

**205th MINUTES OF BOARD OF TRUSTEES
of SLEAT COMMUNITY TRUST (SCT)
Tuesday, 28th of June 2022
7.30pm, Boardroom and Zoom**

ATTENDANCE: Martin MacGillivray (MM) (Chair), Roddy Murray (RM) (Trustee), Eilidh Grant (EG) (Trustee), Polly MacInnes (PM) (Vice Chair), Mike Shucksmith (MS) (Business Development Officer), Flora MacLean (FM) (Trustee), Ruaraidh Morrison (RMN), John Duncan MacInnes (JDM) (Trustee), Sarah Hess (SH) Administrator. Andrea Nollent (AN) (Trustee), Ruud van Ruitenbeek (RR) (SCTCL Chair), Gordon Matheson (GM) (Asst Business Development Officer)

1. **Apologies:** Dòmhnall Angaidh MacLennan (DAM) (Trustee) Garry Noakes (GN), Ade Stokes (AS) (EAG advisor)
2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** MM & RM, declared an ongoing interest in the Hydro scheme.
3. **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING:**
The 204th meeting minutes were proposed by JD seconded by FM, approved by the board.
4. **MATTERS ARISING:**

The date for village hall SCT General Meeting will be the evening of Wednesday 13th July. All please note revised date. An initial idea of presentations to be forwarded to MM. FM has kindly offered to help with the refreshments.

Roddy has been helping with the latest newsletter re the translating on Gaelic.

FM confirmed the last stock take did coincide with yearend.

Audit by Scottish woodlands. Action plan ongoing for H & S – GN had meeting with MS, all documentation has been updated, but the work continues.

Training is ongoing for shop staff and further Wednesday afternoons are required. A few people have dropped out of the Manual Handling Training due to sickness and this has been postponed. MS waits on the Shop Managers for a proposed new date. The Forest First Aid bolt-on has been rescheduled to Tuesday 5 July @ 14.00. **Action MS**

5. FINANCE

Cashflow: MS presented the latest actual cash flow/forecast.

SCT is gradually recovering with all MOUs reinstated. The claims for administration for the EV car are also up-to-date and these equate to £500 per month.

The SRL account is slightly elevated, firstly because of the VAT rebate we received, which was slightly too much, but it helped with assisting the SCTCL account where HMRC took too much. There is also a settlement to take place for the Peatland Restoration activity. We have settled all our accounts with Duncan Wemyss. What is now to be confirmed is the money that may be owed to us from NatureScot in relation to how much timber we have left within the project as per the funding agreement. This makes allowances for money we are getting paid by Norbord for the timber they have extracted. We have retained £3487.00 of timber, which would have gone to Norbord, we have asked them to stop extracting. This equates to 158.50 tonnes which will be used in the financial balancing exercise for the project with NatureScot and Lochaber Peat. **Action MS**

The trading account is stabilising. The refund of £10K to SRL and the extra MOU payment of £5000.00 for this month will be deferred until the VAT refund has been received in July.

Ongoing balancing between SAGE and all bank accounts before the next quarter of VAT is due. SH gave an example of one month's bank statements showing the significant amount of work required. **Action SH**

Revised mandates for RBS have been done as they require a member of the board to sign and approve. **Action MM & RR**

6. COMMUNICATION

The information evening at the Village Hall is to take place on the 13/07/2022. Some catering to be organised as well as the layout i.e., tables at the front with rows of chairs at the back. Presentations to be around 5 mins each, therefore allowing for Q & A. we need to give a detailed update on what we have been doing and achieved over the past 2 years. **Action MM.**

Flora has kindly offered to assist with the catering, tea & coffee and cakes. Using the kitchen there. **Action FM.**

7. PLOT SALES

Plot Sales – the Housing Trust advised that applications are still in progress. 2 parties still interested. – no change

8. HEALTH, SAFETY AND POLICIES

The Strategic Business Plan and 3 Service Improvement Plans still need updating and then maintaining. Each Board Chair to go through their own plan, update the document and then meet with MS. This needs to be completed by Friday 15th July 2022. **Action: All Board Chairs.**

A fire drill date to be confirmed for early July. **Action MS.**

9. SMO FACILITIES UPDATE

Kilbeg Service point – still waiting for adoption of the water systems by Scottish Water before McQueen's can start.

10. SCTCL (Trading)

The handbook has now been distributed, just waiting for the signatures to come back in. **Action Shop Managers / Line Managers.**

Trading update – RR

- With a spike in Covid cases in the area, influence on the the staffing situation. To get and keep staff is a continual ongoing issue.
- We have placed an ad for seasonal staff
- The shop managers are now prioritising and checking the deliveries against the invoices and increasing the prices on a regular basis. Keeping a close eye on checking the profit margins are kept.
- Last week the team had a meeting with Martin Devlin from PGMA He also discussed the return deposit scheme this will be introduced August 2023; it is a legal requirement so we need to start looking at the shop area as to where to place the unit and how it will be implemented.
- Debbie will be having a refresher online course re the alcohol licence
- A food bank basket has now been placed in the lobby

11 SRL (Renewables)

PM presented the following report on behalf of GN:

- Gordon Matheson has joined us as Assistant Business Development Officer. He has particular responsibility for our woodfuel business and will be looking ahead to secure timber for our future supply. He will also do a feasibility study on whether it would work to have a Campervan Service Point in the area at the gate to Tormore Forest.
- We have managed to retained 158t of the timber that was felled during the peatland restoration project. This will need to be seasoned for 6/9 months before chipping. We hope to get it stacked and tarped soon.
- Richard Livett has done a chipping for us of wood that was tarped 6 weeks ago. Despite the mixed weather we have been having the moisture content is a healthy 28%. Gordon is planning ways to keep the MC as low as this on a regular basis.
- We continue to make log lengths available and hope to revive the split log provision if Gordon can find funding for a splitter.
- Social Activities: The midsummer BBQ was cancelled due to the poor weather. Volunteers continue to work on path maintenance and the bothy area.
- Forest School Tree Survey was carried out. A few simple actions will make it safe for the children. This report was approved and adopted.

- The white-tailed eagle failed to raise a chick this year, probably due to the cold, wet weather in May. This means volunteers can access the restricted area from now on.
- The local Deer Management Group has not met since the Covid shutdown. SCT has been asked to contact the CEO of CDLT to press for its return.
- A beat-up survey has been done to assess the replanting area for next winter. A dedicated group will meet to coordinate with Ruairaidh MacPherson to plan this.
Action PM & HM
- Ian Hall re the bid for the cycle tracks, the bid doesn't cover as much as he thought it would and his intention was.
- It has been decided that at the moment we will put on hold the ordering any more from Kinloch Forest, as we have enough at present. But we have asked them to keep us in the loop for future requirements ie in a couple of years time.
- Bothy works – CSP: Rural Design have come up with a few proposals for the CSP. Plans for the restoration and development of the bothy will be undertaken separately.

12. EAG REPORT – Ade

The Group held its most recent meeting on Tuesday 14th June. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 13th September.

Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS)

Reported sightings of Himalayan Balsam in Tormore Forest have yet to be confirmed despite two attempts to find it. Further monitoring to be done as it comes into flower in July.

HB is present at Tormore House and along the roadside nearby, however, and work has commenced to clear it. We are hoping to arrange further volunteer work at this location in the coming weeks.

Armada Castle staff is hoping to tackle HB at and in the proximity of the Kilmore memorial site.

The Group is also considering practical ways in which the buddleia stand near to the turbine house can be eradicated. Note that there are at least two buddleia bushes alongside the forest road suggesting it has spread further upslope than previously realised.

Pheasant berry (Himalayan honeysuckle) has been sighted near to the woodshed by Tormore Volunteers.

SCT Environment Policy

Carried forwards - awaiting feedback from SCT entities.

Insurance coverage for volunteers – the revised policy from NFU has now been received and accepted, there was a slight increase in cost which is negligible over the 12 months. We were also under insured in certain areas of the business. Which the review highlighted and corrected.

One example was the shop which in the policy had stated an annual turnover of £100,000 which should be £800,000.

13. AOB

Communication between Boards - While not wishing to impede the excellent amount of work being done across the Boards and volunteer groups in the Trust, there was some concern expressed that developments were not always effectively communicated. **Action: MS, MM**

Review and update of Articles: Starting to update our articles of association with the newer template. This new format allows for further opportunities for funding and land management. MM went over the proposed amendments which were largely to do with layout and will not affect our charitable aims.

Many of the changes in the template are to do with membership and meetings. Three quarters of members now have to be members of the local community, which is no problem. Proxy votes are now allowed which is also helpful in terms of greater participation. Voting is will be 75% rather than a simple majority - again OK. However, the one which might be a problem is the quorum for meetings - 8 members or 10% of membership, whichever is greater. SCT has a very healthy membership so 10% is around 60 members. This level might be difficult to achieve. The quorum has probably been changed to aid stability, however a 5% level would still be around 30 people which would be easier to achieve. **ACTION: MM to check government guidance to see whether there is any flexibility.**

Once the article is signed off by the Board, it needs to be voted in and signed off by SCT members, then notified to OSCR. It is then referred to the GM and finally uploaded to companies house and OSCR as the final amended copy.