

Minutes for KCFC Board meeting held on 7th January, 2015

Present – David Blair, Rob Borruso, Nikki Brown, Willie McAllan, Andy McKenzie, Steve Williamson, John King, Andrew Graham-Weall, Fiona Hamilton

Apologies – Fraser Brown,

Welcome DB welcomed everyone back for what he predicts will be a hugely exciting year – all seen in the tea leaves at the bottom of his cup!

Minutes of previous meeting

Two typos spotted by DB. FFCS should read FCS. Date of Pond Life project needs changed. proposed WM, seconded DB

Development Manager report (NB)

Purchase of Upper Acharossan

- The meeting with NFLS panel member and FCS on 9th Dec had positive feedback.
- Twin Deer Law have been appointed to review draft Tilhill contract and initial comments have been received. NB and SW to go through and then request a call with TDL and Tilhill to discuss any changes. It is important this contract is signed ASAP ahead of the SLF/ NFLS committees meeting in mid/ end Jan. Funding has been received from HIE to cover legal costs.
- RB and SW will attend a meeting at Tilhill office in Strachur on 14th Jan with FCS and others who use the Ormidale Hill timber haul route, to discuss proposed upgrades to the road. Funding has been secured via the Strategic Timber Transport Scheme, however there will be a % to be paid by the partners.
- The outcome of the new forest purchase should be known by the end of Jan.

Kilfinan Trust email

- NB/ DB to draft a response to Kilfinan Trust's email outlining future plans.

Froglife

- RB has provided Froglife with a quote for a dipping platform and frames for interpretative signage. James Stead is finishing project specification and pond installation date still to be determined.

Archaeology

- A meeting is scheduled for 22nd Jan, 7pm, Kames Church Hall. 10 people confirmed so far. Key topics for discussion – phase 2 archaeology following walkover and features identified, and the potential for setting up a Kilfinan archaeology group.
- Ronnie Irvine has pointed us towards some ex-forestry commission workers who might have information about the old curling rink, as they most likely planted the forest. Richard following up.

Kilfinan area path network

- NB and RB hosting a meeting with the Argyll & the Isles Coast & Countryside Trust, Portavadie Marina, TDDT, Community Council, Bruce Marhsall (ACT trustee), and KMG. ACT want to focus on an area (potentially Kilfinan) and bring the walking and cycling routes up to a really good standard of repair, and assist with the development of supporting detail like signage, mapping and promotion. The idea being that this area could be held up as a kind of showcase within Argyll that other communities could learn from and hopefully deliver in their own locations. Portavadie are interested as a potential developer.
- KCFC's focus might be improving the Kilfinan Way and establishing a link through to the Powderdams – connecting areas of the community and creating a circular route. There might be a funding opportunity here; NB to report back.

New volunteer programme

- New round of VAF funding announced. NB putting a plan together for a new 'apprentice' style volunteer project/ mentoring programme, where KCFC will take on up to 6 young volunteers for a set period, who will receive training in forestry/ land-based skills. At the end of the programme two young people will be taken on as paid trainees, to join the operations team. NB working on a plan. Proposed young people's project will be costed out by WM and NB

Crowd funding project

- Project complete and £1,710 raised. Elaine Jamieson confirmed availability of FCS Community funding from April 2015 to fund the gap for the tree nursery. NB to put a bid together. RB to get quotes for fencing the tree nursery

Shared forester resource

- Elaine Jamieson has floated the idea of a shared forester resource across different community groups, with potential FCS funding. Sounds like it would need to be a community group-led initiative, and could be very useful for our strategic forest management of the new forest. It was agreed to express interest and ask how would the forester be recruited.

VAT

- VAT claim 1 submitted - c. £5.5K due back.
- Christmas night out was unexpectedly civilised. All were congratulated on their relative sobriety

Housing

- Cllr Mike Breslin has had reply from Paul Farrell who is hardening his position on requirements for the road. Option to scale back to 5 houses, or press on with original and rely on committee pushing it through. RB seeking clarification on whether committee members can overturn Roads department.

Forest Operations

- Three orders need completed in next week, but there is no capacity to get the work done. It was suggested to hire someone on ad hoc basis in order to complete. It was agreed to take on a person who came up expressing interest in having work. In future a register of people willing to take on short term/ad hoc work at short notice in order to ensure employment opportunities are equitable. Tele-handler training will be organised for another three people. RB and AM to work together to look at training need and devise a training programme.
- WM AGREED THAT A RAKE MAY BE PURCHASED. RB confirmed his happiness is temporarily complete.

Financial Report

- a conference call is scheduled for tomorrow with HIE re hydro
- the cash flow spreadsheet shows a shortfall over a period of six months, but overdraft facility is in place.
- Cost Benefit Analysis has been reviewed by NB & WM. Cash flow problems exacerbated by purchase of Upper Acharossan will be smoothed out by sale of standing timber. The CBA shows that KCFC is financially viable over five years.
- NB to ask Tillhill when a return on the timber should be expected.
- Fast track licence might be available for windblow
- SRDP needs to be submitted for timber transport roads.
- Jobs structure will need to be looked at closely if purchase is successful.

AOCB

- JK expressed an interest in helping to develop the crofting project. He has drawn up a suggestion of one way to set up, as a mixture of personal croft for primary production and common ground, and will email this to committee. JK will take the lead on crofting for the committee. A specific meeting will be arranged for discussing JK's proposal.
- Habitat creation and path creation. JK is keen to develop this and will write a plan to present to committee. JK and RB will take detailed exploration walk around the forest.
- AG-W Commemorative bench was ordered some years ago, almost ready for completion upon hearing if final payment will be forthcoming. Mini-digger will be required to prepare site. If final payment is not forthcoming, the bench will be sited in the forest.

DONM

Wednesday 4th February, 5 pm