

FCWT BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING

held at St Leonard's Church portakabin, February 25th 2013 at 7.30pm

PRESENT: Graham Hilditch (chair), John Carson, Claire Feaver, Wilson Metcalfe, Stuart Johnston, Alan Smith, Eddie Tomkinson, Donald Wright

Minutes taken by Trust member Jane Johnston

APOLOGIES: Gisela MacFarquhar, Fiona Chalmers (see correspondence)

PREVIOUS MINUTES of the meeting held on January 28th 2013: proposed by SJ, seconded by ET

MATTERS ARISING

- it was agreed that in future, the draft Minutes will be submitted to the Chair prior to circulation to the Board. Any challenges or alterations will be discussed at the next meeting and a consensus reached.
- GH asked for agenda items to be sent at least a week before the meeting
- Point 6 - SJ said Pat Johnston's statement was inaccurate and misleading
- Point 6 - JC asked for the CD with past Minutes. **ACTION: DW will e-mail the contents to JC and SJ**
- WM noted some Minutes were missing for 2009, 2010 and 2011. **ACTION: ET will put all Minutes into a composite file**
- Agenda 1: GH said that Ian Suttie is happy to take Board members around Muiry Woods. SJ said that Ian had stressed the importance of critical deadlines for both the barriers in the car parks and contacting the Forestry Commission to check the status of grants. **ACTION: the Board, before the end of March ?**
- GM had reported that Ian Purkis will repair the picnic table as a goodwill gesture
- GH asked about the damaged signs on the bike track. ET said that Chris Piper has the file on forestry grants to cover this **ACTION: ET to ask Chris Piper**
- JC is completing the forms for changing the bank signatories
- Agenda 3: ET had met with Chris Piper, who holds the information about grants in files dating from the start of FCWT. He felt that Chris Piper's skills and knowledge were important, and that information could be filtered gradually. CF and SJ felt that all the paperwork should be given to the Board; ET said that CP is still preparing a claim for a Forestry Commission grant for ongoing work. DW and ET felt that a good working relationship should be maintained with CP. GH said it was necessary to prioritise and focus on a) green burials and b) accounting and liabilities
- Agenda 4: WM gave a progress report on the website and anticipated that by mid-April it would be up and running. Tom Ireland has prepared a well-formatted homepage, but has yet to register the domain

name. Photos/press cuttings etc are being collated. WM will have further technical meetings. The cost of hosting the website is £100, agreed between Chris Wortley and Tom. Total fees would be £330, of which £84 has already been paid.

- Agenda 6: The proposed meeting with Jamie Whittle had shown no major outstanding bills. R&R Urquhart are charging restricted or no fees.
- Agenda 7: DW said there was no obligation to go to the membership; this had been confirmed by Jamie Whittle. DW is compiling a report on the Green Burials issue, although information is incomplete at present. **ACTION: DW and ET go to CP together** GH had contacted Jim Grant, head of planning at Moray Council, who is happy that the situation is being reassessed and that time is needed to gather facts. GH proposed a full debate at the next meeting.
- Agenda 8: WM reasoned that the Board was indeed able to make objections to planning proposals, citing similar actions in 2000 and 2007. WM and CF underlined the duty of the FCWT to safeguard the Woodlands. GH had met with Sir Alastair who would be happy to meet the Board in a month or two. He had no imminent plans for a Countrypark. There was anxiety amongst the Board that once part of the Moray planning, building could take place in Long 2 and Long 3.

CORRESPONDENCE

- Fiona Chalmers had e-mailed GH tendering her resignation from the Board. She is happy to be contacted. **ACTION: GH to send reply and good wishes**
- Euan MacIntock from Gordon and McPhail explaining slight delays in arranging the proposed pipeline re-routing. AS said the environmental impact needs to be assessed by an environmental ecologist who would prepare a report and formalise the process. CF, aware of the Countryside Act, asked if work could be delayed until September to protect breeding birds. Gordon and McPhail could be asked to support path upgrades.
- an e-mail from Mike Kemp, Community Woodlands Association, suggested extending mountain bike trails. AS had reservations on this. SJ had asked Mark Fletcher his opinion of the trails. **ACTION: GH will contact Mike Kemp**
- GH showed a copy of the February bulletin of the Community Woodland Association, suggesting it has value for training courses and grants
- CameronTaylor FACT invited GH to a meeting at the Ramnee on 27/3/13
- e-mail from Jim Grant to SJ clarifying requirements for any new planning application
- letter from Jane Johnston regarding litter/used dog bags **ACTION: Jane will monitor the site in question**
- letter from Nicole Merrilees re. planting on offin field (see Item 4)

AGENDA

1. OPERATIONAL UPDATES

a) Muiry Woods - Ian Suttie and ET form part of a work group every 3 weeks, planning ahead. An upgrade on paths is being organised.

b) Sanquhar Woods - GH,JC,SJ and John Rutherford had walked through Sanquhar with Gareth Whyment, retired forester from Moray Estates and currently chairman of northern section of the Royal Scottish Forestry Society. The woods are in 'good heart', only a bit of thinning and clearing are needed. GH would like the Board to approach Gareth to act as a consultant. **ACTION: GH write to Gareth.** DW thought that Ian Suttie had sound knowledge of woodlands too. He suggested compiling a 'to do' list. John Rutherford had offered to be involved in workparties. **ACTION: SJ to look at what needs to be done**

AS suggested Academy students could help as part of their gold DofE award. **ACTION: AS to approach Academy.** CF had spoken to John Innes, scoutmaster, who was eager that scouts and guides should be involved (risk assessment included)

ET thought structured workparties were vital. On the back of new membership forms, a questionnaire invites members to say how they could get involved in FCWT.

SJ asked if he should approach Balloch Forestry School, whose students might benefit from project work in Sanquhar **ACTION: SJ**

Gravelling paths was discussed. CF said 'All Ability Paths' must be fit for purpose, but some paths should be left natural. She reminded the meeting that the FCWT Development Plan needed adhering to. ET confirmed that the FCWT has an account with Leith's.

2. NEWSLETTER

CF outlined the format of the newsletter - which will include info on new Board members,current issues, Giants in the Forest. Ian Suttie would like a slot 'Wildlife in our Woodlands'. GH would like the newsletter out in the next fortnight. Asked about contact details, GH agreed that his office could be used for address and phone. **ACTION:CF to compile,GH to overview and photocopy in b/w.Members will be asked to deliver.**

3. MEMBERSHIP

ET explained that only £420 is raised through membership and more income is needed. He is looking into data protection, gift aid options and possibly payment by standing order. It was agreed that October 1st should be the date for membership fee renewals. Members could be reminded that donations are welcome. GH asked if the draft membership form could be reduced. CF agreed to remove the section on childrens' names. Anyone over 16 to pay adult fee.

4. WOODSIDE PARK AREA

A letter from Nicole Merrilees requested the loan of the brush cutter. AS explained that 420 plants had been purchased with a grant from the Woodlands Trust Jubilee Fund, for hedging around the north Coffin Field. ***ACTION: GH and SJ to meet Nicole and then discuss the issue at the next meeting when the first item on the agenda will be to discuss the Woodside Park project.***

5. FINANCIAL UPDATE

ET circulated copies of balance sheets of what is known from March 2012 to date, highlighting the main points. The bank balance stands at £23 475.48 of which about £10 000 is available after ring-fenced sums have been deducted. GH suggested working on cashflow projections after the assessment of necessary work has been compiled. JC expressed his concern about unknown outstanding obligations and liabilities, in particular the status of a grant/loan from HIE.

6. AOB

- WM, on behalf of the FFT, would like to move the 2 footpath marker posts to across the Coffin Field. AGREED
- ET wanted to ask Chris Piper to get a quotation for replacement of the damaged bike trail signs
- WM suggested that Sanquhar Woods could have signs similar to those in Muiry Woods
- SJ distributed copies of FCWT Memorandum and Articles 2010, and plans of Sanquhar Woodlands 2003, gifted by John Rutherford

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING Monday March 25th 2013 at 7.30pm in St Leonard's portakabin