



# Cormonachan Woodlands

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## Minutes

A Board Meeting was held on Tuesday 11th May 2021 at 2 pm  
by Zoom online.

- 1) **Welcome to our Board Members & any apologies.**  
Those in attendance were Alastair Moodie (AM), Douglas Locke (DL), Jimmy Sim (JS), Don Kamsley (DK), Scott Black (SB) & Richard Hall (RH). Frances Walker (FW) sent her apologies.
- 2) **Approval of the Minutes of the last Committee Meeting held on 20th April 2021.**  
The minutes were approved by RH, seconded by AM and will be signed later by AM.
- 3) **Chair's Report including approval for CCW Business Plan an updates on progress of application to be made by 22nd May 2021 to National Lottery Heritage Fund for funding for the 'Upper Cormonachan Paths Project'.**  
AM gave his Chair's report that was mainly about applying for National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) for the Upper Cormonachan Paths Project. DL said that he had received a re-quote from McGowan's for the construction costs from £269,570.00 to £210,955.55 + VAT, a total of £253,146.66. AM suggested that we look at not constructing the car park and access up to the Cormonachan Falls initially to keep the cost down on the funding application (which elements DL said

amounted to £76,558.80 inc. VAT) and have access initially just by paths from the current car park. DL said that this was not a feasible solution as CCW had to apply for the full funding to meet the National Park's planning approval. The other board members agreed that we should try to obtain the full funding for the whole project.

AM explained that it had been made clear that the Heritage Fund will not simply pay for the capital costs of construction. It must be a comprehensive heritage project that could include, for example, employing a project officer. DL and RH were not convinced that this was necessary.

AM proposed that we change the name of the project to The Cormonachan Community Woodlands Heritage Project because it was obvious from previous correspondence that the focus must be on developing a heritage package. DK supported this.

As part of the Heritage Project AM was keen to recruit volunteer guides who would receive training not only from the archaeologist about the Medieval Settlement but also about the identification of trees and other plant species that are features of the woodlands (possibly from PlantLife). The Heritage Fund require the primary outcome of widening the range of individuals and groups who will visit Cormonachan and inclusion is also emphasised. We hoped that Ardroy OEC would send groups of children and other disadvantaged groups again to the woodlands after the Covid-19 pandemic. DL said that Raleigh International had recently expressed great interest in bringing groups of young people to do voluntary work for two-week periods.

AM stated that applications for the high-level awards above £250,000 are very competitive and a lot of work was still needed to have a full application ready if the Expression of Interest was received positively by the funders.

After further discussion it was agreed to aim for the medium level funding up to a maximum of £250,000. This option was possible as a result of the substantial reduction in the contractor's quotation, along with the £17,200 already raised locally. The aim was to have the construction of paths etc carried out this autumn and winter.

AM said that he would continue with finishing the Business Plan that had already been given to the directors and approved subject to some additions still to be completed. He said he would work on the full application for funding up to £250,000 and would consult with DL. AM said that he had been in touch with Jon Hollingdale, CEO of Community Woodlands Association for funding advice and ACT. DL said that he would call two of his contacts for further advice -

Graeme Auty in the heritage funding office at the National Park and with Craig Millar, Community Officer at Scottish Forestry as he had said in the past that he was willing to speak to the NLHF regarding supporting our application for funding.

AM questioned the fact that we only had one quotation. DL said that five companies had been asked to quote but only one was prepared to do such a comprehensive detailed quotation which took about five days work to prepare following two initial visits by McGowan's. DL had already prepared a paper on this subject. AM stressed that NLHF was looking for long-term results that generally helped a range of people.

The Cooperative Bank's mandate to add Richard Hall as a signatory and remove Scott Back as a signatory was passed by the directors. The mandate was signed by the current signatories and the Company Secretary will post this to the bank.

4) **Treasurer's Report including bank account update and draft accounts for 2020/2021 and progress with changeover of Treasurer to RH.**

JS advised that the bank balance was £14,103.34 with three cheques totalling £93.83 still to be debited leaving a balance of £14,009.51. JS said that the accounts as sent out to the board directors by e-mail had been sent to the auditor, George Connell (GC) for checking and verifying. He said he will be meeting GC next week to clarify any points raised. Two had been identified, one was the transfer of the bank balance and the other was the transfer of the assets from Cormonachan Woodlands Association (CWA) to Cormonachan Community Woodlands Ltd (CCW). DL said that the board directors had been sent by e-mail the Supplementary Information to the Formal Accounts that showed the assets and JS had passed that information on to the auditor. These were approved at the meeting.

5) **Secretary's Report including an update on donations received to date for the "Upper Cormonachan Paths Project Fund"; donations received in the Red Squirrel Hide; donations received in the Donations Post and from 'easyfundraising' and the 'People Counter' April visitor numbers. Website and Facebook updates. Update on Raleigh International's volunteer agreement. An update on progress on the local contract to clear the CCW Rhododendron ponticum and a future grant application to be made to clear the remainder in the woodlands.**

DL said the Lease with Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) has now been sent for registration costing £44.00 and we will receive a copy of it in due course.

Upper Cormonachan Paths Project Fund = £17,277.83 that includes £4,000 held by Lochgoil Community Trust.

Red Squirrel Hide donations to date is currently -£5.92. with one 12.5 kg bag in stock. The donation box has raised £408.27 to date since it was installed on 30th March 2018 with peanuts costing £414.19.

Donations Post = £34.54. These donations are for the maintenance of the woodlands.

easyfundraising = £114.84 with 15 supporters. We are grateful to those using this service regularly now.

People Counter for April 358 (12 pd). Previous months - March 329 (average 11 pd); February 265 (average 9 pd); January 185 (average 6 pd); December 2020, 272 (9 pd); November 2020, 519 (17 pd) & October 2020 1,225 (40 pd). A total of 3,153 visitors over the 7-month winter period.

Rhododendron ponticum local paid contract - 322 hours completed, 11 hrs reserved for spraying & plugging pesticide TD has sprayed Cormonachan Burn area (6 hrs) and plugged roots (6 hours) leaving 11 hrs to complete the contract. This is being carried out this week.

We are still awaiting new funding to apply for Phase 2 for clearing the rest of the Rhododendron ponticum from NPA.

Gabriel Hemming visited the woodlands on 2nd May. He is writing a book on The Forests of Scotland to be published by Bloomsbury Wildlife and CCW is to be included in it.

CCW has been approved to be included in the Argyll Community Lottery. CCW will receive 50p for every £1 ticket purchased. The top prize is £25,000 per month.

DL has revised the CCW Membership Form and Dennis Bolt (DB) has made an amendment to be approved at the meeting. This will reduce the forms to new members to one form instead of two. It also adds in Gift Aid if the board wish to proceed with the work involved in applying for the gift aid. This was approved at the meeting.

Jonathan Taylor, a researcher is working on a commissioned BBC Scotland factual entertainment series. In the programme, two competing teams of woodworkers will travel to forests across Scotland and chop down a sustainable (one already approved to be felled) tree - building a structure or item which commemorates the local area our teams find themselves in.

What they piece together will be assessed by an expert hailing from that area, judging the technical skill and relevance to the brief. Their aim with the show is to produce

something of great warmth which is both fun and informative. Alongside the competition element, they want to celebrate the craft of woodwork and the vital work of caring for our forests. He's been charged with finding appropriate locations that have on-going and approved felling projects. The programme is to go ahead in September 2021. DL has advised that CCW has a felling licence due to be active in July but also has a 5m<sup>3</sup> per quarter allowance for felling trees. DL said that CCW would welcome a shelter or two being built in other parts of the woodlands and has sent some photos of Sitka spruce that could be felled near the top Squirrel Trail path. DL will keep the board members updated with any progress on this. Approved if offered. Raleigh International were very impressed with Cormonachan Woodlands and said they wished to go ahead using the woodlands for their volunteers and the first possible period would be in July 2021. Website up to date and Facebook as well with 285 people liking the page, 310 following and 365 people reached this last month. FLS advised the diseased Larch at the south west corner of CCW above the Settlement has been felled. The timber will be removed in three months time. DL prepared a draft of 'Where to go locally in Loch Goil' for LGH & CC. This was forwarded to Tim King (LCT) who has approved it and it is now on display in waterproof A5 holders in the CCW car park and in the Red Squirrel Hide in the woodlands. This information was sent to The Wee Goil, Community Website and to the marketing manager at Argyll Holidays who are also displaying our CCW leaflets in the reception area.

6) **Report provided by the Membership Secretary on current membership to date will be given.**

The current membership totals 93 members (69 full, 16 associates, 2 corporate, 2 associate corporate & 7 life members) and 6 applicant members (4 full, 1 associate & 1 corporate). There are 17 full members, 5 associate members & 1 corporate member shown as not yet having paid their subscriptions for 2021/2022. 6 full member applicants, one associate applicant and 1 corporate applicant have not sent in their membership forms. We have so far received £825 including £50 for a new corporate application in subscriptions.

DB will send out reminders after the board meeting to all those who haven't yet paid that totals in subscriptions of £225.00. CCW needs around £1,000 per annual for running

expenses which would meet this target if all members and member applicants pay up that would total £1,050.00.

- 7) **Approval of any new member applications.**  
One new member Bruce Morrison to approve.  
Other applicant members not having sent in their forms will only be confirmed as members once they have completed their forms.
  
- 8) **Report by the Volunteers Leader on the Volunteers Days of 25th & 30th April and 1st May and the tasks to be undertaken on 28th & 29th May and 4th June 2021.**  
DL read out FW's Volunteers Report in her absence. Friday the 30<sup>th</sup> of April was a lovely sunny day, there were six of us including two national park volunteers. Team one Richard, Franca, Tom and Mary cleared brash and logs from the path site, working further along from last time. As the before and after photos showed there was a massive amount shifted. Team two, Frances and Douglas painted the floors of the contemplation shelter and the squirrel hide. In the afternoon we all cut back the newly growing bracken and pulled up loads of self-seeded Sitka spruce from around the recently planted trees from behind the contemplation shelter and along the top of the Squirrel Trail.  
Saturday five volunteers. Team one, Frances and Mary applied a second coat of paint to both the contemplation shelter floor and the squirrel hide. Also, we cut back the newly grown bracken from the totem pole area around the seating and planted a few Rowan trees close to the path. Team two, Tuk and Calum hung new bunting flags on the totem pole, helped by Douglas. Total volunteer hours for the weekend were 42.  
Next volunteering weekend will be strimming paths and more path clearing and painting, also the picnic tables and chairs could do with a scrub up.
  
- 9) **Update on the 'Upper Cormonachan Paths Project', including contractor's update. Update on National Park's planning approval of conditions and the current position on availability of grant applications including the AECS grant (SRDP) possibility that closes on 30th June 2021.**  
Most of the updates on this item were covered either in the Chair's Report or in the Secretary's Report. It was decided to proceed with the funding application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund for an amount up to £250,000 where a full application would have to be made by 12 noon on 28th May 2021. AM said he would work with DL to achieve this.

DL said three new funds have just opened up this week:- Paths for All - up to £1,500; Tesco Bags of Help - up to £1,500; Co-op Local Communities Fund - apply now for funding from October 2021 for a year. Each has to have a good reason for applying for funding. DL suggested funding application to Paths for All for chain saw training as we are currently lacking enough chainsaw operator members with only two current members available at present.

- 10) **Date for the AGM to include Director's reports (Chair, Secretary & Treasurer), approval of the Articles of Association to be submitted to Companies House, the Board's recommendation on membership subscriptions for 2022/2023 and election of all Directors. The venue is to be decided or whether to be held by Zoom?**

The AGM will be on Wednesday 9th June 2021 at 7 pm by Zoom.

- 11) **Any other Business?**

AM suggested that we could do more to engage with the CCW members, not only at the AGM business meeting. The general consensus was that this would not get attendance. DL said in the past the CWA had had Open Days but they were not well attended. JS said that Gala Day was well attended and useful.

- 13) **Date of next committee meeting?**

The next Board Meeting will be held on Tuesday 8th June 2021 at 2 pm by Zoom.

The meeting closed at 4.15 pm