

Minutes

of the Board Meeting held in The Magnus House, Aigas Field Centre on Monday
14th Aug 2017

Present		Apologies	In Attendance
Simon Longman SL Greg Jackson GJ David Garvie DG	Graeme Scott GS Peter Smith PS Philip Masheter PM Mark Hedderwick MH Neil Valentine NV	Russell Ross Liam McLaughlin	Helge Hansen HH John Graham JG (Treasurer) Andrew Leaver AL

Item		Action
1	<p>GS welcomed everyone to the meeting</p> <p>Apologies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Received from Russell Ross and Liam McLaughlin PM took meeting notes. 	
2	<p>Declarations of Conflict of Interest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> None noted 	
3	<p>Minutes of meeting of 26TH June These minutes had been circulated to the Board in advance. Proposed – NV; Seconded GJ</p>	
	<p>Agenda items</p> <p>Vice Chairperson</p> <p>GS explained the need to appoint a Vice Chairperson, the board felt that this would help the chairperson in times of absence and may improve the transition for a new chairperson should the vice chairperson succeed the chairperson. It is noted that PS has offered his services for this role.</p> <p>It is aimed to fill this position by the next meeting and it was felt that other parties should be given the opportunity to express their interest in the interim period. GS will remain in position for another year.</p> <p>Paths and Access sub-group report</p> <p>PS had circulated an update prior to the meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deer Gates are to be installed by the car park Signage has been agreed 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aigas field centre have offered to do further work on the turning/car park area at a time that is convenient. NV offered to explore prices from Campbell hire for machinery to assist with moving a suitable quantity of fill material down to the turning area in preparation for the work to be carried out by Aigas Field Centre. MH then offered to carry out the loading and transport of this new material at a suitable time with a new digger (on trial) and is keen to explore an area which may have some good fill material further up the hill. He also suggested that it would be good to carry out this work during the landward visit if he could schedule it in. • The path group will walk Path/route 1 on Wed afternoon and discuss work requiring to be done. • HH met recently with the MT bikers for consultation to discuss safety, insurance and club issues. Resolving these items for existing tracks is of paramount importance prior to any proposals put forward to the P&A group for expansion. • The subject of insurance was discussed at length (at the board meeting) for the bikers. It was suggested that a model similar to that used at Kessock should be explored for Aigas. • NV offered to contact John Ireland of the forestry commission (Health and Safety officer for UK – tracks/paths) for advice on the Aigas paths/tracks to allay any concerns that the path/track sub group or board members may have. • Firebeaters to be placed at the Cabin, Lochan, Crask Rd & junction to Lochan. A suitable way to install these is to still to be actioned <p>Deer Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HH reported that the stalker should be with us for another year Though he has not been active for some time. PS noted that stags could be stalked now. The stalker has requested that some tracks require to be cleared to enhance the recovery of despatched deer. Sottish woodlands will aim to improve certain tracks when they carry out the thinnings during the next few months. NV has emphasized that the chain saw operators are working hard to clear an area east of the Lochan and work will continue there to make it suitable for stalking purposes. Chain saw volunteers can be used in the future to clear the tracks identified by the stalker • HH spent some time on the merits of a new fence to ring fence the forest and as requested at the previous meeting showed a proposed line to achieve this. Scottish woodlands were asked to submit an approximate price for this work as was David Reid. The price for the Scottish woodland fence was £55000 for approximately 5km which is approximately 50% of the length of the forest perimeter. The other 50% of the perimeter has recently been deer fenced by Mains of Aigas Note: this does not include a deer grid at the Crask which would be required near AL'S house. 	<p>MH</p> <p>NV</p> <p>PM</p>
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At the time of the meeting David Reid had not submitted a price.

There was quite a lengthy discussion on the impact and need for a deer fence and the cost of providing one. **HH** is of the opinion that with the large numbers of deer that are in the area, new trees would not survive despite the efforts of stalking and has made a strong case for the fence to be erected to protect any future tree planting schemes. The new fence would mean that the cost of fence per hectare would be £360, which would be significantly more cost effective than fencing round individual blocks of trees.

No decision was made to proceed with the proposed fence as ACF does not possess sufficient funds at this current time.

GS suggested bringing some felling forward as nothing is planned for 2018 and this along with funds received from thinnings for later this year may help to make a future fencing project feasible for board approval.

Wood fuel

- **JG** gave a run down on the costs for equipment that could be required to enable a wood fuel business to function all be it with volunteers.
£6000 and £2800(+ VAT) has been spent since the last meeting to procure a second hand tractor (MF 165) with crane attached and a new log trailer respectively.
Also log bag frames and bags have been purchased to enable logs to be bagged.
- To purchase a digger (multi purpose) that was discussed at the previous meeting and a vehicle to deliver the bags of wood to customers would require in excess of £10000. The board felt at this stage that there should be a further meeting with Chris to revisit the viability of spending significant sums of money on equipment for the wood fuel operation
- There is a question mark also on how much can be expected from the volunteers on an ongoing basis for wood production.
- A question mark was also raised about the sustainability of borrowing tractors for the running of this business.
- The survey has been concluded though that the number of submitted returns were disappointing. A number of individuals at the open day expressed interest verbally.
- There are also ideas to consider engaging a third party to distribute the wood to the customer.
- Future wood fuel group meeting to be arranged.
- **JG** has sourced suitable suppliers for the following essential items that the board have now approved for purchase.
 - Basic toilet unit for the cabin approx £850
 - 500L fuel dispensing station to fuel machinery approx. £1000
 - Parts to provide tractor with 3 point linkage to enable use of **NV'S** winch which is on loan to the ACF. Cost of the three point linkage tbc. The 3 point linkage will also enable the tractor to perform other functions within the forest.
- Provision of a Hot water washing facility (for hands & cups etc) to be deferred until the loo is in position – approx £600

Open Day Resume

- **HH** gave a brief account of how the open day went with over 120 visitors over the course of the afternoon with one of the objectives being to engage more members and volunteer helpers. The day was successful with good value sawmilling, firewood production, wood carving , good BBQ, and music all in the mix. Thanks to all volunteers and generous donations.

Volunteer (Volunteer Coordinator)

- **JG** and **HH** both discussed the merits of having a volunteer recruited to manage volunteer helpers for tasks such as path work, preparing restock, fence repairs etc
- **NV** offered to be acting volunteer coordinator in the interim period as he is already in the process of engaging the forestry college lecturers and their students to carry out practical work
GS thanked **NV** for all his efforts to date
HH and **NV** to liaise
- **GJ, JG** and **HH** generated ideas for the 2 students who will be based at Aigas Field Centre during the Winter months

Chain saw training

- **NV** updated the board on progress and that all trainees had been involved in training and ongoing project work and that all were now applying for assessment.
- **NV** will assess some previously trained individuals others will be assessed by a third party. ACF will bear the necessary costs.
- Approx £235/person for assessment. Training was provided on a voluntary basis by **NV**

Saw Milling

- Sawmilling was discussed ie buying/hiring the equipment
NV suggested that as projects arise (such as cladding the forest cabin) we should hire the likes of Neil Armstrong with his sawmill and volunteers to assist (cost £250/day)

Lochan Refurb

- **JG** took the initiative at very short notice to apply to the CO-OP community fund for up to £6000 with a proposed budget of £12000 to carry out further Lochan refurbishment. We will know on the 17th Nov if ACF has been shortlisted to win funding.

Financial Report

- **GS** produced draft accounts for the year ended 28th Feb 2017 and talked the group through the figures.
- ACF currently has £65000.00 in the bank , **JG** has expressed that he has been experiencing signatory problems with the new account mandate for the bank –though on a positive note they have given a £400 donation to ACF.
- **AL** expressed that it would be ideal if board members could have sight of all income/expenditure
- VAT registration for ACF is being explored by **GS**
- **JG** reported that ACF has fulfilled its statutory requirements as an employer to provide a workplace pension (NEST)

AOCB

- **GS** reported that the funding that had been applied for through Historic Scotland for the repair of the Stone arched bridge had been unsuccessful on the grounds that they were aiming to look at the bigger picture ie include paths and other items and look at the way the paths fitted into the old estate. Feedback on the failed application was limited at this time.
- It was decided to continue with monthly board meetings in view of the amount of work that being carried out at the moment. The next meetings will be on 2nd Oct, 6th Nov & 4th Dec

The meeting closed at 1000PM
The next meeting will be held in the Magnus house at 7pm
on Mon 2nd Oct.
