

Final Minutes for Maryculter Woodland Trust Board Meeting: Thursday 9th February 2018

Members Present: Alice McAra, Ed Thorogood, Inga Milne, Bill Caffyn, Nigel Astell, David Brainwood, Susan Astell

Minutes: Minutes of last meeting still in draft, awaiting approval

Finance

1. The total invoice from Nigel for the brush-cutting work on the flanks of Oldman Hill will be £1,800 + VAT.
2. The invoice expected from Rob Robertson for mulching the larch path should be about £2000.00 plus VAT, based on his hourly rate
3. Payment of £73.50 was received for wood sales (Dean). They also donated £5.
4. Bill was paid expenses (£9.98)
5. Inga was paid catering expenses (£154.65)
6. Ed was paid expenses – Conservation Volunteers subscription (£38)
7. VAT: £13.00 VAT was paid out on birch log sales

The account currently stands at £31,699.

Expenses due excl Vat:

Forest Road	£20,000
Orchard/tree nursery	£4,050
Fruit trees	£1,080
Brashing Oldman Hill	£1,800
Mulching larch path	£2,000
Car park area *	£1,000
Horse signage	£130

*this is for widening the burnside entrance to give timber lorries the space to turn when extracting timber felled from east of the burn

Income due: Timber sales from Bill Munro to be confirmed

Projects

1. **Thinning Licence.** The thinning east of the burn has been completed. The value of the timber will vary; saw logs from the sitka spruce are the most valuable but the western hemlock logs are only suitable for pulp/chip. Thinning is ongoing in the southern part of the wood. The contractor has advised that the sitka stands to the west of the upper path have little monetary value to them (hence no value at all for us). This area of spruce will be left for now but it may be possible to

manually remove spruce from around any large clumps of birch in order to keep the birch alive and create glades.

The last stand of spruce is being worked on (opposite the T junction). There are many gaps in this stand, full of gorse and heather, indicating that the stand is mostly, or entirely, from natural regeneration rather than a fully planted commercial stand.

The entrance to the wood opposite Eastland Lodge (burnside entrance) had to be widened to allow access for lorries to remove the timber. We have incurred an extra cost for a digger and tar planings to carry out this necessary work as it was the only way possible to extract the timber.

- 2. Road to East of Burn.** The money received from timber sales (est > £6,000) will easily cover the cost of improving the forest road east of the burn. The work required includes removing hag from the road, re-digging the roadside ditch, unblocking culverts, scraping the road, some crusher run in the most damaged areas and a top dressing of dust. The sides of the track will be smoothed to allow it to re-green with occasional runnels to allow surface water to drain off the road. Alan Whiteford will be asked to quote for the work as a supplement to the work that he is doing on the main forest road. This ensures that we benefit from any synergy with his existing work. It was thought that it might cost around £2500 to £3500 plus Vat. The road was in a very poor state even before the felling operations. It is hoped that the road can be restored to a multi-user grade i.e. good enough to allow wheelchair access.

Action: Nigel to get quote from Alan Whiteford

- 3. Mulching** It was discussed whether there is budget for further mulching of the hag and stumps left over from the current felling operations. Most of the hag has been piled onto the new extraction racks. Top priority would be to mulch the circular rack that we asked the contractor to create in the spruce stand opposite the T junction. This would create a path similar to that through the larch stand (which seems really popular with visitors). The Board decided to wait until we have a more accurate figure from Bill Munro for the income that we will receive from timber sales.

- 4. Orchard** The budget for fruit trees is £1080 and this will determine the size of trees planted. A generous member of the community has offered funds for a project in the woods and funding some trees for the orchard might be a suitable choice. It was thought that a mix of small and larger trees would allow some fruit to be provided quickly by the more mature trees whilst the smaller trees developed. Nigel and David will liaise regarding tree varieties and suppliers. Members of MWT might also wish to donate fruit trees and bushes from their gardens.

- 5. Main Drainage Ditch** The slew used to scrape the new forest road has crossed the drainage once too often and damaged the crossing. The damage to the pipe isn't serious but the edging stones collapsed into the drainage ditch. The stones can be hauled out easily enough with a small slew at a later date.

Events

1. **Quiz Night** It was thought that a Quiz Night could be held in March and that we should approach Ann to see if the Church hall would be available for the event. It was agreed that there should be a raffle and it was discussed what type of catering could be offered. Stovies was suggested but there are licence complications and would require catering before final numbers are known. At the last quiz night we asked attendees to bring their own food "bring a picnic to a picnic".

Action: Inga to progress plans for quiz night

2. **Tree Planting** Trees will be arriving in the middle and end of March and volunteers will be needed to plant these as well as the trees still stored in members' gardens. About 1000 trees will be available to plant so we will need more than just the monthly work parties in March/April to get them all planted.

It was suggested an approach could be made to Lairhillock Primary School for some children to come to a tree planting session. **Action:** David.

22nd April is 'Earth Day' and could be a tree planting event.

It was considered that people might be available for planting during the week or evenings, including short notice groups.

It might be possible to advertise and organise a bigger tree planting event with far larger numbers of people than the usual work parties.

Once the nursery area has been levelled and fenced and topsoil spread, any trees not planted in time can be heeled in there safely until the autumn.

AOB

1. Mailchimp. Alice has updated Mailchimp. New data protection regulations come into force on 25 May. Under these regulations it must be as easy to withdraw consent as it is to give consent to hold data. It was agreed that we should have an unsubscribe button on all our emails.
2. John Skinner met with Ed to investigate an issue of worsening drainage of John's fields. They found that a section of drainage ditch crossing under the boundary dyke had become blocked with roots etc raising the water levels in both our property and John's adjoining property. This has taken many years to develop and the birch trees are clearly struggling in the wetter conditions. The boundary dyke is also sinking into the wetter soil. The area is too wet to get a digger in now but in the summer a digger will be required to clear the ditch and possibly widen it to avoid any future slumping of the banks from blocking the ditch.

A little further to the south of the blocked drain John & Ed discovered that someone has dismantled part of the boundary dyke and dug a drainage pit in the wood. This was done several years ago and when FCS was still the owner of the wood.

3. Recycled Deer Fence. Bill has collected up the old deer fence donated by Altries Estate. Nigel suggested keeping it where it is until we can immediately use it in the wood - avoiding double-handling. **Action: Bill and Nigel to arrange transport.**
4. Ed has further investigated padlocks and found even more weather resistant model (Squire Rustproof Lock). These will be in the region of £20.00 and so are more expensive than the Abus marine padlocks previously discussed. We will need 5 keyed-alike padlocks and 12 keys. The Board agreed to go with the more expensive Squire padlocks. **Action: Ed**
5. Amazon has launched a new donations programme for charities called AmazonSmile. They will donate 0.5% of net purchase price to a selected charity. It was agreed that we should register. **Action: Ed**
6. Friday 2nd March, 2.30 to 4.00 pm, Hutton institute. Biodiversity film about the wild north east of Scotland. Peter Cairns
7. The felling contractors suffered a theft of red diesel from their fuel bowser whilst it was in the wood. The padlocks were smashed off and about 200 gallons of red diesel was stolen.

The next meeting will be on Thursday 8th March, 8pm at Eastland.