



Cormonachan Woodlands Association
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Minutes

A Committee Meeting was held on Tuesday, 26th November 2015 at 4.30 pm at Cruach House, Carrick Castle, Argyll, PA24 8AF

- 1) Liz Evans (LE) welcomed the committee members, Marion McCune (MM), Douglas Locke (DL), Rowan Fraser (RF) and Simon Garnett (SG). David Robertson (DR), of FCS, was present as a visitor. Apologies were received from Jimmy Sim (JS).
- 2) Approval of the Minutes of the last Committee Meeting held on 29th September 2015 were approved and proposed by MM & seconded by RF and signed. The follow ups are in the minutes.
- 3) Liz Evans introduced David Robertson to the committee members who is the Recreation Manager for Forestry Commission Scotland for our area and is dealing with our Association and its permission to manage Cormonachan Woodlands. A discussion was held about the best options for the Association in light of a new document that has just been released by FCS called 'Working with Communities: A Guide.' DR felt it was important that he attend our committee meeting to explain the document. As it had only been received by the Secretary 30 minutes prior to the meeting, only one copy was available but DR also had a copy that he brought with him so DR explained a summary of its contents and suggested the right way forward for our Association. It was agreed by the committee members that a 'Management Agreement' was best suited to us at this point in time and that this agreement should last for ten years rather than having a Lease that would commit the Association to more commitment and expense. DR said that the Agreement could be extended after the ten year period or a Lease could be negotiated or even the woodlands purchased if we so wished at a later date. The option of a ten year Management Agreement was agreed to be the most suitable way forward at the present time and

was voted to proceed based on the map that had been prepared by FCS. DR would now put this forward to the Area Land Manager of FCS, Gordon Archibald and the Management Plan that had already been discussed would be used as a base for agreement. Within the existing plan discussed, those items that had been marked in blue had FCS permission for CWA to carry out those tasks without formal agreement being current or in place/approved. AOEC Trust Ltd (Ardroy) must send insurance certificates to FCS annually. DR was thanked for attending the meeting that will help move the agreement process forward. (*Action DL to look up any time restrictions on Rural Development Fund.*)

Report by the Chair on the current position of the Cormonachan Woodlands Association (CW).

A) The current Agreement dated 6th October 2015 by e-mail from DR of FCS that have immediate approval in the draft Agreement are:- Removal and Burning of Rhododendron; Removal of small Sitka spruce (less than 10cm dbh), burning and clearing of previously felled conifers maintenance of existing paths; maintenance of Jan's Hideaway, toilet & sheds & habitat survey of all of Cormonachan Woodlands. Notes: The woodlands will not be used as an outside toilet. A compost toilet is on site and is managed by CWA. Burning - CWA & Ardroy shall not, and shall not permit any other party, (other than as provided for in this paragraph) to light a fire in the woodlands without providing risk assessment to and obtaining written permission from FCS prior to such fires being lit. The FCS shall not grant written permission to light a fire during periods in which it considers there to be a high risk of fire. The months of March, April, May and June shall be deemed to be periods of a high risk of fire. The FCS shall notify CWA/Ardroy of any such additional periods. CWA/Ardroy may light a fire in the designated camp fire site in the woodlands without obtaining the FCS's prior written consent except during any period in which there is a high risk of fire.

B) The volunteers days including the weekend of 24th/25th October were very successful. 27 LL&TNP Rangers spent 1 3/4 hours clearing the paths in CW on 21st October and were thanked as were the 7 Fife volunteers who worked clearing Sitka spruce trees over 24th/25th October weekend and the 15 day member volunteers who cleared the 7 years of undergrowth from the CW plantation on 24th and cleared culverts and ditches on 25th October. The Fife volunteers said they would come back again in the spring and more member volunteer days are being programmed for a day a month from February 2016 onwards.

C) It is intended to have some training days in the spring if CWA can get some funding. Kevin to be approached with RF. (*Action LE*)

D) LE & DL attended a workshop on Lichens in Glenbranter on 15th October which was very useful in relation to those at CW.

E) LE & DL attended a RSPB meeting at LL&TNP headquarters in Balloch in the afternoon of 26th November prior to the committee meeting attended by about 10 managers from RSPB, National Park & Plant Life to discuss the Rhododendron ponticum problem in Atlantic oak woodlands. LE gave a presentation to share a community group's views on the problem which was well received. CWA will be kept informed as a very large grant of around £8 million will be sought to clear Rhododendron in the south and west of Scotland.

- 4) Report on the bank account and accounts for CW. RF advised that the bank balance was £1,554.18. This balance included £905.04 - the grant received from the FCS Community Fund that has to be paid to DL who funded the purchase of the tools until the grant was received. So payments made as of the meeting date included £905.04 to DL and £15.00 for two books on Atlantic Hazels and Lichens as reference books for the CWA. DL advised that he was making a donation of £413.00 to CWA as he had approval from an organisation he had been helping to be able to give their closing balance to a charity of his choice - CWA. It was agreed at the meeting that part of this money would go to purchasing a 3m x 6m foldaway marquee with weights so that CWA could attend events with its own marquee, the cost of which was £133.98. After these payments and receipts, the balance now stands at £913.16.
- 5) Secretary's report including an update on the website. DL reported that he was keeping the website up to date and that the Latest News was updated regularly. The membership remains at 34 members, 26 are Full Members; 4 are Associates; 1 is a Corporate and 3 are free Child Members providing an income of £330.00 to date. The latest fifth & sixth Members' Updates had been sent out to members by e-mail on 13th & 27th October 2015 and a further one will be sent out at the beginning of December. The Minutes and Members Updates are viewable on the CW History page. CW Facebook has been kept up to date by DL.
- 6) A report on grant funding for volunteers tools, etc. The first grant had been successful and £905.04 worth of tools, etc. had been purchased and these are being kept under lock in Jan's Hideaway and in the shed close by. A further grant for more tools has been applied for and DL was able to report that the application had been accepted by FCS for a further £748.00 at 100% grant. FCS said they would like to see CWA add some private funding in future. See item 12) for further information on private funding.
- 7) Car park development - JS e-mailed advising he had chased up Elizabeth Bain (EB) for the plans and copy lease for the Cormonachan Woodlands car park again and would do so again at the beginning of December. (*JS to follow up.*)
- 8) JS had previously advised that he had requested £3K from enTrust over the next two years through the Loch Goil Community

Council as grants for community projects such as our future car park project. This is now administered by EB Scotland Ltd. for the Scottish Landfill Communities Fund. JS has sent DL the application forms and said that it has to be done through Loch Goil Community Council as they have a special arrangement. Currently we are unaware of what we can apply for or the amount we can apply for and JS suggests we wait until the FCS agreements are in place before taking this forward. In the meantime the committee would like to have answers to the above questions. (*Action JS*)

- 9) C W Management Plan - This is now in the hands of FCS.
- 10) C W Maintenance Plan for 2016 - A plan of what is to be achieved in 2016 will have to be worked out between Ardroy and CWA. (*Action LE & SG*)
- 11) Future Volunteers Days - It was agreed that shorter days but more of them would be best starting in February 2016. A number of forward dates would be prepared and advised to members.
- 12) Donations to Cormonachan Woodlands Association by the committee members, its members and others. These below figures are updated from commencement to 14th November 2015:-
 - A) By LE & DL
Total expenditure to date as donations = £153.70
Total number of hours donated = 458 hours
 - B) By Ardroy Staff & Committee Members, Members & Others
Number of hours donated excl. specialist hours = 291.25 hours
Number of Chainsaw hours donated = 11 hours
Number of Strimmer hours donated = 8.75 hours
Number of Other Specialist hours = 19 hours
Total number of hours donated = 330 hours
Number of vehicle hours donated = 17 hours
Total donations = £387.00
All to keep up hours worked for CWA.
FCS have worked out the value of the above to CWA for the current financial year from April 2015 to 14th November 2015 as follows:-
 - A) above as approx. £3,000
 - B) above as approx. £ 830 for specialist hours
& approx. £1,614 for other hoursDonations to 14th November 2015 - £387
Total 'in-kind' value = approx. £5,444.
- 13) The FCS have no objection to CWA having natural sculptures in the woodlands. DL explained that the sculptures would have to be made from stone, wood or living/etc. DL showed the committee the FCS Frank Bruce Sculpture Trail leaflet with photographs at Feshiebridge, near Aviemore as an example.
- 14) Other business – SG said Ardroy may be able to help with red squirrel feeders in CW. (*Action SG*)
(*All items in italics for following up*).

The meeting closed at 18.30 hrs.