

BIRSE COMMUNITY TRUST

Minutes of Board Meeting 11th November 2014

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

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Agenda was confirmed with two additions (3 (5.4), 6.6). One apology was noted and one item noted for AOB.

2. Minutes of Previous Board Meetings

The Minutes of the Meeting on 21st October 2014 were agreed and signed

3. Matters Arising from Last Minutes

- 3.1 Old School: RP confirmed fire safety check done for November and water off for winter.
- 5.1 New Trustee: It was noted that JH and RC visited Balfour and Slewdrum on 3rd November.
- 5.4 LG Boundary Review: RC reported he had spoken to the 3 Councillors about BCT's views.
- 6.1 Members Site Visits: It was noted that the visit to the Mills is on Sunday, 16th November.
- 6.4 Old School: It was noted that work on the roof repairs is due to start within a month.
- 7.1 Forest of Birse Community: It was noted that the updated boundary maps were circulated.

4. Finances

- 4.1 Management Accounts: JW reported current bank balances of £36,398 and net expenditure of £1,900 since the end of the 3rd Quarter. It was noted that receipt or not of the pine planting grant would be a significant factor in BCT's end of year balance. It was confirmed that BTCo will be making a donation before then, possibly with an interim amount first.
- 4.2 Endowment Fund: JW reported on investment options with banks for the money currently in the Fund. It was agreed, subject to JW's continuing investigations, to invest £50K of the Fund in a Bank of Scotland one year fixed interest account. It was confirmed that it is a priority to invest the money before the year end.

5. Administration

- 5.1 BCT Office: It was noted that the new rate from BT of £25.40 per month for BCT's office phone and email charges, represents a saving of nearly £400 a year.
- 5.2 BCT Website: It was noted that there have been recent updates and additions to the information on BCT's website. It was noted that Simon Robson has confirmed the difficult nature of the site's internal workings. It was agreed that this should be tackled at some stage and noted that this would also involve reviewing the current design and layout of the site.
- 5.3 Scottish Rural Parliament: RC reported that the inaugural SRP in Oban on 6-8th November had been a very positive and worthwhile event, with over 400 people participating from rural communities all over Scotland. He noted that another BCT member there, Frieda Morrison, had also considered it a very good event. He recalled that BCT had first supported the idea of a SRP in 2002 and had been involved at other stages since, prior to the SRP being established this year. It was agreed that RC will feedback comments on the event to the organisers and circulate the report due on it to Trustees. It was agreed that BCT will maintain its support for the SRP, report to the BPLG on the SRP to encourage interest amongst other local groups and anticipate being represented at the next SRP in 2016.
- 5.4 Birse Parish Liaison Group: The topics on the Agenda for 18th November were discussed. It was agreed that JK will attend for BCT with RP and RC, and possibly AS if available.
- 5.5 Action List: The topics on the List as updated to 5th November were noted and the preparation of a legacy leaflet added.

- 5.6 Communication: It was agreed that BCT could take a more systematic approach to the methods and frequencies of the different types of contact it has with its membership. It was noted that 56% of the addresses on the POOT email list are from Birse parish, with 111 Finzean, 41 Ballogie and 27 Birse email addresses. It was agreed that BCT mailings on POOT should go to Birse only as a rule. It was agreed that POOT is good local community service that BCT could support. It was agreed that JW will check the nature of POOT's governance and discuss with them possible ways of increasing POOT's local coverage, for example, a flier with BCT's AGM mailing or each person on the list encouraging a neighbour to join. It was also agreed that JW will make contact with the Ballogie Bugle and Finzean Rabbit, to ensure that BCT knows the copy dates and aims to have an item included in each edition. It was confirmed that RP puts a copy of each edition of each in the Archive.
- 5.7 Annual Plan 2015: It was noted that BCT's last Annual Plan was for 2013, as one had not been produced for 2014 due to other pressures. It was agreed that BCT should produce a Plan for 2015 which, as previously, follows the five main headings in BCT's Strategic Plan: governance, properties, other activities, administration and finance. It was agreed to consider some of the priorities and main tasks for next year at the next Board meeting.

6. Properties

- 6.1 Finzean Community Woods: The informal agreement with the new owner of Kardele over the temporary use of land beside Kardele, was noted. It was agreed to approach Finzean Estate about the future management of the small area east of the Hall car park..
- 6.2 Slewdrum Forest: RC reported on contact with SLF over the proposed land purchase. It was agreed that BCT is concerned about putting all three possible purchases in the same application as recommended by the SLF, and that RC will discuss this further with the SLF.
- 6.3 Finzean Mills: It was noted the lade has been repaired at Bucket Mill and it is hoped the Mill will be working again soon after checks to the wheel. It was agreed to re-instate a drop-board at the lade offlet. RC reported that he had spoken to Andrew Farquharson about the land at the Sawmill and will now be writing to Donald Farquharson. It was agreed that it would not be suitable to lease the land, rather than buy it.
- 6.4 Corsedardar: It was noted that 60+ had attended on 9th November and that the event had gone well. RC reported on a number of points that could be improved next year. It was agreed that he will discuss these further with RP and with AS.
- 6.5 Deer Management: It was noted that the Birse Parish Deer Management Group meeting at the Old School on 30th October had gone well and that discussions are ongoing to finalise Birse Parish Deer Management Plan 2014-17. It was agreed that BCT should involve JW in next year's autumn meeting for the other farming interests, who are not currently involved.
- 6.6 Local Land Management: The topics on the Agenda for this annual meeting of BCT and the three main Estates on 19th November, were noted.

7. Any Other Business

- 7.1 Finzean Community Path: It was noted that there is a need for work to the path surface in the School Wood. It was confirmed that, while BCT would co-operate with an agreed plan to extend the path across the School House drive into the School grounds, BCT considers that the initiative for this should come from the School and Aberdeenshire Council.

8. Board Meetings

- 8.1 Board Meetings: It was agreed that the next meetings will be on Tuesday, 9th December 2014 and on Thursday, 29th January 2015, both at 7:15 pm in Birse Hall.

Signed.....

Dated.....