Birse Community Trust

Minute of Board Meeting
24th November 2015

Trustees Present: Jean McLeod (Chair), Anita Stutter, Doug Boyle, John Hector, Mark White

Also Present: Robert Dinnie (Patron), Jane Winton (Book-keeper), Robin Callander (Adviser), Guy Haslam (Item 1 only)

Apologies: Jonathan Kitching (Trustee), Rick Paul (Secretary to Board)

1. Introduction

1.1 The Agenda was confirmed with the addition of an initial presentation from Guy Haslam about the John Forster Memorial. Two apologies were noted and one item for AOB.

1.2 Guy Haslam outlined how he saw the current position with the development of his proposals for the John Forster Memorial in the School Wood, so that this could be taken into account by Trustees when considering the topic under item 7.4 of the Agenda.

2. Minutes of Previous Board Meetings

2.1 The Minutes of the Meeting on 13th October 2015 were approved and signed.

3. Matters Arising

3.1 Finzean Old School: It was confirmed that fire safety checks had been completed for October and November, and noted that water supplies in both buildings are switched off.

4. Finances

4.1 Management Accounts: RC explained that BCT will not be receiving the FCS grant of £18K for pine planting during this year, as the planting failed the inspection due to too few trees, as a result of a misunderstanding by RC and RTS of the new arrangements governing open space in planting schemes. It was noted that the grant should be received next year, after more planting in the spring. It was noted that with the anticipated donation from BTCo, there would still be a significant reduction in the level of BCT's end of year unrestricted funds.

4.2 Finances: The previously circulated email of 31st October from Guy Haslam with his views about BCT's future finances was noted, including that no response was required.

5. Administration

5.1 BCT Membership: It was noted that the current membership of 214 represents 33% of those on the Electoral Register and means that there is one or more members in 40% of the households on the Register. It was agreed to try for further members before the year end.

5.2 Boundary Commission: It was confirmed that BCT's previously circulated submission to the Commission had been sent and an acknowledgement received.

5.3 Strategic Plan 2016-20: The previously circulated Schedule of Lands and Buildings updated to January 2016 was discussed and agreed. The previously circulated BCT Financial Tables was also discussed and endorsed. It was agreed that it would be helpful if the sections in the main Strategic Plan document are expanded from their length in the previous plans.

5.4 Year end / Year start Arrangements: It was confirmed that RP, JW and RC should follow the existing pattern of arrangements for the end of BCT's year and start of the next one.

6. Properties

6.1 Forest of Birse Commonty: It was noted that, further to item 4.1 above, RC has put in place arrangements with RTS to try to ensure all the pine planting areas have adequate densities for next June's grant inspection. It was noted that RC has been in touch again with Ballogie Estate about the deer control and that maintenance work has recently been carried out on the North Hill tracks. It was also noted that RC is meeting Stuart Young of Birse Estate on 26th November to follow up the topics they discussed in July, including tree planting and the Fungle.

6.2 Finzean Community Woods: It was noted that the annual walk around the Woods organised with the Community Association had been on 1st November and that, while this had only been attended by DB, JH,

RC and Ian Hector, it had been a useful walk discussing the work to be done over the winter. It was agreed that RC will speak to Kathleen Moir about the tree behind her house. It was noted that some pupils from Finzean School will be planting around 8-10 hazel seedlings in the north end of the School Wood in the spring.

6.3 Corsedardar: It was noted that the attendance at the Remembrance Sunday event on 8th November had been 37 or more, despite the adverse weather. It was agreed that RC and AS will discuss any changes for next year, including an agreed shortened programme for bad weather. It was noted that Andrew Hector has agreed to be the piper in 2016.

6.4 Finzean Mills: It was noted that Historic Environment Scotland (HES) and Aberdeenshire Council (AC) Listed Building officials had visited the mills on 17th November in the context of BCT's request for advice over the circular saws and Health & Safety. RC reported that they were going to speak to colleagues and be in touch. It was agreed that BCT will bring in no further timber into the Sawmill until the H&S position is clearer. It was noted that other HES staff will visit on 13th January with a view to drawing improved plans of the mills later in 2016.

6.5 Soutar's Shop: It was noted that HES also visited the Soutar's on 17th November and that HES will be considering whether the building should be listed at a higher grade than its current grade C. It was noted that HES will visit the Soutar's with the Mills on 13th January.

6.6 Slewdrum: It was noted that, despite reminders, no response has been received from FCS yet to progress the discussions over the draft disposition. It was confirmed that BCT has to have spent the SLF grant for the acquisition before the end of March 2016.

7. Other Projects

7.1 Parish Archive: It was noted that BCT's Archive Policies will be put on the website. It was agreed to dispose of the leaflets and old reports in the previously circulated list, as well as the Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland and related volumes. It was noted that BCT has been donated photos from the National Library of Scotland of the Birse Rental of 1511, and has also received the new transcription and translation of the Rental being done for BCT. RC reported that it still needed to be edited before it can go on BCT's website.

7.2 Deer Management: The previously circulated Record of Birse Parish DMG meeting of 29th October was noted. It was also noted that the annual Local Land Management Meeting between BCT and the three local estates has been postponed from November to January.

7.3 Raptors: It was agreed the previously circulated summary of local raptor breeding in 2015 by Alastair Pout was an interesting and helpful contribution. It was noted that RC, AP and Paul Chapman had met RSPB staff in October to discuss improved local liaison over raptors.

7.4 John Forster Memorial: The points made by GH under item 1.2, the previously circulated emails between GH and RC, GH's planning application and related papers were discussed. Trustees agreed they were surprised and concerned by GH's approach of submitting a planning application over the School Wood site without consulting BCT about the application or its terms. It was agreed that RC will draft response to GH setting out the points discussed and agreed at the meeting, and circulate the draft to Trustees for comment. It was confirmed that BCT hopes current issues can be resolved straightforwardly and successfully to deliver a good project.

8. Any Other Business

8.1 BCT website: It was noted that BCT has had a counter on its website since January and that Simon Robson will provide a short report on the visits to the site during 2015 in January 2016.

9. Board Meetings and Visits

9.1 Board Meetings: It was agreed that Board Meetings in 2016 will be on the third Tuesday of the month, starting on 19th January and with meetings January - June, and August - November. It was agreed that the meetings will start at 7pm.

Signed..... Date.....