

BIRSE COMMUNITY TRUST

Minutes of Board Meeting

19th May 2009

Trustees Present: Donald Silcock (Chair), Brian Page, Dorothy Dinnie, Jean Mcleod, Jacqui Christie
In Attendance: Robert Dinnie (Patron), Robin Callander (Secretary to Board)

1. Introduction

It was noted that there were no apologies and no items for Any Other Business.

2. Minutes of Last Board Meeting

The Minutes of the Meeting on 27th April 2009 were approved and signed.

3. Matters Arising:

3. ETBK: RD reported that he had contacted the Chair of ETBK to obtain the signed letter revising the lease of the Kirk. It was agreed that as BCT had yet to receive the letter, RD would continue to follow up the matter.

3 Electricity: It was noted that the next stage in RC's investigation of the current position over the recovery of the overpayment from British Gas, is to contact Colin Liddell.

3. Birse Parish Liaison Group: It was agreed that BCT will aim to organise the meeting of the BPLG in late August / early September.

4. Financial Report

4.1 Annual Accounts: The previously circulated paper of 4th May on Restricted Funds from RC to Christine Wright was noted. It was agreed that BCT should supply CW with an accurate statement of committed funds and contingent liabilities at the end of the financial year in time for CW's work on BCT's accounts. It was agreed that RC should pass on Trustees appreciation to CW of the value of the work she does on the accounts.

4.2 Current Balances: The paper tabled showing the balances in BCT's accounts at 15th May was noted and the proposed transfers between accounts approved. It was noted that, while some grant payments are due to be received by BCT in the coming weeks, overall expenditure is likely to continue to be greater than income meantime.

5. AGM 2008

It was noted that DD and JM are in touch with Eileen Bailey over helping with the arrangements for the AGM. It was agreed that RC will liaise with DS over his short presentation after the formal business and with RD over his closing remarks following Hector Riddell's performance. It was agreed that the AGM reminder to be sent to households should highlight HR's performance and that Trustees will actively encourage members to attend the AGM to maintain the level of those present. It was confirmed that RC will inform Trustees of the nominations received by the 20th May deadline.

6. Management Update

6.1 Administration: RC reported that Eileen and Bill Bailey and he have been continuing to meet weekly as part of co-ordinating and implementing BCT's management. It was agreed Trustees will meet RC, EB and BB on Wednesday 24th June at 2 pm as the three month review of the current arrangements. It was agreed to propose that such a meeting takes place again three months later. It was agreed that RC should work with EB and BB to draft letters of appointment for each of the three of them for Trustees to consider.

6.2 Overview: It was noted that, in addition to BCT's current focus on "forests" as part of trying to acquire Balfour, BCT will be involved in consulting on long term Forest Management Plans for each of Slewdrum, the Commonty Pinewoods and Balfour over

the next 18 months or so. It was noted that each of the local estates may also be involved in consulting on such plans during that period and that it had been agreed today with the three estates that it would be beneficial to have a coordinated local approach to these consultations. It was noted that BCT is currently working with the estates to review the 2004-09 Deer Management Plan covering the parish and replace it with a new Plan for 2009-14. The red and roe deer cull statistics for the parish over the last five years set out in the paper circulated by RC, were noted. It was noted that BCT is responsible for the deer control over 1,000 ha of land and agreed that BCT should be aiming for higher culls in each of the Commonly Pinewoods, Slewdrum and Balfour. It was noted that BCT is also working with the estates and RSPB to develop a parish wide plan for capercaillie conservation and that this plan and the Deer Management Plan will both be helpful elements in BCT's Forest Management Plans consultations.

6.3 Properties: Trustees considered the current topics at each of BCT's sites:-

Forest of Birse Commonly: It was noted that the site visit on 12th May had been very useful. It was agreed that a formal allocation will be made from the Fire Fund in due course to help finance the completion of the riparian planting programme. It was agreed that the improvements in the Kirk Woods and School Croft area were very positive. It was noted that BCT remains concerned about the condition and future of the Kirk. It was agreed that BCT will follow up the issue of fence lines around Auchabrack to reduce the risk of encroachments of Commonly land and inspect the position at Balloch. It was confirmed that BCT remains generally against temporary fencing as a way of addressing the issue of Glencat sheep coming on to the North Hill. The previously circulated map of BCT's proposed route for the Fungle through Balloch and the record of RC's site visit with Stuart Young on 23rd April were noted, including the position with the tree planting north of Birse Castle. It was agreed that BCT should offer to provide catering for the next social event with Birse, Ballogie and Finzean Estates, given BCT's lack of a suitable venue to host the event. It was agreed that BCT should update the information on visitor numbers to the Forest from its traffic counter near the Sawmill.

Slewdrum Forest: The current small scale site improvements being carried out were noted, together with the paper previously circulated on the Management Accounts for the Forest. It was confirmed that BCT will be sending BCTCo a lease for 2009-10 for signing. It was noted that the Forest Management Plan grant contract has now been received and that BCT will draw up proposals for the Forest for a consultation process starting in the autumn. It was agreed that a route through the Craigbeg plantation to the west of Slewdrum could provide a constructive way forward for the Deeside Way.

Balfour Wood: (a) Management: The paper previously circulated on the current Management Accounts for Balfour was noted. It was also noted that the Church Road on Balfour Estate has been repaired following BCT's timber extraction over it and that BCT is still pursuing a list of improvements with FCS within the Wood, including the condition of the Church Road, marking the eastern boundary and opening up the Foggage Road path. (b) Acquisition: Following a report from RC on the final feedback that BCT has received on its Lottery application, it was agreed that RC should write to the Growing Community Assets Programme Manager expressing BCT's disappointment over the apparent basis of the project's rejection. RC's report on his on-going discussions with Forestry Commission Scotland about how BCT might acquire Balfour was noted, including the potential application to the Third Sector Investment Fund for part of the money required. It was agreed that BCT now needs a meeting with the Director and Chief Executive of FCS to discuss the way forward.

Sawmill & Bucket Mill: The previously circulated paper from RC to BB with Draft Management Accounts was noted, as were points reported by RC about the position at the Bucket Mill. It was agreed that it would be helpful if BB can provide an up to date list of any physical repairs or improvements currently required at the Bucket Mill. It was agreed that, as RC is likely to need to take FCS and other officials to the Bucket Mill on occasions as part of BCT trying to acquire Balfour, he and BB should discuss how this might be best arranged. It was confirmed that further discussion of

the way forward with the Mills is a priority for the coming months. It was noted, given the significance of the Woodend steading's location relative to the Mills, that Finzean Estate intends to re-let it as a business unit following the departure of the bakery.

Finzean Community Woods: Current topics noted included the lack of funding for maintenance work pending the current SRDP funding application. It was agreed to have greater dialogue with Finzean Community Association over the Woods.

Finzean School Wood: Current topics noted included the lack of funding for the site and the need to encourage on-going engagement with the site by the School.

Birse Kirk: Current topics noted were the lease and insurance (3.3 above), the sign for the Kirk, tidying up the parking area dyke and the annual meeting with ETBK and BACA. It was agreed to propose Thursday 20th August for the meeting.

Birse Hall: Current topics noted were the water supply and general maintenance.

Soutar's Shop: Current topics noted were on-going maintenance and group visits.

Corsedardar: Current topics noted were on-going maintenance, Remembrance Sunday in November and the proposed Millennium Stone re-dedication on 1.1.10. It was agreed that RC will check and report on the condition of BCT's information panels at Corsedardar, in the Community Woods and at the entrance to the Commonty.

Finzean Old School: Current topics noted were the meetings room project, office space to re-let, list of building repairs and proposed woodchip heating scheme.

6.4 Projects: It was noted that EB is considering the elements that might be included in a potential Archive project and that this is likely to involve BCT's website. It was agreed that each Trustee will inspect the current website with a view to discussing possible improvements and adequate arrangements for keeping it up to date. It was noted more generally that BCT's on-going activities involve many topics that would be of interest to its members and the website appears the best potential way of communicating these.

7. Next Meetings

7.1 Board Meetings: It was agreed that the next Meeting will be on Monday 22nd June subject to its suitability for the new Trustee.

7.2 Site Visits: It was agreed to visit to the Commonty again on Tuesday 26th May, meeting at the Sawmill car park at 7 pm. It was noted that DS will not be able to attend and confirmed that Trustees partners are also invited. It was agreed to consider further site visits during July and August.

Signed.....

Date.....