



Minutes for meeting via Zoom

19.30 hrs, 8th July 2021.

Attendees:

Reg Macdonald (RD), Ros McGhee (RM), Cathleen Russell (CR), Gary Kirby (GK) John Allan (JA),

Apologies:

John MacNaughton (JM), Graham Curran (GC), Charlie Collins (CC), Amber Llovet (AL)

Previous minutes:

Given that there was a shortage of members present who had attended the last meeting the approval is held over until the August meeting

Matters Arising:

Covered in the agenda

Declarations of interest:

CR is a director of the SRA.

Administration Report:

In AL's absence the report and the positive impacts of the Communities Recovery Fund were discussed . The balance of funds await approval for use for ongoing maintenance.

It was noted that the Colintrave Structure had been completed although the Glendaruel Structure had not yet started. There was concern the location of the Glendaruel structure had not been fixed on the ground. It was noted this was in the plans.

RD expressed concern over current funding, the payment and liability for the contractors and lack of transparency to ensure the trust remained solvent and that trustees had proper oversight of funding. The status of the contractors was discussed and confirmed by CR that they were on short term rolling contracts with limited liability. It was stated that it was important that the trust took a responsible position to CC and AL who had been loyal supporters.

AL had offered to take a holiday in August to help in cash flow and that would not be funded. RD requested, and it was agreed that CR would provide the up-to-date financial status to trustees and a forecast of cash flow before the next meeting in August. RD emphasised the need for trustees to take preventative actions now, including controlling contractors hours. Problems with Bank access and poor service by Bank of Scotland were noted and this was complicating matters. JA queried if the retained funds from Stakis Screening funds was included in the balances in the report and CR would confirm. General concern was expressed over the burden of work being undertaken by CR that seemed disproportionate – CR confirmed this was manageable and acceptable until the new Board could be appointed by the community at an EGM.

CR would make an application to the Wind Farm Trust for additional funds. CR reported that the bid for CEO funding was progressing and, if successful would support the role of AL.

GK reported Forest main signage was nearing completion and would be circulated for agreement. Concern was expressed by GK over the lack of precision mapping and confusion over areas of the forest for different uses. JA agreed to provide the detail from the lease, although the scale of the lease documents was unhelpful when on the ground. The SWG (Stronafian Working Group) report on the lease will attempt to improve that.

Volunteers were required to assist on the work in the forest, particularly to clear the bracken that was invading paths and obscuring routes. A discussion followed on the use of chemical treatments (Asulox?) and this will be pursued with CC, CR and GK, respecting best practice and legal constraints, noting the risk to water supplies. It was

mentioned by CR that there were no known private water supplies deriving from the forest amenity area. It was agreed the use of chemicals would be presented and voted on at a future meeting.

Motion

To accept the Admin report as presented. Unanimously approved with no dissenters.

Rangers Report:

In the absence of CC his email report was discussed. The minister's permission for signage at the church and comments were noted.

It was agreed the discussion on the lease of land from Argyll and Bute Council is held over until RM, CC and JM are available together, to provide local input from all perspectives.

Governance

The intention to appoint a new Board at an EGM at the earliest opportunity was raised by CR. Until then the intent was to hold the line. That EGM would also provide the opportunity to seek Community direction on projects to pursue. Completion of the Governance documents is ongoing by CR. Introducing the new filing system and emails is underway.

Farmers Market

CR outlined this to be the subject of a separate meeting with all interested parties.

Broadband report

JA said some 30 properties had been supported. This has now reduced to mainly newcomers to the area. The service would continue to be available on an ad hoc basis, even after JA has left the Board. Some small donations received.

AOB

A general discussion ensued on the critical need for developing income streams. It was pointed out by RD that the trust is not sustainable on grant funding alone and a robust minimal expenditure needed to be imposed until a viable income stream is achieved.

Funding topics included:

- CR raised the possibility of carbon capture funding using the forest asset. JA commented this would be covered in the forthcoming SWG lease report but doubted there was potential income, from what had been discovered so far.
- CR mentioned Walking tours
- CR mentioned that the Sutherland family would be keen to support Glendaruel historical projects.
- RM mentioned enterprise courses with various organisations willing to provide training to teach forest and green skills as well as availability of cultural and business funds to support these.
- Revisit previous subject put forward in January and tabled – these to be the subject of prioritisation by the community at the EGM as above e.g. sustainable energy projects and use of the forest by Calum MacLean.
- JA mentioned that the trust should consider the asset value of the forest area for others to lease/rent as a venue for pursuits in line with the M&A. This would avoid the management and financial risk of the trust while providing income.

In summary, these to be worked up into proposals to put to the EGM for community direction.

CR pointed out the need to follow the UN goals on sustainability – a discussion ensued because the language of this needs to be carefully applied to ensure the intent of the 'goals' does not become a restraint on what can be done.

JA offered that his aim is to finalise the SWG lease report and recommendation before the next meeting.

It was noted that JA will leave the Board after this meeting under his agreement to provide 6 months co-opted support, although he will still be available as a member and volunteer.

CR thanked JA for his support and help in dealing with the governance issues, Broadband initiative and ongoing lease work.

DONM: 9th August 2021