

Minutes for Maryculter Woodlands Trust Board Meeting, Tuesday 2nd April 2019, Inga's House

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

Apologies: Nigel Astell

Minutes: The minutes from the March Board meeting were approved.

Finance: The current bank balance is £4,830

The following payments were made (debited from bank account since the last meeting):

1. £495 to Scottish Fruit Trees (the Children's Orchard) for 8 heavy bush fruit trees for the orchard (5 apple, 3 plum)
2. £456 to David for 30 fruit trees
3. £3,600 (incl VAT) to thin spruce in the southern stands using a chainsaw crew

The following payments were received (already in bank account):

1. £3,155 reclaimed Gift Aid
2. £2,000 private donation from community members

Known Liabilities:

1. ~£300 (incl VAT) for fruit trees and shrubs to stock the orchard (paid by Nigel).
2. £700 to complete pond (geotextile, sand, digger time, plants) + liner
3. ~£100 website hosting fees (paid by David)
4. £25.48 for keysafe (paid by Ed)

Action: Bill to set up payment of expenses incurred by Ed & David

Action: Nigel to provide receipt from Ben Reid to claim as expenses

Known Income:

1. Gift aid still to claim (£500).
2. Supply of a Christmas tree to Portlethen Community Council. **Action:** Ed to send invoice
3. VAT refund (£692)

Projects

Orchard/Nursery. All 41 fruit trees are now planted (apple, pear, plum, gage, damson, cherry). There are 31 trees on the grid with a further 10 along the perimeter fence There are 4 possible planting nodes left on our 6x6 grid (all near the main gate) but these will be reserved for fruit bushes rather than trees.

Insect hotel. Lairhillock want to visit again w/c 22nd April (contact Rachel May).

Spruce Thinning. Work continues by hand, at a slow but steady pace.

Nest boxes, Pond, Recycled Deer Fencing:Nothing to report

Events

Apr Work-PartyThe list includes spreading wood chip in the orchard, planting the remaining bushes (blackcurrent, blueberry, raspberry, gooseberry) in the orchard, clearing the gorse off the sunken path below the orchard

AOB

Alice will start her RebelPT classes in Edinburgh later in April & so will not be able to attend any Board meetings if held during the week. The Board agreed with Alice that, sadly, she will need to step down and that the Board will need to find a co-opted replacement. Alice agreed to continue working the mailchimp on behalf of the Board. The Board all expressed their gratitude to Alice, who has been involved since the very beginning of the Maryculter Woodlands Trust in 2007.

Dawn informed the Board that the Forest School now has 26 children on their roll, with 15 attending on any day (still only Tues/Weds/Thurs). The maximum number that the teachers can supervise is 18 pupils at any time. There is demand for even more places but expanding to a new site within the wood has been ruled out. Longer term the school would like a composting toilet and also a log cabin, which will be discussed at a later date when more details are given to the Board. The Board remains supportive of Mucky Boots and looks forward to working closely with Mucky Boots so that we achieve the best balance for all user groups in the wood. The Board discussed using the May workparty to work in the base camp area used by Mucky Boots. Clearing some of the gorse in the area immediately south of the base will help relieve pressure on the forest floor north of the base. Dawn agreed to rustle up some support from the forest school parents.

A local resident has asked if he can grow potatoes in the wood adjacent to his garden. The Board expressed concern that whilst this wouldn't be a major abuse on an individual basis it did raise a wider, more complex, issue. The precedent set could, over time, lead to a creeping private ownership of strips of community land adjacent to gardens (it starts with a compost heap, then a fruit tree or bush, then paving, pizza oven, sheds, trampolines, trellis, lawns.....). The Board agreed to craft a letter to be sent to all those who have gardens adjacent to the wood advising them of what would cause us problems. **Action:** Ed to draft a letter for consideration by the Board.

Action: Ed to complete draft of Annual Report ready for signature at the next meeting. **Bill** will ensure that the accounts are ready.

Action: Ed to send maps to Nigel for printing

Action: Nigel to suggest a date to bring in his tractor/trailer into the wood to collect birch logs

Action: Ed to write email about new office-bearers and pass it on to Alice for mail-chimping out

Action: Ed & Susan to finish the draft AGM minutes

Next Meeting: Weds 8th May, Ed's place