

Aigas Community Forest meeting 26th May 2025 at the Forest Cabin 7.30pm

Present:

David Garvie (DG) - Chair

Jo Young (JY) - minutes taken by JY

Fin Denerley (FD)

John Graham (JG) - Treasurer

Russell Ross (RR)

Neil Valentine (NV)

Mark Hedderwick (MH)

Alasdair Martin (AM) - Forest Manager

Phil Envis – Visitor

1. Apologies:

Graeme Scott (GS)

Bob Bull (BB)

2. Minutes of previous Board Meeting 24th March 2025

Proposed for adoption by JG and seconded by PM.

3. Agenda Amendments

None.

4. Matters arising from Previous Minutes

Stephen Cotteril has intimated his resignation from Aigas Community Forest Board.

Recruitment of Board Members to be added as an agenda item for next meeting. We need to consider actively promoting this perhaps via social media to encourage people with relevant skills and ideas to ensure succession planning for the future.

We may also need to seek a new minute secretary as Natasa now living at Macduff.

5. Forest Managers Report Previously circulated fortnightly due to time constraints.

Concerns re a 400m section of old metal deer fence which requires repair above the burn and close to boundary with JG, this is challenging terrain on the forest side and concerns are that deer will access and graze the new proposed area of planting above An Druim, this is the area scheduled for SSEN Biodiversity Net Gain Planting. Board Members agreed that this fence should be replaced thus completing the new fence. AM, JG and David Reid (fencing contractor) to discuss further.

AM disappointed with recent further tidy up by Scottish Woodlands (SW) above An Druim. SW have indicated that they would monitor the area for stability of the fallen timber. This area is for BGN but still requires to be handed back to ACF. Are SW happy to sign it off, if not then they will be asked again to make improvements. Should ACF consider an independent review of this area of hillside?

6. Sub - groups

Paths and Access - NV has undertaken to convene this group.

Deer Management - A group of Approx 15 hinds has been noted within the forest.

Wildlife and Ecology - There have been two tree planting days, and a further day planned – other tasks such as the construction of dead hedges and insect huts will be included. Dragonfly numbers are noted to be strong this year.

Equipment - Report circulated pre meeting. The group would like to increase the value of timber by offering milled timber from larger pieces – there would be grant assistance for up to 40% towards the purchase price of £8000 with extra attachments. The Board approved this purchase.

10th Anniversary – report circulated pre meeting. The next event is Music in the Forest on Sunday 15th June. Portaloo to be arranged by JY. Generator still to be trialed.

7. Victorian Bridge – report previously circulated.

Phase 1 quote from Neil Nixon (NN) of £3,420 was approved by board members, work to commence end June beginning of July to stabilize the underbed of the bridge.

Phase 2 quote from NN of £9,450 with proposed date of Spring 26 approved in principle but ACF would possibly seek funding from SSEN Community Fund to support this project.

8. SSEN Overhead Pylon Line

Discussions are ongoing and recent walkover with Wood/ACF/SSEN/ Road Contractor.....to assess stone for road construction within ACF, this would significantly

reduce the number of heavy lorries entering the forest. Current Traffic movement figures which have been estimated would therefore be reduced and require to be separated out from the figures supplied by SSEN.

ACF has the mineral rights. Cost of stone approx. £3.50 - £.700 /ton, ACF will have the option of agreed tracks left in place or stone retrieved and repurposed.

DG requesting feedback for next SSEN meeting on 12th June.

Points raised:

Working times for heavy traffic movement preferably not out with 08.00-18.00.

Concerns re road width at points between Kilmorack and Aigas.

Conflicts with school traffic and time. Avoid Sunday working.

ACF traffic and access will be discussed further at the next meeting with SSEN on the 12th of June.

9. SSEN Biodiversity Net Gain Planting.

No movement.

10. Financial Report

JG reports that Current Account balance of £65,932 and Deposit Account £361,200.

Salaries only outgoing.

11. Items of Expenditure

Request for concrete mixer to be purchased (approx £160) this was approved.

12. Date and Time of Next Meeting: 7/07/25 at 7.30pm in the Forest Cabin.

DG was thanked for his commitment, time, effort and energy co ordinating and leading ACF through the discussions regarding the SSEN OHL project.

