

## **Portmoak Community Woodland Steering Group**

**Meeting:** 18<sup>th</sup> March 2004

**Present** KMcDonnell, J.Shepherd, B.Drysdale, D.Batchelor, E.Carruthers, G.McShane, S.Garvie, R.McDonnell, M.Brown, H.Rolton, M.McGinness, S.Cail, J.Hughes

**Apologies** R.McDonnell, L. & D.Batchelor, J.Gunnell

Minutes of previous meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> Feb 2004 agreed

### **Woodland Trust Update:**

J.Hughes attended meeting to update Steering Group on a number of issues, he is being seconded from the WT to work on a project relating to restoration of ancient woodlands for 2 years. Jill Aitken will oversee works until another Woodland Officer recruited. The WT is committed to restoration of peat bog.

**Wellburn** This matter has been resolved between WT, Peter Tweedie (WT solicitor) and Mr Bell, have agreed and marked boundary. Contractor instructed by WT to erect fence.

**Unauthorised Work** This appears to have ceased, group members will require to monitor situation. Those present discussed how the pruned birch should be dealt with the preference of the WT is that these are allowed to 'regenerate'.

**Willow** Several species were sourced at Lochore Country Park, Dallas Sewright assisting in selection and suggested location within the Moss. Some discussion took place regarding 'native' species, JH requesting that any non-natives removed. (G.McShane has requested since the meeting that this matter put on agenda for april meeting, not satisfied with 'native' vs 'non-native' position taken by JH)

**SITA Application Letter of Support** KMcD read a letter drafted to meet needs of application ie stating that there had been community consultation in relation to restoration of peatbank. JH had met with SITA onsite (JShepherd to attend future meeting) have applied for £100k will be advised by 15<sup>th</sup> April latest. SNH Peatlands expert Andrew Cooper has also visited site, compiling letter of support to go to Forestry Commission, 'some challenges but weight of opinion in favour of restoration'. WT have applied for third party funding in the order of £10k from SNH, hence need for their input. JH will make information available to the group but this must be treated confidentially.

**Management Plan:** M.Brown had reviewed this document, drawing parallels with existing plan. Key change noted as being change of focus to the restoration of peat bog. Questioned the Management plan principles, very generic 'primarily for walkers' may be interpreted differently by user groups with an intention to access woodland for other recreational purposes.

Questioned annual inspection, is this frequent enough? Reliance placed on local inspection/knowledge.

In the case of the Moss, requested that plan modified to specify paths suitable for walkers, all-abilities as opposed to 'suitable for a wider range of users.

Parking on EoS water site, WT to contact P&K Council regarding creation of car park adjacent to the Moss entrance.

Queried use of glyphosate, environmental impact, this is used at Vane Farm. Some reservations were expressed regarding use and information relating to potential detrimental effects.

How to publicise revised plan? Would not require a public meeting, WT to advise local press and newsletter, copies to be made available at Kinnesswood Post Office.

### **Beer Tasting**

S.Cail arranging beer, group require to organise 0.5 pt glasses. J.Shepherd to get license, hall is booked. Need to set up cask beer on fridat early evening, hall set up as per wine tasting. Book PA, G.McShane to set up. 100 ticket plus posters being produced by Trojan Press, available from usual outlets.

G.McShane suggested a display within the Hall to update people about our activities. Group to purchase bread/cheese to accompany beer. 2 tickets required by JH.

**Better Place to Live Fair:** This had been fairly successful, although people seem to be very aware of the Moss and what we are endeavouring to do.

### **Treasurers Report:**

Current balance £714.28

**Viewpoint indicator:** J.Gunnell had been in touch regarding funding sources via ExxonMobil Chemical Company. First option being drafting a letter requesting donation to a specific project up to £50. Secondly via Volunteer Involvement Programme grant of £250 in return for 20hrs volunteer work by an employee. Those present agreed the latter would be the better option.

**Bats:** K.McDonnell had emailed Al Borland to thank for his involvement with PCW Group. Al is to forward an interpretative sheet which could be used to raise awareness of bats via the school.

**MSC Project:** No movement currently. Lead to a discussion relating to the involvement of McBride Habitat in the installation of dams within the raised peatbank. Will use photoresistant plastic sheets to hold moisture, there is still a query regarding the need for an Environmental Impact Assessment. The Forestry Commission to provide feedback by the end of March 2004.

**Quality of Felling Work:** WT has drafted a 'very tight' specification for future felling work , £16k budgeted for brash clearance from previous felling. Brash clearance scheduled for summer 2004, JH unsure how much would be removed for the cost incurred, group sought clarification as the balance would most likely fall to local community. Regeneration would be dealt with by 'weed wiping' using glyphosate. There is also a need for stump reduction.

**Christmas Cards:** KMCD to look at costs of printing card.

**Dog Fouling:** JShepherd advised that PCC are still pursuing with P&K DC.

**Reforestation Scotland:** KMcD has chased £50 for our participation in the Community Woods and the Local Economy Study again!!

### **AoCB**

**BTCV** Group membership is about to lapse, decided not to renew given that volunteer activity is covered by WT insurance. This had been the major benefit of being members.

**Reforestation Scotland** Community Woodland Conference 2003 report available to group members. The 2004 event, will take place in the central belt in November 2004. KMcD contacting for further details.

**Managing Health & Safety in Forestry:** Recent publication outlines roles and responsibilities of landowner, contractors and subcontractors in relation to working within woodlands.

**Management Plan Area 8A:** RMcDonnell had registered his interest in undertaking the thinning operation within this compartment, with JHughes. JHughes agreed in principle subject to cost.

**Big Tree Country Project:** Perth & Kinross Countryside Trust developing a heritage and access project to conserve Perthshire's heritage trees. There had been some local issues recently regarding 'elderly' trees, those present agreed there would be some benefit in mapping notable trees within the Parish. WT website has survey forms, discuss at April meeting.

**Tree Council:** John Stokes Director of Community Projects addressing P&K tree warden group on 2.4.04. Invitation extended to those present.

**Path within Kilmagadwood :** A couple of approaches had been made to steering group members regarding access via Kilmagadwood for horses. Local horse owners expressed an interest in accessing top of hill through use of right of way adjacent to golf club then through kilmagad. It was suggested that they should suggest route given their awareness of gradient etc in regard to horses. The production of the core paths network is in its early stages, it may be more appropriate that horse lobby identify the route, then Steering Group go public to ensure community consultation allowed. Note that core paths will only be permissible for pedestrian use.

**Interpretative material within the Moss:** This is one component of the Management Plan style etc to be discussed in due course.

**Community right to buy:** M.Brown had reviewed the documentation, suggested PCW join Community Woodland Association, and that we consider registering an interest in land adjacent to Moss and Kilmagadwood. KMcD to progress.

Next meeting: 15<sup>th</sup> April 2004 1930hrs, Lomond Country Inn