

Steering Committee

Minutes

of meeting held in The Magnus House
at 7.30pm on Monday 29th November 2010

Present		Apologies	
Graeme Scott	Steve Byford	Gavin Cormack	
John Graham	Warwick Lister-Kaye	Peter Masheter	
Mark Hedderwick	Calum Fraser		
Alisdair Stewart	Andrew Leaver		

In Attendance			
Ron McLaughlin	Kirstie McLaughlin	John Murray	Mark Williams
Denise Davis	John Lister-Kaye	Lucy Lister-Kaye	Shauna Jennings
Rick Lusher	Sue Morris	John Morris	Lyndsey Ward
Nick Ward	Mary Graham	Russell Ross	Donna Macrae
Iain Shepherd	Ewen MacColl	Ake Inghammar	Alison McAllister
Paul McAllister			

Item	Action
<p>The Chair, Graeme Scott, welcomed the members of the public to the meeting and noted that although this was a Director's meeting with a published agenda, members of the public in attendance would be given full opportunity to comment on discussion.</p>	
<p>1 Minutes of meeting of 27th September 2010 The minutes were proposed by Alisdair Stewart and seconded by John Graham.</p>	
<p>2 Matters arising from the minutes → Review of agreed actions from 27/09/10</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21/1 – John Graham attended the launch of Community Land Scotland at Eden Court on 28th September 2010. Aigas Community Forest was recognised as one of the 17 founder members of this organisation the aim of which is to give community land owners of all types a voice at the highest levels of government and policy making in Scotland. • 21/3 – John Graham and Alisdair Stewart attended the FCS Pine Tree Lappet Moth meeting on 5th October. In addition to hearing confirmation of previously received information about the moth, it was reported that should FCS require eradication the cost would be wholly met by the landowner or tenant at the time. This presents ACF with a significant potential for financial risk and will be taken into consideration when negotiating any transfer of control from FCS. 	

Item	Action
The following two items were taken out of order.	
<p>4 Update on Discussion with Falck Renewables</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graeme Scott updated those present on contact to date with Falck Renewables: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Letter received from Falck dated 17/09/10 inviting discussion about allowing Falck access through Aigas Forest on the existing forest road for the purposes of developing a wind farm at Breakachy. ○ 27/09/10 - Board authorised Graeme Scott and Andrew Leaver to meet with Falck to conduct further discussion ○ 22/10/10 – Graeme and Andrew met with Falck representative. This meeting was followed up with an e-mail from Falck. ○ Andrew Leaver sent a further e-mail and received a reply clarifying requirements to upgrade the road and likely volume of traffic. ○ Second letter received from Falck dated 27/11/10 providing further information on their activity and the current status of plans for Breakachy • Graeme Scott addressed those present clearly stating that the Board recognised that a significant element of the local community had concerns over the proposed wind farm. He assured those present that there would be a full discussion but also tabled a motion that the Board would not enter negotiations with Falck Renewables to allow access through Aigas Forest for the purposes of developing a wind farm at Breakachy. • This motion and the general issue of wind farm development were discussed, with several Board members and members of the public making clear their objection to the Breakachy development. • A request was made to amend the motion to exclude discussions with any third party on allowing access for the purposes of a commercial wind farm. This was accepted. • Steve Byford indicated that Kilmorack Community Council would be hosting a public meeting on wind farm developments including those at Breakachy and Druim Ba, once they had received sufficient information. • The following motion was put to a vote of Board members and accepted unanimously: <i>‘Aigas Community Forest will not enter into negotiations with Falck Renewables or any other party to allow access through Aigas Forest for the purposes of developing a commercial wind farm.’</i> • Andrew Leaver to notify Falck Renewables of this decision. 	<p>Andrew Leaver</p>

Item	Action
<p>3 NFLS Guidance on Community Leasing of Forest Land</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NFLS guidance on community leasing of forest land was published in early November. • Graeme Scott noted that the guidelines for calculating rent were extremely complex and open to interpretation. Graeme had discussed these with Jon Hollingdale of the Community Woodlands Association who had prepared two models for illustrative purposes, based on different interpretations of the document. These produced annual rentals of £50,000 and £7,000 respectively, thus illustrating the vague nature of the guidelines. Any rental would ultimately be set by the District Valuer and ACF could be the first community group to test the guidelines. • Graeme stated that further work would be necessary to improve and test the existing forest projections and to explore whether it would be possible to justify or negotiate a 'viable rental' within the guidelines. • Andrew Leaver noted that should a request from ACF for a transfer to community rental be accepted by the NFLS then a further 18 months would be available to finalise a lease agreement. This request can be sent at any time up to June 2011. During this period of approx. 18 – 24 months it would be acceptable for ACF to continue to fundraise for outright purchase. The current purchase price of £690,000 would lapse and a new value be set if ACF were to then request purchase. Given the financial risk presented by the Pine Tree Lappet Moth this may work to the advantage of ACF. • It was agreed that purchase remains the favoured option but that further investigation of rental as a potential fallback option would be valuable. • It was agreed to seek permission from LEADER to use existing grants to contract with a forestry specialist to undertake detailed examination of the lease option and to support completion of the business plan. • If LEADER approve use of funds, a tendering process to appoint a specialist consultant will be undertaken • It was noted that should leasing become a financially viable option favoured by the Board, further consultation to seek the community's support would be undertaken before any lease is signed. 	<p>Andrew Leaver</p> <p>Andrew Leaver</p>
<p>5 Fundraising and PR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Graham noted a recent discussion with a professional fundraiser who may be able to support ACF. No conclusion came out of this initial meeting but John will maintain contact and report to the Board 	

Item	Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Graham noted the need to prepare a leaflet soliciting pledges towards the purchase of the forest as well as smaller donations to general funds. John Graham and Andrew Leaver to prepare this leaflet. • Andrew Leaver noted that the second joint Forest / Hall quiz night will be held on 1st April in Kilmorack Hall. • A number of other actions remain outstanding from previous meetings. 	<p>John Graham Andrew Leaver</p>
<p>6 AOCB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warwick Lister-Kaye raised recent communication from Donna Macrae concerning the Renewable Energy Questionnaire issued jointly by ACF and Kilmorack Hall in March 2010. • Andrew Leaver noted that concerns on the wording of the questionnaire had been raised at its time of issue and had been immediately accepted by the Board. Since that time ACF have taken no further interest in the questionnaire and have no intention of using the results for any purpose. 	

Summary of Outstanding Actions		
Ref	Action	Person Responsible
18/2	Draft a list of private sector targets and consider the best way to approach each of them as individuals or in a group	John Graham Peter Masheter Steve Byford
19/6	Investigate potential for a debenture scheme. Contact Douglas Graham on same subject. Discuss with Steve Westbrook as part of business planning process.	Andrew Leaver Graeme Scott
20/5	Contact Lord Lovat to invite him to be a Forest Champion and figurehead for the 'Adopt a Forest' campaign.	Andrew Leaver
20/6	Contact Plexus to identify costs for enhancement to website to include video / graphic for 'Adopt a Forest' campaign.	Andrew Leaver
20/7	Progress planning for bike event.	Mark Hedderwick
21/5	Progress planning for on-line auction.	Andrew Leaver
22/1	Notify Falck Renewables of Board decision not to negotiate provision of access for purposes of developing a commercial wind farm	Andrew Leaver
22/2	Seek permission from LEADER to use existing grant to contract for specialist advice on the option of leasing the forest	Andrew Leaver
22/3	Undertake a tendering process to appoint a specialist forestry consultant (if LEADER agree use of funds)	Andrew Leaver
22/4	Prepare a leaflet seeking pledges for purchase of the forest and smaller donations to general funds	John Graham Andrew Leaver

Chair		Date	