



Minutes from ACF Board Meeting held at the Magnus House on 26th February 2024 at 19.30

Present:

David Garvie (DG) - Chair
John Graham (JG) - Treasurer
Jo Young (JY)
Neil Valentine (NV)
Stephen Cotterill (SC)
Bob Hemingway (BH)
Mark Hedderwick (MH)
Phil Masheter (PM)
Fin Denerley (FD)
Russell Ross (RR)
Bob Bull (BB)
Graeme Scott (GS)
Nataša Kenda (NK) - Minutes Secretary

Apologies:

Greg Jackson (GJ)

Minutes of Previous Board Meeting of 27th September 2023

Adoption proposed by JY. Seconded by SC. Approved.

Agenda Amendments

No changes were made to the agenda.

Matters Arising from Previous Meeting

It was agreed to defer budget discussions until after GS had circulated the accounts.

Forest Manager Job Update

Job description circulated pre board meeting, all agreed. Proposed by JG, seconded by SC. The salary was discussed as several members found the suggested £23 - £30 per hour too high. JG proposed to advertise it as annual full-time salary equivalent rather than hourly rate; all agreed. A wide range was suggested not to exclude any potential candidates. DG suggested £35,000 - £45,000 annual full-time salary equivalent, all agreed.

Forest Manager Report

Previously circulated pre board meeting. The northern part of the deer fence was cleared. Tree planting day scheduled for 16th March 2024. Ideally we need 20-25 people (with a spade). They will be divided into groups with marked planting zones. FD offered a help of around 12 AFC rangers in the afternoon. Lunch will be provided.

Sub-group reports

- **Paths and Access:** The map is up in the information bothy and was received well. NV suggested several maps around the forest marked with “You’re here”. JG reported that the QR code signs for fundraising will arrive this week, as well as defibrillator location sign, no motorised vehicles sign, a whiteboard and box for information leaflets.
BH ordered signs for paths; the drainage should be sorted asap, especially on Rogie’s walk. DG asked the group to present a plan and budget proposal.
- **Wildlife & Ecology:** Not met. School groups were recently planting trees at ACF.
- **Deer Management:** Met in December, report circulated pre meeting. The fence hasn’t been finished so the deer cull and count will be postponed to March 2025.
- **Equipment Groups:** Plan to meet soon to discuss wood processing. Work was done on drainage after the floods by the forest gate. Recent beaver activity was reported.
- **Wood Fuel:** JG reported a decent recent income. Palax machine is inefficient and needs to be used by trained and experienced people. The equipment group will look into alternative wood processors. Our wood prices have increased to (per bag): £70 for split wood, £50 for blocks, £40 for lengths.
- **Forest Vision:** Circulated pre meeting. ACF board approved the refreshed and discussed Vision document. Cathryn Cotterill has been doing great work on the Facebook page; the next step is updating the website. The Board thanked for her time and expertise collating the information for the consultation.

Mains of Aigas Woodland Creation Scoping Exercise

Circulated pre meeting. The shared borders and fence will need to be reviewed to go back to the original boundaries. Planting is being pushed back to 2026. The pond needs reinstating; drainage and the access road need improving. JG proposed to consider the maintenance of the Crask road due to the higher volume of vehicles and machinery using it.

Financial Report

JG reported current account balance: £156,799.26; deposit: £350,000. The outgoing not accounted for was £4015 bill for the digger.

Accounts for the year ending in February 2023 were circulated by GS at the meeting and via email afterwards. Proposed by DG, seconded by JG.

GS has commented on a few points on income. Our timber sales are going to decrease in a few years so we might be running at a loss. We will need to set clear budgets and apply for grants if we build. There is a potential additional income from SSE. VAT returns are done quarterly by an independent company at a budget around £1000.

Items of Expenditure

JG proposed a donation of £1000 to Teanassie Primary School, specifically for a classroom for pupils with additional support needs. The board raised concerns that our annual donation budget is £1000 and that the donation might not be within our charitable purposes; GS will investigate.

GS proposed a vote if the board agrees to go ahead with the donation. All were in favour. JY suggested an amount of £500, approved by the board.

The meeting closed at 21.25. The next Board meeting will be held on Monday the 15th April 2024 at 19.30 at the Magnus House.