

Portmoak Community Woodland Steering Group

Meeting: 16th December 2004

Present KMcDonnell, J.Shepherd, M.Hogg, M.Brown, R.McDonnell,
D.Batchelor,L.Batchelor,H.Rolton.

Apologies E Carruthers, R.Barlow, S.Garvie

No comments on previous minutes

Woodland Trust Update:

Harvesting Works harvesting works completed, path reinstatement completed following further discussion between WT and contractors. Positive comments from members of the community regarding standard of reinstatement. JS had observed original work, of the opinion that the contractors had undertaken work under the wrong conditions. WT withholding funding until works completed to satisfaction has had a positive benefit.

Future Felling

The issue of felling the remainder of the peatbank arose at the November meeting, the funding and forward plan for this has been agreed. RB undertook a site visit accompanied by RMcD and JS, clearly defining the felling area, to ensure a closer control of contractors. A woodland edge to be left on the crown of peatbank. Feedback from the site visit demonstrates that RB is willing to take a practical approach in working with PCW Group, reaching a compromise where possible.

Fencing at Wellburn

WT have received quote for fencing at Wellburn RB meeting contractor on site to discuss.

Paths : It was reported that the plank bridges had been removed since the November meeting and had not reappeared.

Kilmagadwood: insufficient regeneration may have to plant out to meet grant conditions. The planting undertaken on work to be 21st November to coincide with WT Tree for All campaign had been successful, 13 people planting 150 trees. S.garvie had suggested a tree planting day between Christmas and New Year weather permitting. Awaiting update from WT regards First Aid training.

Bats: BD to pursue with Al Borland.

MSc Study: HR has completed her MSc copy made available to group. Tony Shelton had been in touch with KMcD regards the history of the Moss, details provided, Tony will provide a copy of his findings to the Group.

Woodland Update: S.Garvie volunteered to undertake, has proposed layout to be made available at January meeting

Treasurers Report: £1445.19 in bank

Community Woodland Association. Woodland Officer wishes to attend meeting/site visit to woodlands, extend an invitation to the March meeting.

HND Countryside Management Students: B.Drysdale has arranged for a number of students to undertake a module of their course relating to Countryside Visitor Provision within the Moss. The outcome of the study will hopefully come up with valuable management ideas, which the group can then consider. The survey work has now been completed it was agreed that BD should invite students to present findings at the February meeting.

Rustic Information Board/ Seat: To discuss further in Spring. M.Hogg currently involved in creating seat for the Burns Supper Raffle. Almost ready to assemble, no assistance required.

Burns Supper:

Ticket price to remain at £17.50, produce program in January, Trojan Press to do.

SWT Evening Meeting

RB highlighted that the Scottish Wildlife Trust were holding a talk relating to the rewetting of Flanders Moss. It was agreed that details would be provided to KMcD and circulated to the group, it was Roy's intention to attend and feedback to the group. MMcG has a report on Flanders Moss, this can be made available to group, highlights key positive benefits of rewetting. Peat used to fill drains within moss, soay sheep used to graze regeneration. This was discussed as a control measure for Portmoak Moss, how would we keep then in stipulated area(s)? Interested in WT comment on this.

Reaction to Changes within the Moss

M.Hogg had had some negative feedback from a member of the public, it was understood that this individual did not attend PCW group meetings.

Unauthorised work within the Moss A member of the public who is known to the group had been observed undertaking chainsaw work within the Moss. He has been advised that this is inappropriate by the WT, he must contact Roy Barlow to identify what work requires to be done and hold the prerequisite certification. WT to write to E.Salmond to cease working within their property unless authorised and accompanied, group members concerned about his safety whilst 'lone' working also safety of other members of the public.

Route Definition: To avoid confusion within the Moss it was suggested that authorised and bridges are clearly stated in writing and outlined on site map. This ensures that authorised routes are recognised and any others clearly unauthorised.

The Future: MMcG suggested that given the regeneration of the Moss is a long term process, we need to give an indication to community what the Moss will look like in 10,20,30 years time. Restate the refuge areas, identify exactly where the path network will go. Such clarification and explanation will assist understanding of the regeneration process and how the Moss will change over time.

Next meeting : 20th January 2005, Well Country Inn, 1930hrs