



Cormonachan Community Woodlands Ltd.
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Minutes

A Board Meeting was held on Tuesday 19th January 2021
at 2 pm by Zoom

- 1) A welcome was given to our Board Members by the Chair. Those in attendance: Alastair Moodie (AM), Douglas Locke (DL), Jimmy Sim (JS); Don Kamsley (DK), Frances Walker (FW) & Scott Black (SB).
- 2) Approval of the Minutes of the last Committee Meeting held on 8th December 2020. Proposed by JS & seconded by DK. The minutes will be signed when Covid-19 Pandemic regulations permit.
- 3) Chair's Report including an update on progress made to date with the preparation of the draft revised Memorandum & Articles of Association to put to OSCR.
AM asked the directors if they approved the new Articles of Association that had been sent out to them prior to the meeting. These were voted on and unanimously approved to now be approved by OSCR and later by the membership at an EGM. DL said that he would pass these on to the Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) solicitors as these were required to be added to the lease for Cormonachan Woodlands.
AM also asked for the Privacy Policy provided to be voted on and this was unanimously approved. DL said that this would now be added to the CCW website.

AM said that he had spoken to James Fraser, Chair of AOEC Trust Ltd (Ardroy OEC) with regard to current and future membership and that JF said they hadn't joined CCW for 2020-2021 due to having to save money because of being closed for the foreseeable future as a result of Covid-19 but would hope to join 2021-2022. AM said they if it was just a question of money then perhaps CCW could help and DL offered to contribute £20 towards Ardroy's corporate membership if it would help.

AM also said that he had spoken to Jon Hollingdale (JH), CEO of the Community Woodlands Association of which the CCW was a member. He told JH that he had revised the Articles of Association to meet OSCR's requirements, as part of our application for charitable status. DL had said that the Articles were required also as part of the lease with FLS. AM asked JH about aspects of the draft lease that concerned him. JH agreed that some points needed clarification. JH agreed with AM that we would not be exempt from VAT as a charity but would be able to claim Gift Aid on donations."

4) **Treasurer's Report including bank account update.**

JS confirmed that he had given formal notice to retire from the board and as Treasurer at the next AGM (expected to be in May 2021) and that he would help a new Treasurer into the position. He said that now that all the work had been completed with Companies House and the Co-operative Bank, he now spent only an hour a week doing the work and that at membership renewal time about two hours a week. He had also arranged for an accountant, George Connell, to independently audit the CCW accounts that would meet the legal requirements.

The bank balance stood at £13,609.10 with one payment cheque not yet cashed for £30.00 and two cheques received by the Secretary not yet paid in for £20.00 (donation) and £250.00 (a Life Membership). The balance in hand will therefore be £13,849.10.

5) **Secretary's Report including an update on a Forestry and Land Scotland Lease for Cormonachan Community Woodlands Ltd. 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.'**

An update on progress on the local contract to clear the CCW Rhododendron ponticum and the 'People Counter' December visitors numbers. An update on tree planting.

DL had sent out the revised draft lease prior to the meeting for discussion following amendments made by our volunteer solicitor, Jan Fagan, DL and Lynne Stephenson, the FLS solicitor. Whilst the majority of the draft lease for Cormonachan Woodlands was acceptable there were the following clauses that require further clarification or amendment:-

Item 2.2 - The directors were not happy with this clause and DL said he would take it up with the FLS solicitor.

Item 3.1 - It was asked how Commercial activities are defined? Would these include selling logs, activities such as the Walking Theatre in the woodlands, sculpture events, open days and the like? DL said he would take this up with FLS solicitor.

Item 4.25 - It was suggested that we reinvest to benefit the maintenance and development of the woodlands and perhaps add in conservation too. DL will take this up with FLS solicitor.

Item 17 - add in extra signatory for 2 directors to sign on behalf of Cormonachan Community Woodlands Ltd. DL said this had already be suggested and had just been omitted but would be rectified.

It was agreed that once the above points had been dealt with by FLS & FLS solicitor to the board's satisfaction, the final draft lease will be submitted to each board member by the Secretary for approval and if all agree then the lease can be adopted for signing without a further board meeting.

DL reported that the 'Upper Cormonachan Paths Project' fund had reached £17,170.55 (£4k was still held by Lochgoilhead Community Trust); The Red Squirrel Feed donations had £89.98 in hand; the Donation Post donations totalled £6.70 to 3rd January 2021; easyfunding donations totalled £97.46 from 7 members in 5 months; The clearance of Rhododendron ponticum contact has 52 hours left from 333 hours. This balance of hours has to include the spraying between the car park roadside to Cormonachan Burn; 375 native trees have now been planted over the last year, all by donation and this was reported to the BBC Plant Britain project; Facebook has 243 Likes and 262 Followers to the Cormonachan pages and finally the People Counter recorded 519 visitors in December 2020 (an average of 17.3 people per day).

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

87 members and 2 supporters (2 not completed forms).

- 7) **Approval of new member applications.**
In order to comply with the new Articles of Association all members must be approved by the Board of Directors so their membership can be confirmed by the company. It was decided to approve all the members to date en block (87) and that in future any new members joining will be approved at the first board meeting following their application for membership. The confirmation of membership by e-mail will then follow by the Membership Secretary.
- 8) **Vacancies on the Board of Directors - Treasurer & Volunteers Leader plus one further member.**
JS proposed SB to become the new Treasurer for 2021-2022 and that he would have a hand over period. JS would complete the accounts to 31st March 2021 and have them audited. He would then hand over for the new year with support until the AGM in May when he would retire. SB agreed to become the new Treasurer for the new financial year and this appointment was unanimously approved by the board. FW said she would be prepared to take over as Volunteers Leader from DL who had been temporarily continuing with the post following trying to give up this extra work over the last year. DL said he would help FW into how the volunteering work was organised and would liaise with her and support her in taking over the position. This appointment was unanimously approved.
It was also suggested by DL that Richard Hall be invited to join the board of directors as a very keen and supportive volunteer member. That would leave a further available place on the board for another member and once JS leaves the board at the next AGM, there will be another board member's place to fill.
- 9) **Update on the 'Upper Cormonachan Paths Project' including an update on the Settlement's interpretation sign ready for erection. Update on National Park's planning approval of conditions and current position on availability of grant applications.**
The Settlement's interpretation sign has been received and is ready for volunteers to erect on the lectern. The National Park's planning approval conditions have been completed as far as is possible at this time. There are just a few items to deal with just prior to construction work taking place. The National Lottery Heritage Fund for grants of £100,000 to £250,000 and £250,000 to £1,000,000 will open for applications from 8th February 2021 and the Scottish Government's SRDP funding for 'Improving Public Access' is a

new fund opening on 25th January 2021 with a closing date of 17th April 2021 for applications. This is a new fund replacing the EU SRDP funding that has just been announced yesterday. Both these funds will be investigated by DL as soon as possible. Both require that CCW has a lease for 20 years. DL said he would contact McGowan's to check they were still prepared to offer the same quotation of £269,570.00 + VAT for the paths construction despite the time delay.

- 10) **Board agreement required for the Secretary to apply to Scottish Forestry for a felling licence to clear the Sitka spruce in the area from the top junction on the Squirrel Trail south to where new tree planting has been taking place.**

DL said that the CCW should apply for a felling licence from Scottish Forestry for the area of Sitka spruce to the south side of the top middle Squirrel Trail junction down to where the last Sitka spruce had taken place several years ago where recently the CCW had been planting native trees. These licences generally take 3 months to obtain and if the Fife Conservation Group return in October or November 2021, their team would then be able to fell many of those trees over a few bi-annual visits. This was agreed by the board and DL would make the felling licence application.

- 11) **Any other Business?**

DL suggested setting up two Geo-Cache boxes within Cormonachan Community Woodlands and FW agreed to do this. Liz Evans and DL had prepared two boxes a few years ago so this could be done in the near future. Suitable sites will have to be found and then be registered. This was agreed to go ahead.

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

The next Board Meeting will be held on 16th February 2021 at 2 pm by Zoom.

The meeting ended at 3.45 pm.