



Cormonachan Woodlands Association
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Minutes

A Committee Meeting was held on Tuesday 4th July 2017 at 4.30 pm at Cruach House, Carrick Castle, Argyll, PA24 8AF

- 1) Liz Evans (LE) welcomed the committee members, Douglas Locke (DL) & Donald Kamsley (DK). David Thorpe (DT) & Jimmy Sim (JS) sent their apologies. In attendance were Will Huckerby (WH), FES Community & Visitors Area Manager & Sue Morris (SM), FES Argyll Forest Park Manager and Frances Walker (FW), CWA Member.
- 2) Approval of the Minutes of the last Committee Meeting held on 16th May 2017 were approved and proposed by DK & seconded by LE and signed by the Chair. There were no matters arising from the minutes.
- 3) Chair's Report - LE advised that Simon Franks (SF), Tree & Woodland Adviser from the National Park (NP) had helped us to prepare a 10 year Management Plan for presentation to Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) & Forest Enterprise Scotland (FES) and this had been completed and sent to our contacts. The Cormonachan Woodlands PAWS Report prepared by Angus Bevan, an Associate of the Native Woods Co-op and paid by the Woodlands Trust has also been passed on to FES. The SRDP form completed and signed by FES has been approved by the SGRPID office in Oban. This is a Scottish Government area of funding per hectare for Rhododendron ponticum clearance by professional contractors, native woodlands management and path maintenance. SF has arranged to give a free training day to CWA & Ardroy on a strategic plan for Rhododendron ponticum removal on 15th August 2017. The CWA AGM was held on 20th June 2017 at Carrick Castle Estate Lodge, Carrick Castle where thirteen members attended. Sheron

Hambly stood down at the meeting and was thanked for her time on the committee as was Simon Garnett who had been Ardroy's representative and David Thorpe (DT), General Manager of AOEC Trust Ltd. was elected in his place. The lodge were again thanked for hosting the AGM. The car park has now been extended by Drimsynie Construction and is useable. One problem had occurred when drivers cut the corner turning to Lochgoilhead. This was a driving technique simply sorted by using a larger swing round to the road. Two white posts will be put up to the sides of the concrete pad at the entrance to clearly show the entrance/exit sides. Ardroy had reported that their minibuses were grounding when turning to the new car park area however they didn't realise that the minibus area was still the same area as before to the left on entering and that has resolved the grounding problem. LE advised that DL would be paying all the car park invoices for the CWA, that doesn't have the funds to pay them in advance of receiving the funding. Once the completion certificate is received from NP planning and the receipted invoices are all sent to the funders for payment, DL will be repaid on receipt of the funds from the Scottish Landfill Community Funds (£4,559.00). He was thanked for doing this for the CWA.

- 4) Treasurer's Report - JS was unable to attend the meeting but passed the following information to the Secretary who advised that the current bank balance was £1,642.56 that was basically an accumulation of membership fees (£1,027.75) and 'Car Park Fund' (£614.81), the balance after paying £1,080.00 to the solicitors. JS had asked that the financial year should be changed from ending 31st May to 31st March and this had been passed at the AGM. The accounts were presented at the AGM and passed and are available on the Association's website to view. JS had also asked to have the bank account moved from the Cooperative Bank to the Royal Bank of Scotland as their mobile bank came to Lochgoilhead weekly and this was agreed at the meeting for JS to proceed with the change.
- 5) The Secretary reported that there were now 60 members for the year 1st June 2017 to 31st March 2018 of which 3 were Life Member, 42 were Full Members, 11 were Associates, 2 were Child Members (free) and there were 2 Corporate Members. Nine members had not renewed their memberships as at 4th July 2017. The website is kept up to date and Facebook as well, with regular news. The last Members Update No 19 was sent out on 30th June 2017. DL said that his full Secretary's Report was given at the AGM and is available on the Association's website in the AGM Minutes.
- 6) The Management Plan for the next ten years was covered in item 3) above. It had been agreed previously that we should obtain quotations for the proposed new paths in order to know what funding would be necessary to go ahead with this project. DL & LE have a site visit planned for later in July with Guy Keating (GK) of

the NP to assess the work involved and likely cost of the project. Based on GK experience from another woodland project, one kilometre was costing £35,000 and based on a similar distance, there was 100% funding available for such a path project. As planning permission would also be required, it takes a long time to plan a big project like this. WH was asked if this path project could be brought forward from our previous plan by a few years if the funding were available. WH said that FES would have to look at this suggestion with other FES managers. SM said that she would like to have a site visit of Cormonachan Woodlands and LE said we would arrange one to suit her convenience. LE asked WH what the plans were for the excluded conifer area in the north west of Cormonachan Woodlands once felled as would it be a PAWS area as well. He said he would look into this and send us plans. LE said that following the PAWS Report that CWA had received, it was felt that priorities should be to remove invasive species and stage halo thinning around deciduous trees in conifer areas.

- 7) Car park development - DL advised that the new car park had been completed and was now open. The gates were up and the fencing to the north finished but the small fence to the south had yet to be completed. We were waiting for the lectern and CW information board to arrive and be concreted in. The final artwork was shown and approved previously by the committee. The donated CW slate sign would also have to be erected and white posts put in place at the entrance. This should all be finished by mid July. There will be a formal opening of the car park planned for September 2017 and it was suggested by LE that we ask James Fraser (FOLLAT) and Allan Campbell (Drimsynie) to jointly open the car park with the press and members present and this was agreed.
- 8) The last Volunteers Day was held on 21st May 2017. Eight volunteers cleared and burnt the brash from around the totem pole, chainsaw-ed the previously felled branches and logs, cleared a ditch in the same area and strimmed part of the Squirrel Trail path. This work was in preparation for an art installation on the totem pole. Thanks were given to the volunteers. FW was thanked for keeping the squirrel feeders topped up with nuts when she walks her dog in the woodlands very regularly there. WH said that our volunteers could create an income stream for CWA by selling logs. The woodlands had productive broadleaf trees that would be suitable for such use as well as conifers that have been felled. DL said that transporting the logs down to the car park was the problem that had to be solved and that two members had said they would be willing to use their quad bike and trailer but needed a certificate to be able to use this equipment in the CW. WH said he was sure that the Lantra training course would be approved and he would check this out. CWA had already obtained the cost of the training and the two members were willing to pay for the course

themselves. WH suggested the CWA should ask Craig Walker of NP to look over the CWA Volunteers Policy with a view to getting NP volunteers to help out in CW.

- 9) Update on Annual Maintenance Plan - There have been three Volunteers Days and quite a few trimmer chainsaw training days so far this year and a lot has been achieved including path maintenance, strimming, tree felling under licence, toilet cleaning, ditch cleaning and Rhododendron removal by the primary children visiting Ardroy. DL advised that a short length of pipe had been inserted into the ditch at the Clach Bhadach entrance to CW at the Lochwood end that will make it easier to enter and leave the woodlands. The top still had to have a gravel surface added. DL also advised that three CW signs had been erected, one at this entrance, one opposite the lay by at Lower Cormonachan and another at Cormonachan Burn. LE said that a day's hire of a small excavator would help to clear some of the worst overgrown ditches that are in need of attention. DL said that part of the membership fees could be used as the money was to be used to run the Association and be used for running costs of which this was an applicable subject to cost. LE then went through the various projects that had to be covered by the member volunteers.
- 10) Future Volunteers Days - It had been requested by some members that it would be good to have future volunteers days pre-programmed so that the dates can be put into members diaries. As a result of this request the dates for the next autumn dates are as follows:-
 - Sunday 17th September 2017 from 13.00 to 16.00 hrs.
 - October Weekend - Saturday 14th & Sunday 15th October 2017 from 10.00 to 16.00 hrs on each day with social lunch breaks.
 - Saturday 18th November 2017 from 10.00 to 13.00 hrs.
- 11) Gala Day, Lochgoilhead on 29th July 2017. The CWA marquee will be erected in the village car park with a similar display to last year. The aim of the event for the CWA is to raise awareness of CW to the local residents of Loch Goil and visitors to the area with the aim of enrolling more members. There will be a photographic record of how the car park extension was achieved in a year of funding to car park operation and the work of the volunteers in CW. Volunteers will be required to erect the marquee at 10.00, set up the stand and run it from 12.00 to 16.30 and then disassemble at 16.30 hrs. FW, DK, LE & DL were the first to volunteer at the meeting. Ardroy to be asked for some donations of soft drinks and other items for sale and as prizes for the annual Treasure Hunt competition.
- 12) Training & Equipment Funding - Training that is fundable is for the clearance of Rhododendron ponticum and trimmer training. Although we have trained six members (4 CWA and 2 Ardroy), we have found that we need at least four more CWA members to be

trained for availability two or three times a year. We have three members who have offered themselves to be trained and need one more to run the course. FCS Community Fund are willing to fund the course costing £425.00 for the day. We currently have three squirrel feeders in operation with feed supplied by Ardroy and need more feeders that we will apply for funding for too. A member who wished to remain anonymous, has kindly donated a new Husqvarna 129C Strimmer (value £195.50) for CWA volunteers to use which is greatly appreciated. JS kindly donated his strimmer to the Association as well. DL asked WH for names of Rhododendron eradication trainers which he said he would look into for us.

- 13) CWA Risk Assessments - DK said he would be looking at the risk assessments we have and see if they could be standardised in format. WH said we also need to have a simple risk assessment for the sculptures in CW.
- 14) General Project Funding - The proposed new path from the south west corner of the Squirrel Trail to the old village at Upper Cormonachan and the waterfalls has already been mentioned in item 3) above. Whilst the path funding would likely be funded by a 100% grant, the interpretation boards will need to be funded as will the conservation of the old village buildings. The Argyll & Islands Leader programme would fund 50% of this heritage project provided the cost was at least £10,000 which it would be. That mean we would need to raise the other 50% of the project that would be at least £5,000. There are other funds available but funders want to see input from members too. DL said that the GoRaise communities funding scheme of raising money was going well when members buy items on line through any of the 3,000 online retailers who are part of the scheme. So far only 12 members have checked out the scheme and four members have raised £33.62 to date with no cost to themselves. We need more members to look into using the funding scheme. LE said that there was another funding source available for sustainable communities and she suggested that we apply to get funds to get more local people involved with events such as green wood working, spoon making, making walking sticks, art in the woodlands, guided walks and working with the primary school. It was agreed that she should look into this further. SM suggested that the CWA should contact Gavin MacGregor of Northlight Heritage regarding archaeology in CW.
- 15) Sculpture Trail - The totem pole has at today's date had the halo and strays set up and this is shown on our Facebook page - Cormonachan. Progress will continue very soon.
- 16) The date for the next committee meeting will be on Tuesday 29th August 2017 at 4.30 pm at Cruach House, Carrick Castle.
- 17) Any other business - 1) DL advised that another incident had been recorded and sent to NP where campers had had a fire near

the totem pole and left their used cans after camping over night. There is a notice to say 'No Fires' in Cormonachan Woodlands that was ignored. The car registration number was recorded. 2) SM suggested a CW site visit prior to the next committee meeting at 13.00 hrs on 29th August 2017 which LE and DL would be happy to attend. 3) FW was asked, following attending the committee meeting, if she would like to join the committee and she agreed to be co-opted on to the committee.

The meeting closed at 18.30 hrs