



Cormonachan Woodlands Association  
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## Minutes

A Committee Meeting was held on Wednesday, 18th July 2018 at 4.30 pm at Lochwood House, Lochgoilhead, Argyll, PA24 8AE

### 1) Welcome & Apologies.

The Chair (DK) welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were no apologies as all the committee members were in attendance: Don Kamsley (DK), Douglas Locke (DL), Jimmy Sim (JS), David Thorpe (DT), Frances Walker (FW), Cecilia Ferguson (CF) & Sue Morris (SM) - Forest Enterprise Scotland ex officio member.

### 2) Approval of the Minutes of the last Committee Meeting held on 15th May 2018 & any follow up reports (see italic notations in the last Minutes).

The Minutes of the last meeting on 15th May 2018 were approved - proposed by JS & seconded by DK and signed by DK.

### 3) Chairman's Report including report on the Opening of the Red Squirrel Hide & Contemplation Shelter and Reception. Outcome of Scottish Finest Woods Awards 2018 - Small Community Woodlands Award 2018.

JS declared that he had an interest in AOEC Trust Ltd. DK said that in future, information pertaining to CWA business that could be potentially perceived as controversial, should not be passed on to third parties without committee approval. The committee agreed with this statement. DK said the turnout was very good in great weather for the Opening of the Red Squirrel Hide and the

Contemplation Shelter and that the Reception sponsored by one of our corporate members, The Lodge on Loch Goil was very well received with an excellent tea provided. The Scottish Finest Woods Awards 2018 - Small Community Woodlands Award 2018 was won by East Kilbride Community Trust for K-Woodlands, (winner Large Community Woodland Group & overall winner). There were 30 entrants from small and large community woodlands. In their report, it particularly suggested the CWA should "broaden and deepen the level of local community engagement."

- 4) Report on bank account position. Update on payment arrangements for renewal of membership annually (Direct debit/standing orders, etc.)

JS said the bank balance was £255.58. This balance was after expenditure for the Loch Goil Gala Day of CWA mugs for resale (£151.40). It was agreed that at the next renewal of subscriptions in April 2019, members should make payment by bank transfer (FPS/BACS) and add their surname and initial(s). Those still wanting to pay by cash or cheque should give the name(s) of those that the payment is for. All will only need to complete a Renewal of Membership form if there are any changes to their address, telephone numbers or e-mail addresses.

- 5) Secretary's report including update on current membership, an update on the website, Facebook update, latest 'Members Update'. Update on Argyll Holidays video of Squirrel Trail Walk.

DL advised that there were now 85 members (4 Life; 62 Full; 13 Associates; 2 children (free) & 4 Corporate members). The Red Squirrel Hide donation box had now received £49.87 in donations since 12th March 2018 for squirrel feed. GoRaise has now raised £97.28 for the CWA Project Fund since the beginning of 2017 from just 5 members using it to purchase items on the Internet. The CW car park (rateable value £270) and the CWA Huts (hide, shed & shelter) (rateable value £110) now have relief of rates after appeal. SRDP (Agriculture & Rural Economy Directorate) will be a source of funding for various developments such as paths. This government organisation is now approved for CWA funding but still awaits the final map of the approval area that was originally set up by them with an area of plantation that was not included under the FES MoU. The revised land area agreed by FES and the CWA is expected in the next couple of months from SRDP. The website is up to date with information on the History and News pages. Facebook is regularly updated and the committee members will be shown after the meeting so that members will know who is on the CWA committee.

The last Members Update No 28 was on 9th June 2018. The Cormonachan Woodlands Squirrel Trail video was still not available from Argyll Holidays although filmed last autumn 2017.

- 6) **Ardroy Report on work carried out in April/May/June in Cormonachan Woodlands (Rhododendron clearance by instructors and primary school children in Area 6 and assistance dates that can be given to CWA in 2018.**

DT advised that Ardroy had not used the woodlands much since April. Due to limited staff available to manage Ardroy's day to day workload, they would find it extremely difficult to provide assistance to CWA for management of the woodlands over the coming months.

- 7) **Discussion on how we proceed with the future maintenance of Cormonachan Woodlands through the management and the physical help required via the volunteer membership and other sources.**

DL advised that the National Park Volunteers Scheme had asked for some weekday volunteers days as well as weekend ones for this autumn. They have already agreed to come on 13th October with young people from Cowal to do some conservation work that will be run by their own team with a prior visit to establish what we would like doing. The strimming of the paths remains the most crucial aspect of keeping the paths in good walking condition over the summer. The paths need three cuts per annum (May/July/September). Of the 10 CWA trained trimmer operators, Ardroy cannot spare their two, DL due to age (77) & back condition now is unable to do further strimming so we have seven potential trimmer members of which four have been strimming the paths so far. We therefore need the seven to volunteer to do sections at the end of July and again in September. We need more Trimmer Operator Members but the funding for this year has dried up so we shall need to apply for funding after April 2019 for new members.

- 8) **Volunteers Days - Report on Volunteers Day of 21st and 24th May 2018. Next volunteers days to be mainly 'strimming' on sunny and windy days at short notice. Next scheduled Volunteers Days to be agreed for September, October & November 2018. Leaders required.**

There was a good turnout of members to help take up all the wood for the Contemplation Shelter's erection on 21st May and again on 24th May, four volunteers gave the shelter two coats of preservative. Some CWA members have been suggesting that some weekday volunteers days would be good for them too and so the

committee have agreed the following Volunteers Days in September and October with November to follow. September - Friday 21st and Saturday 22nd, 10 am to 4 pm and October - Friday 26th, Saturday 27th and Sunday 28th, 10 am to 4 pm. The Fife volunteers will be returning for that weekend of 27th & 28th to fell the remaining six Sitka spruce trees between the Squirrel Trail paths completing the felling of the trees in our felling licence. Members will be welcome to help mornings, afternoons or both on any or all of these days!

9) **Risk Assessments - Ratify and arrange for signatures to complete the outstanding Quad Bike & Trailer RA.**

The final Risk Assessment for Quad Bike & Trailer use was completed by DK and now this has to be signed by those who have been trained.

10) **Update on future funding projects (new path to Upper Cormonachan & the waterfalls from the Contemplation Shelter) & training required for spraying *Rhododendron ponticum*.**

Scott MacDonald of MacDonald Contracting, Inverness, a specialist hill contractor for path work surveyed the proposed path to the waterfalls and Upper Cormonachan old village on 12th July with Phil Thompson of Ardroy and DL attending. Scott followed up the survey with comments on the day of the committee meeting and raised the following points read out by DL:-

Section 1a

*Path leading from the roadside at the south end of the trail towards the waterfall and ruin village.* This section is has the most features for walkers and the visiting school children from the Ardroy Centre. A larger lay by could be cut into the site off the single track road to allow for a couple of mini-buses and couple of cars to park. The trail would start with a section of floated path or timber walkway leading to bridge over the first burn (replacing the existing bridge). Following the bridge the terrain becomes very steep, I suggest stone pitching or steps. The gradient levels of as it approaches the waterfall, a standard path may be applicable here that leads to the ruin village.

Section 1b

*Path leading from the ruin village to the Forestry Haul Road.* Unsure if this section is a priority. A standard floated path would be sufficient for this section. One or two larger culverts may be required at stream crossings.

Section 2

*Path leading from contemplation shelter to a viewing area (approx 500m from Shelter).* A large volume of trees would need to be felled and a suitable corridor formed to allow the path to be constructed. Various locations along this section would require bench cutting and culvert crossings. The path could be of a standard design, but would not be 1:40 in some places and the width would be constricted in places.

Section 3

*Joining section 2 to meet section 1a.* This would be the longest section of path through the worst of the terrain, the ground is a mixture of clear fell and windblown and would

require stump removal and significant chainsaw work.

As this project is perhaps rather more complex than initially expected, the committee agreed that this proposed path should be tackled in stages with Stage One as Section 1a above. However, the path would need a design so quotations will be sought for the design prior to obtaining funding for it. Once this is in place quotations and funding can be sought for the proposed path in stages. This will be a big project costing more likely in excess of £100,000 but with 100% funding available through SRDP. The Forestry Commission Scotland's Community Funding has been cut for 2018/2019 and has already closed for this year. Application has been made for 2019/2020 for Pesticide Training for six members costing £3,827.62 including VAT and PPE (approx £638 per volunteer member).

11) Plans for 'Gala Day' on 28th July. Volunteers required.

The theme agreed for Loch Goil Gala Day in the CWA marquee will be Membership and Volunteer Recruitment. We have five new A1 poster panels that will be on display and there will be CWA mugs for sale as well as other items. The marquee will be in a similar position to last year in the Lochgoilhead car park. Four committee members (DK, DL, JS & FW) have volunteered to run the stand in rota by twos after setting up on the morning of Saturday 28th July. The very good china mugs were approved to be sold at £7.50 each and orders were being taken at the meeting. Ardroy will provide CWA with bottle water to sell. DL has repaired the marquee cover damaged in the wind and rain last year. JS said he would like to send the general article on CWA prepared by DL with photos to the Dunoon Observer.

12) The 'other' CWA Annual Conference and AGM 2018 will be on Saturday 13th and Sunday 14th October at Strathpeffer, Ross-shire at Strathpeffer Pavilion. It will follow a similar format to previous years and include site visits, the AGM, workshops and presentations. There will be a conference dinner and ceilidh on the Saturday night. The booking (conference only) needs discussion as to who should attend.

DL will attend the Community Woodlands Association's Conference over two days on 13th & 14th October. Cost £50.00 with DL paying for two night's accommodation himself.

13) Any other business & date for next committee meeting?

The next committee meeting will be held on Wednesday 5th September 2018 at 16.30 hrs at Cruach House, Carrick Castle. The meeting closed at 6.40 pm.