

Minutes for Maryculter Woodlands Trust Board Meeting, Mon 13th January, Eastland

Members Present: David Brainwood, Ed Thorogood, Inga Milne, Nigel Astell, Susan Astell, Aileen Roberts

Apologies: Bill Caffyn

Minutes: The minutes from the December Board meeting were approved

Finance: The current bank balance is £7,150

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

1. £664 return of award from MC Wind Farm
2. £29.98 to Bill for ratchet loppers
3. £146.53 to Inga for expenses
4. £161.88 to Ed for tree netting
5. £302.54 to Ed for Zurich Insurance renewal

The following payments were received (credited to bank account since last meeting):

1. £456 from Portlethen Town Association for xmas tree (invoicemwt15, net £300 to MWT)
2. £73.50 from Ed for purchase of birch logs (invoicemwt16, net £70 to MWT)

Known Liabilities (not yet debited from account):

1. £3,000 + VAT for chainsaw crew
2. £1,080 + VAT for mulching
3. £80 + VAT to Eastland Foresters for work on xmas tree for Portlethen
4. £63.50 VAT to HMRC for timber sales

Known Income (not yet credited to account):

1. £500 Gift aid still to claim
2. £86.50 in cash donations received during the Winter Wonderland Walk (note: this has been deposited by Bill so will be credited to account at time of Directors meeting)
3. £20 donation from MaryculterFest

Action: Ed to deposit in bank a final beerfest donation of £20 (from David McAra)

Action: Reserve a bag of birch logs for Dean in recognition of preparing the annual MWT accounts

Projects

Pond (by Ian's garden). Aberdeenshire Planning Services (Aude Chaiban) confirmed via email that full planning is required if a liner is used to retain water or if rainwater is diverted to fill the 'scrape', regardless of the size of the final pond. The planning fee is £400. Ed has spoken to the Community Woodland Association about the position of our council. The CWA are unaware of any other community wood in Scotland that has had to pay planning fees for small ponds created for biodiversity. The CWA are taking a keen interest in our situation and they want to be kept informed of how this issue is resolved.

Action: Ed advised the Board that he is trying to set up a meeting with the planners to discuss all the planning issues.

Action: Nigel to advise if the pond could target any species listed in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan

The Board agreed to not proceed with the pond if we have to pay a planning fee given the precedent that it would set for us and other community groups in Scotland.

Pond (widened watercourse). The survey by the Scottish Agricultural College, arranged by Henry, has been completed. The report will arrive in the next few weeks. The Aberdeenshire planners also wish to charge a planning fee of £400 for the section of widened watercourse. Ed advised that the widened section is already filling up just as was feared when we were removing the rush from the watercourse in 2018. If we do not maintain the widened section nature will fill it in for us. The Board agreed to wait for the SAC report and wait to see the condition of the widened section later this spring and then advise the Council.

Ponds (between forest roads). No longer under consideration if planning fees are required.

Spruce Thinning. Awaiting invoice from Eastland Foresters.

Nest boxes, Recycled Deer Fencing: Nothing to report

Mulching. Waiting for invoice.

Orchard: Action: Nigel to obtain replacement trees from Ben Reid.

George Knox has asked if we want the excess topsoil from the field opposite the Meadows. This soil will become available once building work starts in the field. The proposal was discussed but there is no immediately obvious place to spread topsoil in the wood. Spreading the soil near the burnside road (on top of the bracken) could work but it would involve SEPA and would introduce a source of pasture seeds and pasture plants into the wood. **Action:** Board to consider more deeply if any option could work but the feeling is that we can't help.

Ed has applied to the K&M Area Committee for £2500 to help repair the worst sections of forest road and upgrade a section of path near the Burn. This will require match funding from us ie total cost of project is estimated at £5000 + VAT. The K&M Area committee will meet on 21st January to consider our application. Our request is below the level which would require our attendance at the council meeting.

Action: Ed to send copy of application to Board via email (form already on G-Drive)

Action: Board to investigate if Garfield Weston Fund could help with our share of the funding

Events

Feb WP. Sun 2nd Feb. Probably tree-planting, if conditions allow. Could also consider more work on the recycled deer fence, installing sleepers on ditches path, installing owl/ bird boxes.

AOB

Cove Woodland Trust (Ian Bowie) has got in touch asking about community trees. Ed has attempted to reply and left a voicemail and sent an email passing on our experiences. Action is with them.

Scottish Land Fund (David Knight) has got in touch to see if we want, for free, any 1 year old broad-leaf saplings. Ed suggested that we could take perhaps 100 trees. Awaiting reply from SLF.

Mucky Boots are arranging a fortnightly parent-and-child group from end Jan.

Action: Ed to investigate the cost of 5 keyed-alike padlocks & 15 keys

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

Next Meeting: Weds 4th Mar, 7.30pm, 10 Polston Rd (Nigel's pad)