



## **Minutes from ACF Board Meeting held at Magnus House on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2024 at 19.30**

### **Present:**

David Garvie (DG) - Chair  
John Graham (JG) - Treasurer  
Alasdair Martin (AM) – Forest Manager  
Neil Valentine (NV)  
Graeme Scott (GS)  
Jo Young (JY)  
Bob Bull (BB)  
Fin Denerley (FD)  
Stephen Cotterill (SC)  
Russell Ross (RR)  
Mark Hedderwick (MH)  
Phil Envis (PE)  
Nataša Kenda (NK) - Minutes Secretary

### **1. Apologies:**

Phil Masheter (PM)

### **2. Minutes of Previous Board Meeting of 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024**

Adoption proposed by BB. Seconded by JY. Approved.

### **3. Agenda Amendments**

Two items were added: SSE Renewable Funding by JY and Stove by NV. See below.

### **4. Appointment of the Office Bearers**

Chair David Garvie (DG), Vice Chair Jo Young (JY), Treasurer John Graham (JG), Company Secretary Andrew Leaver (AL) and Minutes Secretary Nataša Kenda (NK) remain ACF Office Bearers. Proposed by NV, seconded by SC.

### **5. Agreement with Aigas Field Centre**

FD and DG met with Hermione and Greg Jackson; bullet points circulated pre board meeting. Due to being good neighbours, we will keep a less formal agreement to avoid any potential conflicts in the future and for safeguarding. MH questioned whether we have to buy ourselves out of the funds given 10 years ago; FD suggested it was voluntarily given by the Aigas Trust so it is not expected. DG will formalise the agreement.

### **6. Matters Arising from Previous Meeting**

None raised.

### **7. Forest Manager Report**

Detailed reports circulated pre meeting. AM asked for any further suggestions on his work and reports.

Traffic management works on the Crask side above the road started today (02/12).

Ground work for the last fence section can be done now that the machinery is here. JG will get in touch soon about completing the fencing.

## 8. Sub-group reports

- **Paths and Access:** BH has stepped down; SC expressed is willing to run the group; he will meet with AM to define the purpose of the group and create a priority plan. Ideas are welcome. Re-establishing routes on Crask hill was suggested as it might benefit the residents and access.
- **Deer Management:** Met on 26<sup>th</sup> November, minutes will be circulated.
- **Wood Fuel:** Sales are satisfactory, bags are ready and the majority of wood is dry enough. JG suggested to create a memorial bench for the late community council treasurer Duncan Fraser. NV has elm wood which might be suitable to use.
- **Wildlife & Ecology:** Will plan to meet and coordinate with AM.
- **Equipment Group:** Not met. NV, AM and PE have been very satisfied with performance of the new tractor. It can be used for stone work as well. Altering the trailer is to be discussed as suggested by SC.
- **10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary:** Have met, report circulated pre meeting. In addition, NV has a plan for a totem pole. Newsletter will be published over New Year's; any words or suggestions to be sent to NK. MH suggested mountain biking advertising or events for children, possibly getting in touch with local bikers or Danny MacAskill. First event is on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2025; cover and power to be ready for an indoor option. Ideas to be sent to JY.

## 9. SSEN Overhead Line Project

No significant changes; DG had several meeting with land agents. We continue to strongly oppose access through the forest during the construction period. SSEN's current plan is to submit their Section 37 application around April 2025, and this application will include their plans for access. Discussions will continue.

## 10. SSEN Biodiversity Net Gain Planting

Circulated by AM pre meeting. The aim is 4 different woodland types; JY suggested to add juniper. NV suggested trying planting it from cuttings or seed. Ground prep started today and will be done in summer, planting to be completed by April 2026. AM suggested further protection for trees on the hillside and proposed funding for canes and 30cm plastic tubes. It's rough ground so it won't look perfect. Tree planting design needs approval from FLS and SSE, AM can't see any issues.

## 11. Financial Report

JG thanked GS for all his work; the Board agreed and is grateful.

GS explained the Biodiversity funding after receiving the first instalment of £19,200,00. We have a legal obligation to comply with T&Cs and complete planting within 6 years. If we don't deliver, SHET could take over the area; they will assess our work and certify before the 2<sup>nd</sup> instalment is paid out in 6 years. It is a 24-year contract to maintain the forest and keep replanting when necessary.

GS presented the accounts in bullet points; the full report will be available online. DG previously suggested a budget plan; cashflow will now come out quarterly which will be then compared with the budget plan.

Anything transferring into deposit account will increase the year after.

JG reported current account balance of £85,053,62, £1,069,28 due in December, and the deposit account of £361,200,00 (matures in October 2025).

Accounting made by GS was well received and approved by the Board.

## 12. Items of Expenditure

None.

### **13. Agenda Amendments**

- **SSE Renewables Fund:** £10,000,000 funding is offered from the existing Hydro Power to support community projects for non-profit groups. Deadlines for application are 12/12/2024 and 26/06/2025; we will apply at the latter date. JY suggested two projects: Victorian bridge renovation or a polycrubb; the Board agreed to apply for Victorian bridge funding, as it will be a more costly and essential project; we can't let it decay. A lot of additional information and surveying will need to be done before application; JY proposed for assistance from any members and associates. JY will go ahead with application process.
- **Stove:** NV found a £400 stove with a chimney in good condition: 4.5kW, 4" flue, raised on legs, with glass door and a kettle. MH pointed out to check for liability, health & safety as it will be for public use. The Board gave NV consent to go ahead with the best option.

**The meeting closed at 21.19. The next Board meeting will be held on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2025 at 19.30 at the Magnus House / Club House.**