



Cormonachan Community Woodlands Ltd.
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Minutes

A Board Meeting was held on Tuesday 23rd March 2021
at 2 pm by Zoom online.

- 1) **Welcome to our Board Members & any apologies.**
In attendance: Alastair Moodie (AM); Douglas Locke (DL); Jimmy Sim (JS); Don Kamsley (DK); Frances Walker (FW) & Richard Hall (RH). Scott Black (SB) sent belated apologies for not being able to attend the meeting.
- 2) **Approval of the Minutes of the last Committee Meeting held on 16th February 2021.**
The Minutes were approved by JS & FW and will be signed at a later date by AM.
- 3) **Chair's Report including any updates on application made to OSCR for charity status and to the Board of Directors.**
AM said that we had received approval for our Charity Status (SC050840) from OSCR earlier than expected that will help with our applications for funding. This also meant that the Articles of Association could now be put to the members of approval at the next AGM in May 2021. DL advised that the approval of the charity status dated 15th March 2021 was now shown online on the Reports page of the CCW's website. DL was asked to check if the membership subscriptions in future would be eligible for Gift Aid. JS said that the audited accounts to 31st March 2021 would probably be required by OSCR and Companies House. DL confirmed that this

was the case as he had already received notice to that effect by e-mail and that he would have to prepare a Confirmation Statement (previously known as an Annual Return) for Companies House as Company Secretary by 30th April 2021. AM explained that he was working on the requirements of the National Lottery Heritage Fund's Business Plan required for the funding of the Upper Cormonachan Paths Project. He said the various headings had to be dealt with which were considerable and that he would try to involve the board members as much as was possible and if possible, when permitted by Covid-19 regulations, to have a physical meet up. The application has to be applied for by 22nd May 2021 in order to have a decision by September 2021 to be able to start construction from September onwards. AM said that the contact with Raleigh International would be beneficial to Cormonachan Community Woodlands (CCW) and helpful to our funding application with the Lottery Heritage Fund application. DL said that Ardroy had agreed to become a member of CCW Ltd. from 1st April 2021/2022.

- 4) **Treasurer's Report including bank account update.**
Current bank balance £13,727.87 + £16.50 to credit = £13,744.32 - £46.90 to debit = £13,797.42. DL advised that SB still had to complete bank forms to become a bank signatory when he took over from JS as Treasurer in April.
- 5) **Secretary's Report including an update on the Forestry and Land Scotland signed Lease for Cormonachan Community Woodlands that takes effect on 1st April 2021.**
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' February visitors numbers. Website and Facebook updates.
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 was signed on 25th February by AM & DL and by Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) on 10th March and has now gone for registration to become active on 1st April 2021.

The Articles of Association were approved by OSCR and the Charity set up on 15th March 2021 - Number SC050840 and FLS advised.

Upper Cormonachan Paths Project Fund = £17,251.70 that includes £4,000 held by Lochgoil Community Trust.

The 5% of the construction costs is £16,175 leaving a surplus to pay for the ancillary costs of £1,256.67 (NPA fees & ecology survey, etc.) leaving £179.97 still to find (costs £1256.67 less in hand £1,076.70).

Red Squirrel Hide donations to date £385.53 less cost of peanuts £379.13 = £6.70 in hand.

Donations Post = £14.46. These donations are for the maintenance of the woodlands.

easyfundraising = £68.50 with 15 supporters, an increase of one this month. Note the total is lower due to the cancellations of holidays through Booking.com.

People Counter for February 265 (average 9 pd). Previous months - January 185 (average 6 pd); December 2020, 272 (9 pd); November 2020, 519 (17 pd) & October 2020 1,225 (40 pd).

Rhododendron ponticum local paid contract - 310 hours completed, 23 hrs reserved for spraying & plugging pesticide - still not completed despite chasing the contractors.

New funding to apply for Phase 2; Gordon Fletcher and Tom Ducat have submitted tenders to clear whole area, compartments 1 -13 for £10,500 over 4 months in autumn 2021. One further quote for £12,600 received as three quotes required by National Park. This fund is likely to open in April 2021 for autumn 2021 work, if approved.

Website up to date and Facebook as well with 268 people liking the page and 490 people reached this last month.

FLS advised the diseased Larch at the south west corner of CCW above the Settlement was being felled from 15th March for about three weeks - the area is prohibited from visiting during this period.

The timber will be removed in three months time.

The LL&TTNPA recommended Raleigh International to contact CCW regarding their volunteers working in CCW. Raleigh contacted DL and DL contacted David Thorpe (DT) at Ardroy regarding accommodation.

A Zoom meeting was held on 18th March between Raleigh, DT and DL that was positive and a follow up with Re-Green Project Agreement for our consideration. DL advised CCW would be very interested in the project. Raleigh would consider their volunteers camping in the woodlands with a Leave No Trace policy.

DL prepared a draft first Business Plan that was forwarded to AM for comment. AM said he would look at this against the NLHF business plan template and guidance.

Whilst AM has been looking into the Expression of Interest application with National Lottery Heritage Fund that closes on 22nd May, DL has been chasing McGowan's for a

breakdown of the costs relative to the SRDP AECS for Improving Public Access funding that closes on 30th June. This fund is likely to have to have an extra funder required to meet the total cost.

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

DL passed on the membership information supplied by Dennis Bolt (DB), our Membership Secretary that there was no change to the membership numbers since last month's report, however £345.00 had already been received in advance subscriptions for the financial year commencing 1st April 2021.

7) Approval of any new member applications.

There were no new memberships to approve since February.

8) Report by the Volunteers Leader on the Volunteers Days of 26th & 27th February and the tasks to be undertaken on 26th & 27th March 2021.

FW reported that the Friday 26th February Volunteers Day was well attended with six volunteers divided into two teams. One team of four were allocated to gather and burn in Area 4 the cut Rhododendron ponticum and the other team of two tidied the tool shed and surrounding area. Unfortunately the Rhododendron was too wet to burn and will now be left until June. Friday = 18 volunteer hours.

Saturday 27th February had three volunteers where wind fallen birch trees were cut up by chainsaw and logs piled up in areas 9, 7 & 1 and around a dozen self seeded Sitka spruce were cut down alongside the north end path in areas 6 and 3a. We also measured the oldest oak tree in the woodlands in area 3a with a girth of 5.4 metres. There was no increase in girth since it was last measured 5 years ago. Saturday = 9 volunteer hours.

DL and I each spent 2 hours on March 11th counting 210 Sitka spruce trees to be felled over 5 years. This brings a total of 31 volunteer hours in this period.

Next volunteer days are Friday 26th and Saturday 27th March; we have 4 on the Friday and 3 on Saturday, one additional member has volunteered for the Saturday.

Tasks are: rolling the now cut logs beyond the Contemplation Shelter away from the new path area and gathering brash for burning at a later date. Clearing growth from around the base of recently planted trees and preparing the Contemplation Shelter, shed and Red Squirrel Hide for painting, weather permitting we may get some painting done. We could do with

more volunteers so asked if anyone objected to me asking for volunteers via the local Facebook page for the next volunteer days? This might also encourage some new members.

Agreed, message will be sent on Tuesday evening.

I have had an email from Ross McKenzie at Raleigh International, they are a youth led organization and registered charity who are promoting a new programme, Re: Green. They are interested in CCW and the work that we do. Potentially, groups of youth volunteers could work clearing *Rhododendron ponticum* for up to 2 weeks each session. They require accommodation and either fed or somewhere to camp and cook, Raleigh International oversee the group and are responsible for them at all times.

DL made further contact with RI and Ardroy for accommodation. See Secretary's report for follow up.

- 9) Update on the 'Upper Cormonachan Paths Project', including contractor's update. Update on National Park's planning approval of conditions and funding policy on the current position on availability of grant applications particularly the AECS grant (SRDP) and the Expression of Interest for the Upper Cormonachan Paths Project with the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

DL said there were no real updates to record however McGowan's were working on itemising their construction quotation to match the funding that was eligible through the SRDP's AECS Grant for 'Improving Public Access'. This information is awaited. This fund is open until 30th June 2021.

- 10) Update on applying to the 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 reported that a felling licence was applied for on 22nd March 2021 for a five year period from 1st October 2021 to 30th November 2026 for 210 Sitka spruce trees to be felled at the north end of Area 9. FW & DL surveyed the area with FW marking most of the trees with yellow dots. The area once felled will be replanted with 210 native trees. We hope that Dallas Seawright and his Fife Conservation Group may once again be able to fell the larger trees over two weekends twice a year when Covid-19 regulations permit and Ardroy will be open again for their accommodation. Our own certificated volunteer chainsaw operators would be permitted to fell these trees up to 380 mm.

11) A member with chainsaw certificates has asked if it would be possible to fell any trees in the woodlands for log sales? A discussion.

A discussion was held regarding allowing one of our volunteers with a certificated chainsaw licence to fell some of these trees and be allowed to sell the logs created. DL suggested that if this were to be allowed, a percentage of the profit made should be given as a donation to the CCW as we are a not-for-profit company, we still require funds to run the organisation with a commitment to the maintenance of the woodlands that costs money. JS said that the Co-operative Bank's banking terms were that we did not run a commercial business. DL said that in our FLS Lease, we were entitled to sell logs and that donations would be an acceptable solution. Since the felling licence will take about three months to obtain we have plenty of time to make suitable arrangements for the future of the felled Sitka spruce trees.

12) Any other Business?

AM said that there were two exposed blue water pipes up at the north west corner of the paths by the bench. DK said that those water pipes were put in by FLS to his and his neighbour's properties who he was meeting with tomorrow. He will give an update in due course regarding their visibility. DL said he had received a phone call from Donald Wickes of Corriemonachan saying that he had been contacted by Tom Ducat regarding changing over his water pipeline due to regular blockages in supply from Cormonachan Burn. DL said he would speak to Tom and suggested that only the water access filter should be changed at this time as when the paths and car park construction take place, there will temporarily be disruption when the blue pipe work is put into culverts under the path, attached to the new bridge and moved under or alongside the car park. This was thought to be acceptable and DL would speak to Tom and be back in contact with Donald Wickes. DK said that CCW must make sure that the construction is carried out without any additional costs or liabilities to CCW. DL would discuss this with McGowan's new Project Manager Sam Hesling as Chris Cairns had left the company.

AM said that hand rails or ropes would benefit the steepest paths and this would therefore be looked into.

13) Date of next committee meeting?

Tuesday 20th April 2021 at 2 pm by Zoom.

The meeting closed at 4 pm.