

# Birse Community Trust

## Minute of Board Meeting

15<sup>th</sup> March 2016

Trustees Present: Jean McLeod (Chair), Doug Boyle, Anita Stutter, Mark White, John Hector  
Also Present: Rick Paul (Secretary to Board), Robert Dinnie (Patron), Jane Winton (Book-keeper), Robin Callander (Adviser),  
Apologies: Jonathan Kitching

### 1. Introduction

1.1 The agenda was confirmed. One apology and two items for AOB were noted.

### 2. Minutes of Previous Board Meetings

2.1 The previously circulated Minutes of the Meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2016 were approved and signed.

### 3. Matters Arising

5.2 Finzean Old School: RP confirmed after speaking to Ann Fletcher, that the key he has will be the one returned by her.

### 4. Finances

4.1 Annual Accounts 2015: It was noted that the draft Accounts had been received earlier in the day and that there are a number of points to be followed up by JW. The text of a paragraph about the Endowment Fund for the Trustees Report was agreed. It was agreed that JW will circulate the revised draft Accounts when they are available for prompt comments / approval by Trustees, to enable the Accounts to be finalised for use in BCT's Annual Report.

### 5. Administration

5.1 Annual Report 2015: The previously circulated draft Trustees Report was approved, subject to RC's proposed revision of the timber forecast section following MW's comments. The draft cover and initial draft layout for photographs in the text were noted.

5.2 AGM: It was agreed that there should be a discussion session after the formal business, and that RC should approach Dave Bracegirdle to see if he would be willing to play his guitar after that. It was agreed that, as part of introducing the discussion session, there should be a presentation about the mills incorporating the NMS video and photos of the flood damage and related aspects, such as the Historic Environment Scotland (HES) surveyors due at mills during the week 2<sup>nd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> May.

5.3 Membership: The need to start increasing the number of new members in advance of the AGM was noted. It was confirmed that all households on the Electoral Register will be mailed a copy of the Annual Report with the Notice of the AGM. It was noted that consideration needs to be given to the mailings to the different types of households in terms of all members, some members or no members, with the inclusion of membership forms and explanation as appropriate.

5.4 BTCo: The previously circulated BTCo Annual Accounts and Annual Report approved at BTCo's AGM on 10<sup>th</sup> March, were noted. It was also noted that BCT does not appear to have copies of the Minutes of BTCo Directors Meetings during 2007-11, and agreed that JW will follow this up with Paul Chapman to try to obtain a full set.

5.5 BPLG: The previously circulated Record of the Meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> March was noted, together with BCT's aim of improving the level of participation and the scope of discussions at these meetings.

5.6 Insurance Policy: The points raised by MW with RP in February and the discussion at the last Board Meeting were noted, including the need to review and update the building re-instatement values in the current policy. It was agreed to consider these matters further in August, with a view to being in a position by November to put BCT's required coverage out to market to ensure competitive premiums.

## 6. Properties

6.1 Finzean Mills: It was noted that repairs to the sluice gates and lades are due in April and that the planned works were visited by the Council's listed buildings inspector on 11<sup>th</sup> March. RC reported on the current positions with the funding applications to the Council and Foundation Scotland, and on the need for BCT to produce a Statement of Significance and Conservation Plan as part of taking forward a potential funding application to HES. RC also reported that Donald Farquharson has indicated his willingness to donate the two areas of land at the Sawmill, with BCT paying his legal costs. It was confirmed that RC will instruct J&H Mitchell to contact the Estate's solicitors to confirm the agreement and take forward the conveyancing.

6.2 Slewdrum Forest: It was noted that, following progress with the conveyancing, BCT has proposed 23<sup>rd</sup> March as the settlement date for the 5 ha land purchase and the Scottish Land Fund purchase grant has been released to BCT's bank account. It was noted that BCT is not currently aware of further progress with the remedial work to the river bank.

6.3 Forest of B Commonty: The previously circulated Record of BCT's annual Commonty Management Meeting with Birse and Ballogie Estates was noted. It was agreed that Commonty related topics should be a main part of the agenda at the June Board Meeting in the Birse Shooting Hut in the Commonty.

## 7. Other Projects

7.1 Local Estates: The previously circulated list of topics discussed at RC's meeting with Finzean Estate on 28<sup>th</sup> February was noted, together with RC's report on the meeting. It was confirmed that an annual meeting between BCT and the Estate will be a helpful development.

7.2 Members' Site Visits: It was noted that a visit to the Mills on 22<sup>nd</sup> May will be advertised in the Rabbit, on POOT and at BCT's AGM. It was agreed that a visit to the Soutar's Shop should be planned for the autumn.

## 8. Any Other Business

8.1 Timber Forecast 2009: RC explained that the forecast had been produced to illustrate how BCT could manage Slewdrum and Balfour Forests on the basis of relatively frequent, small scale harvesting to produce a long term, sustainable income. It was noted that the limited quality of the compartment tree data and the variable nature of timber prices, limit the practical value of the forecast. RC reported that the timber yield over the 6 years 2010-15 had been 50% greater than forecast due to the thinning of Balfour when BCT became owner producing twice as much timber than expected, while the timber income had been over 150% greater than anticipated during the 6 years due to the exceptionally high price received for the Lower Kettock clearfell.

8.2 Strategic Plan 2016-20: It was noted that, in addition to other items that RC is undertaking for BCT, the scale of the unscheduled work involved with the mills following the flood damage is placing particularly heavy demands on his time. It was recognised that responding over the mills is increasingly likely to mean that a draft Strategic Plan is not available by the AGM. It was noted that BCT has an Annual Plan, that the Schedule of Land and Buildings has been updated for 2016-20 and that there will be more scope to produce the draft Strategic Plan following the AGM. It was also noted that BCT has continued to consult the Community Councils and Associations through the BPLG about possible new initiatives that BCT might consider in future.

## 9. Trustees Meetings and Visits

9.1 Board Meetings: It was confirmed that the next Meeting will be on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> April at 7pm in the Archive Building.

9.2 Sites Visits: It was agreed to visit Slewdrum and Balfour Forests on 25<sup>th</sup> September and the Old School, other Finzean sites and the Soutar's Shop on 2<sup>nd</sup> October, with both visits starting at 2pm.