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**Directors/Trustees Meeting**

**Thursday 22 April 2021**

**via video conferencing due to covid-19 ‘lockdown’**

***Present***

*Geoff Peart, Jill Patrick, Douglas Johnston, David King, Gavin Fleming, Stuart Ogg, Barbara Linklater, Mairi Jackson, Gill Bell, , Jon Park, Paul James.*

***Apologies***

Nicola Stewart and Alison Younger

1. ***Appointment of Paul James as an ’appointed’ Director***

Following the recruitment process and the recommendation of the Appointment’s Panel, Jill proposed and Gill seconded the formal appointment of Paul James as a Director which was unanimously approved.

1. ***Declarations of interest***

Dave declared a potential conflict of interest as he was a member of the Community Council.

Douglas declared an interest regarding the administrator and would not take any part in the discussion on this paper.

1. ***Minutes of Previous Meeting***

Minutes of the two previous meetings held on Thursday 11 and 25 February 2021 were adopted as a true record of those meetings.

As the agenda was quite extensive Dave suggested he would focus on those items which have an immediate time pressure.

1. ***Follow up actions (Ongoing actions)***

All actions from previous meetings completed other than the following ones which are ongoing. Some actions have been updated following discussion at this meeting:

1. Discussion to develop marketing of Community Centre, progress on this will be made once current Covid-19 situation improves and the Scottish Government allows community centres to reopen.
2. Code of Conduct, Privacy and Data Protection and Child Protection Policies to be finalised. Gill and Stuart to look at other policies.
3. Alison, Helen, Stuart, Douglas and Gavin to meet to discuss monitoring process for Windfarm monies.
4. ***Company Secretary’s report***

Gill explained that Paul’s details had been submitted to Companies House but still needed to be added to the website (Stuart to follow up and to update Director details list). She explained that there would be no Gala this year so there would be no requirement to use the Trust’s Lottery licence. She also noted that the Safeguarding policy was still under development. Gill recorded her thanks to Douglas for getting the annual accounts completed and submitted to Companies House.

1. ***Treasurer’s report***

Douglas outlined the details behind the financial summary which had been circulated and answered various queries from the Directors. The accounts were noted.

Douglas explained that the Trust now had a licence for zoom and is available for anyone who needs to use it. He has the details so whoever wants to use it should contact him. He noted as a charitable body the licence fee had been discounted.

Gavin noted that he would be taking over as Treasurer as agreed after the last AGM and after discussions with Douglas sought the Board’s approval to investigate alternative banking arrangements. His findings and any recommendations would be brought back to the Board for approval. He felt that it might be possible to streamline many of the financial processes if the Trust opened a business account; this would be the focus of his investigation.

One issue which had to be addressed is OSCR’s requirement that double signatures are required for payments. It was felt this could be resolved by having the type of report presented by Douglas earlier in the meeting, whereby any payments made by a single person i.e. through digital banking, are reported regularly to the Board.

Gavin also indicated he believed that there was a way of linking Hallmaster to a bank account allowing those making one-off bookings for the Community Centre to pay at the time of booking. This would reduce the burden on having to issue invoices and chase bad debts.

The Board approved the investigation into alternative banking arrangements.

***Action: Gavin in consultation with Douglas to investigate alternative banking arrangements and bring back any recommendations to the Board.***

Currently there has been no formal request for an annual Windfarm Report, despite the very detailed requirements which had been requested last year after the actual annual report had been submitted.

***Action: Douglas to contact Malcolm at Foundation Scotland to see what type of report is required.***

1. ***Community Centre***

The proposal to accept a donation from the Keepfit group who wanted to use some of the outdoor space around the Community Centre was accepted. Subsequent discussion focused on the possible liability on the Trust for any accidents while the group was using the outside areas. After considering the issue it was felt that there was no risk. Additionally, if there was any potential conflict between a commercial let and the group’s use of the outdoor areas this would be resolved by the commercial let being given priority.

Douglas reported that an enquiry from a local resident had been made to use the Doctor’s surgery as an office. The Kippen Doctor has confirmed they will no longer be using this space. It was agreed that the space could be let as an office at the same rate as the upstairs offices, once minor works had been carried out.

***Action: The Board approved the letting of the Doctor’s surgery for office use which Douglas will take forward.***

It was noted that the Community Centre had been booked by the Council for the forthcoming election and arrangements made for appropriate circulation of voters.

1. **DTAS Funding**

It was reported that bids for funding for community capacity building were being sought from DTAS members. After discussion it was agreed that Jon and Stuart would register for the webinar when the topic would be discussed on 27 April and they would subsequently work on a bid which had to be submitted by 7 May 2021. Ideas which may be put forward, depending on the funding criteria might include, support for a strategic planning process, redesigning and updating the website, support for developing the Bugle and related administration and developing better ways of engaging with the community especially younger people.

***Action: Jon and Stuart to attend webinar on the DTAS fund and to work up a bid if appropriate.***

1. ***Leckie Estate***

There is a proposed meeting involving the Community Council, the Trust and the new manager of the Leckie Estate. This initiative was welcomed and a date is to be agreed. During discussion it was suggested that the meeting should be opened up to all the community as there would be considerable interest.

1. ***Shelloch Windfarm Development***

It was noted that the Kippen Trust had approached the Trust about the Shelloch Windfarm as they were having a meeting with the facilitator for the development.

***Action: Geoff and Douglas to discuss and agree next actions regarding this windfarm development and report back to the Board.***

1. ***Keir Hill***

Douglas suggested the idea of promoting Keir Hill as a local heritage site and agreed to speak to Murray Cook, the local Council’s archeologist, to gain his support before taking a proposal, if appropriate, to the Gargunnock Estate factors. There was a query as to whether there was any link to the Brooch on the Leckie Estate. It was agreed this could be raised at the proposed meeting between the Community Council, Trust and Estate manager.

***Action: Douglas to follow up with a meeting/discussion with Murray Cook regarding Keir Hill.***

1. ***Gargunnock Estate Trust***

It was reported that Dave Penman had sought permission to place bird boxes on the Gargunnock Estate but had not got anywhere. This led to a discussion about the planned changes in the way the Estate is to be managed in the future. A new Galbraith’s representative is now taking over responsibility and it was felt they might be more proactive.

***Action: Douglas to see if he can facilitate a meeting between the new Galbraiths’ representative and the Trust.***

1. ***Beeches path***

Geoff had prepared a report on the next steps with the Beeches Path; unfortunately due to a technical issue Stuart had not circulated it. Geoff outlined the actions that were required if the improvement to this path is to be progressed. He noted that following a decision by the Paths Group he had registered the Trust and opened up the online application process with SRPS for an IPA grant. This could potentially fund a large element of the path although the Board acknowledged that some funding might be required from the Windfarm Fund or another source.

**Action: The decision to take forward the application process for an IPA grant was homologated by the Board.**

One issue with this source of funding, however, was that if an application was successful the funds are only released after the wok has been completed so any upfront costs would have to be found by the Trust from another source. This could be overcome by coming to some sort of arrangement with the contractor.

He noted that the Windfarm Fund Panel had recently requested that the Trust develop a comprehensive strategic paths plan to allow it to see how each project fitted into this overall plan. The Panel also felt that this would help the Trust apply for funds from other sources.

Geoff explained that the Beeches path project was fully supported by the community through a recent consultation exercise, however the next stage required planning permission to be gained and it may also require a professional arboriculturalist report.

**Action: The Board approved Geoff taking the project forward by applying for planning permission with that the cost of the application process would be funded by the Trust.**

Geoff acknowledged other issues that need to be resolved included determining the actual ownership of the land and the Board agreed that if a formal search has to be carried out then the cost would be covered by the Trust. A detailed technical design specification will have to be prepared and it was noted and very much welcomed by the Board that Sweco had offered to undertake this on a ‘pro bono’ basis. The best estimate for this project is currently around £20,000 depending on the possible width of the path and the technical design.

**Action: Mairi and Paul agreed that they could provide any help to Geoff and the Paths Group as and when required.**

The Board thanked Geoff for getting the project to this stage and for taking it forward.

1. ***Craigs Path***

Gavin explained the progress with this path. He had discussed the proposals with Ian Watt, the farmer, who had expressed concerns about gates having been left open by walkers. This had led to the death of a sheep.

Gavin had been in touch with Stirling Council’s Access Officer and investigated self-closing gates with an Aviemore based contractor. He had fleshed out some ideas which would involve the installation of steps at the two gulley’s crossing the core path and the need for 15 self-closing gates and possibly some re-routing of the current path itself to make more of the existing tracks.

He estimates that the work would cost in the region of £15k to £20k. The Access Officer had provided contacts for possible funds, one being the IPA grant. As noted earlier this source is being targeted for the Beeches path so he had considered other options including the People’s Postcode Trust and as a charity we could bid for up to £20k. The deadline for the next round of funding is 3 May so Gavin will submit an application. He noted that the Council has very little money for this type of project. Ian Watt has also suggested that the Trust approaches the Gargunnock Estate Trust so these proposals could be discussed at a future meeting between the Trust and the Estate factors.

***Action: The Board approved Gavin submitting an application on its behalf to the Postcode Lottery Trust and taking this project forward.***

1. ***Gargunnock to Stirling Path***

Geoff outlined the current state of play with this project with the detailed plans regarding the potential ‘land take’ having now been passed to Vyv Woodgee who will be consulting the landowners/farmers on behalf of the Trust and the project.

There is now active interest in linking up with this project from groups in Kippen, Cambusbarron and Balfron, with letters to local Councilors to gain priority support for this key strategic route.

Further discussions have taken place regarding the route through the Gargunnock Estate with a preferred option.

The idea of using the path project as a pollinator corridor was raised by Douglas. Geoff explained that a small amount of money had been allocated for ‘greening’ the route. Stuart explained that the Carse of Stirling Partnership had been in touch with Buglife and NatureScotland about the importance of trying to join up policy agendas focused on nature conservation and path development particularly which would help facilitate more funding and operational integration through projects like the Gargunnock to Stirling route.

It is hoped that all verbal agreements for the route will be in place by 15 May so that the technical design stage can be taken forward in the next financial year.

1. ***Windfarm Panel recommendations to Trust***

Stuart noted that Chloe Bruce had resigned from the Windfarm Fund Panel so Alison, the Chair, is seeking a replacement but is keen to target the advert to younger people as Chloe had brought this perspective to the Panel. After discussion the Board agreed that this could be taken forward.

***Action: Following the Board’s approval, Stuart to inform Alison of its decision to allow a targeted advert for a replacement young person on the Windfarm Fund Panel.***

Following discussion, all the award decisions by the Windfarm Fund Panel from its meeting on 29 March 2021 were supported by the Trust including the conditions set by Panel. In summary these were:

**No. 62.GWF 8-21 GCT Path Ladies Walk - £497.00.** This project involves ‘defect rectification’ of a particularly boggy section of this Core Path. The Panel recommended approval of the sum requested £497 on the understanding that if costs came in below budget, the full amount would not be sought.

**No. 63.GWF 9-21 GCT Path Watson House - £920** This project also involves ‘defect rectification’ works along a short stretch of this Core Path. The Panel made enquiries about other sections of this path however these would require more extensive works. The Panel recommended approval of the full £920.

***With regard to both Path applications the Windfarm Fund Panel recommended that the Trust consider the development and promotion of an agreed strategic Path Improvement Plan listing all priorities for the future. The Panel felt this would be help attract other funding.***

**No. 64.GWF 10-21 Gargunnock Playgroup Outdoor play equipment - £1700** This was the final element of the funding package required by the Playgroup forthe project presented to the Trust at a previous meeting. The Panel requested details of how the insurance issues would be addressed it also commended positively on the Playgroup’s successful fund raising efforts and duly recommended approvalof the full amount of £1700.

1. **AOB**

Douglas noted that there is a Shared Property Fund which will be available for encouraging community ownership of assets such as local pubs/shops etc. This is a replacement to previous EU funding and is closely linked to the concept of social enterprise.

It was agreed that a further meeting of the Trust would take place on 29 April to consider the topics on the agenda which had not been covered due to time constraints.

1. **Date of next Meeting**

29 April 2021

**Planned Trust meetings for 2021 (Subject to variation re: Covid)**

3 June 2021 (Pre AGM meeting)

17 June 2021 AGM

24 June (Post AGM meeting)

19 August 2021

21 October 2021

1. December 2021

**Windfarm Fund Panel meetings**

29 March 2021

7 June 2021

4 October 2021