

Fernaigh Community Trust

Minutes of Meeting 12th October 2021, Achmore Hall

Present: Colin McAndrew, Duncan Gibson, Roddy MacPherson, Georgie Grimson, Neil MacRae, Martin Irving, Lizzie Bird and Colin Parsons

Action

<p>1. Welcome & Apologies</p> <p>Colin welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p>	
<p>2. Minutes of Meeting 14th September.</p> <p>Proposed by Georgie, seconded by Roddy and unanimously agreed. Matters arising are agenda items.</p>	
<p>3. Finance</p> <p>Georgie reported that in September⁴ income was £195 - £145 for office rent and £50 allotment rent. Expenditure was £98.70 – office electricity £85.70 and £13 Companies House. The bank balance now stands at £6,258.88</p> <p>Four allotment rents are outstanding which Georgie will chase.</p>	<p>Georgie</p>
<p>4. Land Update</p> <p>Colin had received an email regarding interest in renting fields. Our policy is to let fields to applicants within the local CC area and the request came from outside this. However, there is nothing available now and when there is it will be advertised locally in April. Colin will contact the interested party if no one locally applies for field leases.</p>	<p>Colin</p>
<p>5. Office Update</p> <p>No further update regarding the office and FLS.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>6. Footpaths</p> <p>a) Access to the river. After looking at a possible access point Colin proposed a kissing gate as the best option for access. However, the land on the riverside of the gate would need to</p>	

<p>be solid flat land so investigation will continue on site and with gate suppliers.</p> <p>b) Spraying weeds on path – it was discussed and agreed that using a tank unit fixed to a quad bike would be the easiest method to control the weeds as opposed to using a pedestrian sprayer. Purchase of a tank sprayer was agreed but this will not be required until Spring 2022.</p>	<p>ALL</p>
<p>7) Forestry</p> <p>a) Tree felling / harvesting by power lines continues above Braeintra. Roddy indicated that another temporary alteration to the electricity supply, which happened this month, would also be needed during November. Notifications will be sent to residents.</p> <p>b) Lizzie reported that we have had a Forest Ranger this year covering Strome woods as well as the viewpoint above Stromeferry on the main road. The Ranger covers a large area but with placing ‘no overnight parking signs’ and ‘no fires’ signs this has improved the problems of campervans and resultant waste disposal problems. It had been noted that signs had been removed and then replaced by the Ranger. The CC and Marian Howatt from Strome have been very active in helping to get and communicate with the Ranger service. The decisions of whether the Ranger will be required over the winter months is still to be made but hopefully this important role will be in place for 2022.</p> <p>c) Lizzie mentioned that we should arrange a meeting in Spring next year with FLS regarding our Concordat with them. She will contact and arrange</p>	<p>Lizzie</p>
<p>8) AGM Planning</p> <p>It was agreed that we will hold our AGM on Wednesday 8th December. Colin and Lizzie will arrange notifications.</p>	<p>Colin/Lizzie</p>
<p>9) FCT & Biodiversity</p> <p>Colin Parsons had been invited to join the meeting to discuss biodiversity. He started with some historical background showing how biodiversity in the Highlands had been severely depleted over the past 200 years or so. It was acknowledged that in recent decades this loss had started to be turned around, and this was very welcome. However, we are still in the midst of a global biodiversity crisis and there was potentially more that could be done and as landowners, this community and the FCT could play a small part in this. The Trust had already done some</p>	

<p>good work such as tree planting and other ideas such as pond creation had already been discussed. Wildflower planting was also mentioned.</p> <p>Everyone was keen to see the agricultural land productive and in good heart, and to this end it was unanimously felt that a reduction in rushes and dockens would be desirable. There was much discussion about how this could be achieved.</p> <p>Colin felt that as use of agrochemicals is widely known to be a cause of biodiversity loss and it has been decisively demonstrated that organic farms had a 30% higher biodiversity than non-organic farms, a consideration of organic approaches would be helpful. The danger to human health from herbicides was also a concern. Others were sceptical and would prefer to continue using herbicides, as they weren't aware of an effective alternative. Some thought that organic or biodiversity friendly methods would be at odds with being productive, but Colin suggested that this was not necessarily the case and with the right management it could be a win-win.</p> <p>Colin MacAndrew suggested an ecological survey of Trust land would be helpful, and this was met with approval. He thanked Colin Parsons for attending the meeting.</p> <p>Colin Parsons thanked the committee and hoped that the discussion would continue.</p>	
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Date of next meeting:

9th November 2021 at 7.30pm Achmore Hall

Colin thanked all for attending the meeting which closed at 9.00 pm