BIRSE COMMUNITY TRUST

Minutes of Board Meeting
8th December 2025

Trustees Present: Simon Lindsey, Roy Cowie.

Apologies: Nancy Davidson, Robert Dinnie, Liz Bracegirdle.

In Attendance: Toni Watt (Manager), Lynne Mellis (Book keeper), Eleanor Craig (Advisor), Rick Paul (Secretary to the Board).

1. Introduction

1.1 SL welcomed everyone and noted three apologies, meaning the meeting was not quorate. The trustees therefore decided to simply discuss the agenda topics and make any decisions at the January meeting.
SL welcomed Lynne Mellis and Eleanor Craig to the meeting. Lynne is the new book keeper and Eleanor is an advisor to the board.

2 Minutes of Previous Board Meetings

2.1 The signing of the minutes of the meeting of 4th October 2025 was held over until the January 2026 meeting

3. Matters Arising

3.1 Fire Safety: The smoke detector in the west room requires the battery to be changed. RP to contact RD to arrange.

4. Administration

4.1 Mills: Owen Bushell is the manager of the Bucket Mill, and as his newly formed CIC has not accumulated 3 years' worth of accounts, he is applying for grant funding through BCT. TW is waiting the answer to some legal queries put to Sarah Brown and will call another meeting if required. One of the funders requires him to hold 20 open days per year and trustees thought that they could help with that. Owen wishes to address the meeting and trustees agreed to invite him to the January meeting, postponing the Strategic Plan discussion to February. TW to action.
4.2 Souter's Shop: Initial funding is complete, but there are always further requirements so fundraising continues. The shop stock has been decanted to the Old School, but the workshop is still untouched. Volunteers have been trained, and digital interpretation has been initiated. Three appointments have been made: a business plan consultant, an evaluation framework consultant, and a fund raiser and heritage support consultant. A non frost free freezer is still required for the larger items. Courses for next year include lime mortar, leatherwork, bee skeps and bee keeping.
The whole building must be clear by the end of Feb, scaffolding is scheduled for March, then four months to repair the building followed by reinstatement of the contents, so it should be all completed by Autumn 2026.
4.3 The Ord: No update. SL to discuss with RD.
4.4 New Team Members: TW to email around to arrange an induction tour of the Trust's land and properties.
4.5 Whatsapp Group: RP to contact LB to progress.
4.6 Meeting Room: No update.

5. Manager's Report

5.1 Forests: Concerns over delays by Scottish Woodlands have been escalated to management level, which appears to have put the felling programme back on track. Slewdrum will be re-stocked in the spring, and harvesting will take place next winter, with Balfour harvesting taking place the year after. Slewdrum flail work is due to start in December.

5.2 Sawmill Trees: TW to obtain quotes to clear unsafe trees.

6. A.O.B.

6.1 Website and OSCR: RP to contact JR to set up a handover meeting with TW, EC, and RP.

7. Meetings

7.1 Future Meetings: Trustees agreed to meet on:-

Tuesday 13th January 2026, Old School. 7:15pm, RD to chair. OB to be invited to make a presentation to the trustees.

Tuesday 17th February 2026, Old School. 7:15pm, ND to chair. This meeting will concentrate on the Strategic Plan.

Signed..... Date…….....