

Annual General Meeting of the Maryculter Woodlands Trust: Minutes

The annual general meeting was held in the Church Hall, Kirkton of Maryculter on 7th November 2018. 22 full members were in attendance (quorum 19)

1. **Introduction.** The outgoing Chair, Ed Thorogood, welcomed the members of Maryculter Woodlands Trust.

2. **Minutes of Previous AGM (Dec 2017).**

Minutes were accepted as an accurate record of the 2017 AGM

3. **Matters arising:** None

4. **Chairman's Report of MWT Activities.**

The Chairman expressed his thanks for the support from the community during the past year. The main activities in the year were:

- The network of forest roads has been extended along the southern boundary to form a 2.5km loop. This work was largely funded by a grant from the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route Construction Joint Venture. We expanded the contractors scope to include refurbishment of the entire length of the burnside forest road and refurbishment of the poorest sections of the old forest roads in the main area of the wood
- First thinning operations were completed in all the remaining stands that had not been previously thinned. Some older stands to the east of the Crynoch Burn were also thinned
- A new circular, mulched path was created in the centre of the wood following the route of the extraction rack cut during the thinning operations in that area. The 'ditches' path, which had been overgrown for many years, was re-opened
- The orchard/tree nursery was constructed ready for planting, funded by a grant from the Meikle Carewe Wind Farm Community Fund and also community donation. The scope involved removing the old stumps and rocks from the site, adding 360 tonnes of topsoil and erecting a deer fence around the perimeter
- We hired contractors (after inviting 3 firms to tender) to clear the worst of the spruce seedlings in the area of natural regeneration on Oldman Hill
- The artist Stan Brooks completed the construction of his public participation sculpture (The Nest) in the wood. It is now ready for the insertion of stick bundles to turn it into an insect hotel. Stan has contacted local schools so that they can help make and install the stick bundles
- A drainage ditch near to the western boundary had become progressively choked with soft rush over the last 20+ years. There was still some drainage along its length but we decided to hire a digger to clear out the ditch. We took the opportunity to

widen a 12m section of the ditch to slow the regrowth of soft rush and so create a small pond

- We arranged a work party for Nexen Petroleum and they cleared gorse and birch seedlings off the large area of heather moor
- Many community members supported us via direct donations or by attending one of our fund-raising events. The monthly work parties and summer working week were all well attended. All members are thanked for this support
- We planted over 600 trees in the year
- We hosted a visit from the Scottish Wildlife Trust and wrote an article for their newsletter
- David Welch and David Elston (former and current Vice-County Recorders for the British Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland, BSBI), along with David Plant and Hazel Witte and student James Cousland conducted a plant survey of the woods. They recorded over 220 plant species in the wood
- A new set of Master students from Aberdeen University School of Biological Sciences worked in the wood over the summer

Future Projects

Potential projects for next year include

- Building a second bridge over the Crynoch Burn
- Creating a small pond and restoring the wetland areas
- Expanding the area of Scots Pine/ Ericoid heath

No further thinning by machine is planned in the near future

Treasurer's Report

A/c 1.9.17 to 31.8.18 Accounts ratified by Dean Turner

Receipts £50,907

Payments £50,759

Surplus £148

Cash & bank balance at YE £7,023

Receipts (total £50,907)

Grants £24,050 (AWPR CJV & Meikle Carewe Wind Farm Community Fund)

Donations	£8,274
Fund Raising	£1,052
Income -Forestry	£11,399
Income - SSE Wayleave	£183
VAT Refund	£5,949

Payments (total £50,759)

Legal costs	£250
Insurance and membership fees	£371
Expenses for fundraising activities	£657
Expenses for charitable activities	£371
Mulcher / excavator hire	£8,622
Road reinstatement after Felling	£5,356
Planting costs (stakes, collars, tools)	£1,137
Southern Link Road	£20,750
Tree Nursery & Orchard	£4,050
Nest boxes and feeders	£561
Bridle path signs	£121
VAT on sales & purchases	£8,513

Election of Directors

Bill Caffyn & Alice McAra had both served the maximum 3-year period on the Board but were prepared to stand again. They were elected unopposed by the members present at the AGM

AOB

Ed reminded the members that if they make any purchases through Amazon then they can nominate a charity to which Amazon will donate 0.5% of the net purchase price i.e. at no cost to the buyer. The webpage is smile.amazon.co.uk.

Ed also advised members of relevant events in November/December: MaryculterFest, Winter Wonderland Walk and a talk about local walks, including in our community wood, at the Culter Heritage Centre

Mr J Skinner accused the Board of taking actions that had damaged his farmland adjacent to the wood. The Board stated categorically that they had not taken any such action and after much heated debate it was decided that the matter would not be resolvable at the AGM. Follow-up conversations were offered.

Dawn gave an update on the Mucky Boots Forest School which is turning into a great success.

Ed thanked the members for their attendance and input, and the meeting came to an end, although discussions continued with the help of the refreshments provided by Inga.