



VAT. No. 310378531

Minutes of the Board Meeting held in The Magnus House, Aigas Field Centre on Monday 2nd December 2019 at 1900.

Present

Peter Smith PS
John Graham JG
Phil Masheter PM
David Garvie DG
Chloe Denerley CD
Neil Valentine NV
Madeleine Robinson MR
Graeme Scott GS
Mark Hedderwick MH
Andrew Leaver AL

In Attendance

Helge Hansen HH
Jim Mann JM

Apologies

Greg Jackson GJ
Russell Ross RR

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

None declared

Minutes of Meeting of 7th October 2019

These minutes had been circulated to the Board in advance.
Proposed JG. Seconded DG. Approved.

Chairman's Business

Jim Mann gave us a progress report on the pigs which have now been moved to a 2nd and much larger enclosure. In the 1st. enclosure the pigs have taken the bracken right down and cleared the mat of moss with no damage to mature trees and only 2 tiny trees uprooted. Over a period of 18months it is planned that the pigs will rotate through each enclosure 2 or 3 times to control bracken growth. He explained that the pigs are given high dose vitamin B supplements in their water to counteract the effect of the enzyme thiaminase found in bracken.

JM asked the Board to consider introducing turkeys and an alpaca to the 1st enclosure. The birds produce alkaline manure, would spread the pig manure levelling the surface and reduce the number of weevils to allow a shortened felling/replanting cycle. The alpaca will protect the birds from foxes and possibly pine martens. NV brought up the risk of disturbance to ground nesting birds and it was agreed to introduce the turkeys before the nesting season. JM reassured the Board that there was no risk of introducing any pathogens. Signage will be needed to warn dog owners to keep their dogs under close control and away from the enclosure as alpacas will attack dogs. The Wildlife and Ecology group will meet to decide how to monitor the effects of the introduction. NV suggested keeping some form of wildlife register which could be accessible to the public.

PS proposed that ACF should buy a secondhand polytunnel to enable us to propagate our own trees. PS, NV and MR will form a group to explore and advance this.

Vice-Chairman's Business

PM had nothing to report.

Report from Helge Hansen, Forest Manager

Approximately 3,000 tons have been harvested so far with a further 2-3,000 tons to come. The wood sold so far has been mainly low quality producing a low financial return. There is no market for the saw logs at present so as the stacking areas are full, harvesting has temporarily stopped. NV reassured the board that the stacked wood will not deteriorate for a few months. The Board agreed that it was appropriate to be patient and not put pressure on the contractor at this time.

AL reported that BT have asked for details of ACF's insurance relating to the cut phone line. The Board agreed that this was to be referred to Scottish Woodlands and was not the responsibility of ACF.

The line that the deer fencing will follow where the ACF boundary is adjacent to Aigas Loch has been agreed. The deer fence will run through the trees uphill from the boundary line and plastic fencing will be used. ACF will supply the materials and AFC are responsible for the labour and maintenance. Davy Reid is aware of this change and it was suggested that this might reduce the overall fencing cost.

HH reported that more than 2,245 trees have been planted to date and are generally doing well. He plans to replant some windblow areas soon and clear felled areas are required to be replanted by 2022.

Matters Arising not covered elsewhere

PS will meet with RR to agree a plan to move forward with the machinery shed.

Sub-Group Reports

Paths and Access Group

The group met on 25th November. DG reported that Path1 is now regarded as complete.

HH is continuing to build a constructive relationship with the mountain biking group including discussions on the maintenance of paths.

NV reported that tidying up is in progress at the working area by the lochan. It was agreed that efforts should be made to avoid this location looking too industrial.

Deer Management

No meeting

Woodfuel

No meeting. JG reported that 2 people are now available to deliver firewood. Various ideas were floated about the future of wood fuel sales. JG felt that it would be more appropriate for the wood fuel group to discuss these before presenting them to the Board at the next meeting.

Wildlife and Ecology

No meeting. Chloe agreed to arrange a meeting.

Financial Report

GS informed the Board that the draft accounts have been inspected with no changes made. They have been submitted to Companies House.

The Board accepted the accounts. Proposed PM. Seconded NV.

JG expressed the Board's thanks to GS for all his work.

GS offered to supply 4-6 monthly management accounts and this was welcomed by the Board. He will meet with HH after the current felling is completed to produce projections for the April Board meeting.

Secretary's Report

MR had nothing to report.

AOCB

AL thanked ACF on behalf of the Highland Hospice for donating the christmas tree that is now standing in Falcon Square in Inverness.

The meeting closed at 21.15

The next ACF Board meeting will be held on Monday the 27th January 2020 in the Magnus House at 1900.

