy with this situation. The CWA/Ardroy were to be asked to prove they could manage the small area first including the removal of all the rhododendron. It was pointed out that this area had been managed by Ardroy since 1998 when the first lease was acquired for CW and

that 2.5 km of paths had been constructed and maintained over the last 18 years with CWA working in conjunction since February 2015 and that the FES under planted Sitka spruce had been cleared in the Atlantic oak & hazel woodlands in many areas to try and bring back the Atlantic oak woodlands to their original ancient state, also, rhododendron had been cleared in many areas even though there was still a large infestation still to clear at the north end. FES had no money to clear this infestation and CWA had already been in negotiation with LL&TNP to obtain funding for the future. All the work done in CW has been done by volunteers and in the last year alone, over £10,000 worth of CWA volunteering time based on FCS calculations had been freely offered to CW. DR said that FES was only interested in the management of the woodlands and not in the educational or recreational aspects of CWA & Ardroy's work. The committee members felt this was a complete turnaround of the previous land area agreement reached and were not at all happy with this outcome and would appeal to the higher authorities in Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS). After explaining many reasons why CWA/Ardroy wanted the full area, including that we already had applied for grants based on the enlarged area boundary and that we would be the only community organisation that would be able to restore Upper Cormonachan old village with grants that FCS were unable to do, DK suggested to DR that perhaps FES could still grant CWA/Ardroy the full area with a restriction that we would take over the whole area but not work in the Upper Cormonachan area for a period of say up to three years. The priorities of CWA were to enlarge the car park and to get funding for which we are reliant on having the full area previously agreed. DR said that as a huge amount of time had been spent on this subject and we were not in agreement, he would put in writing the FES offer and conditions and if we were not satisfied with them then we would have to make an appeal to FCS. At this point DR left the meeting so that the committee could discuss this very unexpected outcome. The committee agreed that we require the full area that we understood had been agreed and that we were expecting to sign the MoU following this meeting with DR of FES. It was agreed that if we are not offered the enlarged area of CW that we believed had been agreed, we would definitely make an appeal.

- 7) Car park development - DL advised that LL&TNP planning permission approval was received on 18th August 2016. FOLLAT had given £500 to the Car Park Fund and advised the CWA to apply for a further £500 grant which has been done to go towards the proposed car park in September or October 2016. Members donations and money received from the Open Day & Gala Day events and other donations have totalled £1,395.35 so far. A PayPal "Donate" button was added to the CWA website cross

referenced from the CWA Facebook page. CWA has applied to the Land Trust and Aqiva for funding that are both based on the full CW area previously agreed with FES and are waiting to hear if funding may be agreed. There is still the issue of Loch Goil Community Trust's outstanding debt of £690.00 with Drimsynie's solicitors that remains a problem as work cannot proceed until their debt is paid. *(Action LE, JS, SH & DL)*

- 8) The CWA Annual Maintenance Plan for the year ahead to 31st March 2017 was time-tabled as far as could be at the meeting. SG advised that maintenance work had been started on Jan's Hideaway. See item 11) for future volunteer dates. LL&TNP to be contacted see if CWA can have a partner's agreement in order to have LL volunteers help at CW. *(Action LE, DL & SG)*
- 9) The sub-group of LE & SG will arrange a meeting with regard to a survey of CW including the hazel & lichens in October. *(Action LE & SG)*
- 10) Tasks to be undertaken on next Volunteers Day on 24th September 2016 from 10 am to 1 pm are to put up the tenth way marker post in the top fir tree area of the woodlands, repair the path in the top NW area of the path where a tree was blown over away from the path taking part of the path and general path clearance of long grass & rushes. *(Action LE & DL)*.
- 11) Future Volunteer Days: The next programmed will be the Annual Volunteers Weekend on Saturday 25th and Sunday 16th October 2016 from 10 am to 12.30 pm and 1 pm to 4 pm on both days. The Fife Ranger Volunteers will be present again on both days felling under planted Sitka spruce trees at the top of the Squirrel Trail. CWA volunteers tasks will include clearing the extended car park area, path clearance, setting up another oak bench and no doubt whatever else needs doing to maintain CW.
- 12) LL&TNP Community Grant - LE is now putting together an application for various training funding from LL&TNP for 2 members who want chainsaw courses (5 day course + 1 day assessment for certificate at a cost of £800 each) and for a 6 person Trimmer/Strimmer course (1 day £400 for 6 people plus £35 per person for Lantra Registration). We have four places booked and need two more volunteers to come forward for the course to run once we have the funding. All members who take these courses will be obliged to do a certain amount of volunteering in CW as a result of CWA getting grant funding. *(Action LE)*

FCS Community Grant - This application has already be made to FCS. We currently have four booked for the One Day First Aid course over two evenings and want two more members to come forward for this course. We have also applied for two members to go on a Two Day First Aid course which is more advanced and are looking for volunteer members to attend this course as well. *(Action DL)*

- 13) CWA Risk Assessments (RA) for Volunteers Days have been provided to CWA by LL&TNP and LE has shown these to the committee. These RA's have to be available at all Volunteers Days. *(Action LE)*
- 14) Changing the Mission Statement was agreed at the meeting from "Come in and Enjoy" to "Explore, Discover, Learn". This was a suggestion by one of our members Matt Wynne for which he is thanked. *(Action DL)*
- 15) Sculpture Update - At the top of the south west corner of the Squirrel Trail a large Sitka spruce has been topped (series of photos are on Facebook) to eventually make a Totem Pole - The cost of topping the tree was paid for by LE & DL however the tree surgeon donated the £50 he got for the job to the Car Park Fund. The next stage in preparing the Totem Pole to completion requires some ideas for the design which SG is considering. SG has still to repair the 'Spider's Web' at the top of the path junction above Jan's Hideway. DL will look at the stones/rocks in the old collapsed stone wall in the fir tree area to turn into a stone sculpture but will need some help removing them first. *(Action SG & DL)*
- 16) The next Committee Meeting date will not be set until we have a letter from DR of FES as we will need to see if they come up with a change of views following this meeting.

The meeting closed at 19.00 hrs.