



Minutes from ACF Board Meeting held at Magnus House on 3rd February at 19.30

Present:

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

1. Apologies:

Graeme Scott (GS)

2. Minutes of Previous Board Meeting of 2nd December 2024

Adoption proposed by JG. Seconded by SC. Approved.

3. Agenda Amendments

An invitation to a presentation on Outdoor fire safety & wildlife reporting procedure on 12th March (FD).

4. Matters Arising from Previous Meeting

- **Agreement with Aigas Field Centre:** DG reported that the agreement was signed, everyone approved.

5. Insurance for Windblow

We've never had this insurance because the wood was mature and the costs wouldn't be justified. The cost would be high now; JG and AM will discuss it annually and reconsider.

6. Mountain Biking Trails

AM opened a discussion on the topic. The use of trails is at users' risk; code of practice is on ACF website, it was suggested to display it in the Information Bothy. The trails aren't suitable for all levels of MTB users and we won't advertise for MTB specifically.

JG raised the matter of donations by the users. Not everyone stops at the Bothy so several signs with JustGiving QR code will be placed in the carpark and around the Forest.

AM will get in touch with John Ireland who previously had given useful advice on liability: our duty of care is to monitor and inspect the paths (twice per annum) and logging all actions, as we are aware of paths' use; this should cover us for liability. Any unsafe paths are to be closed, signs to be made for the gate and the path, and informed on social media. AM will reestablish communication with the local MTB group.

7. Forest Manager Report

Circulated pre meeting. Communication with the fencer continues.

Scottish Woodlands have met, report was requested and will be circulated.

8. Sub-group reports

- **Paths and Access:** SC suggested reestablishing and renaming the group to include Forest users. Clear objects to achieve, maintenance programme, plans for severe weather, reporting system and acting together as a community are needed. All agreed, SC requested for everyone's input.
- **Deer Management:** Met on 26th November, minutes from Peter will be circulated when received. Cull numbers: AFC 8 hinds, ACF 4 hinds and 1 male wild boar. Any wild boar to be reported and despatched. Clearing and high seats needed at the top plantation. Stalkers are in the plantation this week.
- **Wood Fuel:** Plan to meet with Equipment group on 11th February.
- **Wildlife & Ecology:** Will plan to meet and coordinate with AM.
- **Equipment Group:** Plan to meet with Wood Fuel group on 11th February.
- **10th Anniversary:** Circulated pre meeting. Still looking into cost estimate for a stretched tent. Numbers of places on events are limited, bookings to go through NK. All will be advertised. A budget of £10.000 was agreed on 30/09/2024, all expenses will be forwarded to JG regularly. Current biggest expense is approx. £500 for music.

9. SSEN Overhead Line Project

SSEN presented 3 other access routes, all unsuitable, therefore the access through the Forest and necessary wayleave is almost certainly the only viable route from the south. We will continue opposing and negotiating but we need to start thinking about what we can get out of the potential access through the Forest. They might use our quarry and we might benefit financially (mineral rights apply). Additional paths or carpark might be built. We can think of our conditions such as times of the day for their access; members were asked to come up with ideas. SSEN will have to define their plan, size of land used and tracks by April 2025.

10. SSEN Biodiversity Net Gain Planting

DG and AM will review the latest Terms thoroughly and find out about the date of the first payment. Large proportion will go towards ground prep and terrain maintenance. Hope to sign by the end of March. All agreed to proceed with the purchase of trees now because we need to plant in any case. AM plans to plant in September 2025.

11. Financial Report

JG reported current account balance of £76.623,70 and the deposit account of £361.200,00 (matures in October 2025). Mast payment of £8.900 is due by 10/03/2025.

12. Items of Expenditure

£670 for the wood burner and further costs TBC for the trailer.

13. Agenda Amendments

FD invited all board members to a presentation: Outdoor fire safety & wildfire reporting procedure with Mark Fowler from Scottish Fire & Rescue. Organised by AFC for the seasonal rangers and ACF board members. It will be held at the Crannog at AFC on 12th March from 9am – 10am.

The meeting closed at 21.15. The next Board meeting will be held on Monday 24th March 2025 at 19.30 at the Aigas Golf Clubhouse.