

Maryburgh Woodland Community Group

Thursday 9th February 2023 @ 7.00pm

Maryburgh Amenities Centre

MINUTE of meeting.		ACTION:
1.	<p>Welcomes and Apologies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attendees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Craig Evans ➤ Ian Fraser ➤ Siobhan Fraser ➤ John MacKay (MAC rep) ➤ Rosie Macleod ➤ Elsbeth Neil ➤ Jim Neil ➤ Megan Parker ➤ Donald Stuart (CC rep) ▪ Apologies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ewan McHardy ▪ MP welcomed attendees to the meeting.
2.	<p>Approval of minute of 26.01.23 & actions from previous meeting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ MP asked for approval of the minute dated: 26.01.23 Minute Approved by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Proposer: Donald Stuart ➤ Seconder: John MacKay ▪ EN had distributed a copy of the insurance document to all present. This highlighted that MAC had public liability insurance cover to the value of £5,000,000. ▪ MP informed the group that Nick Richards from Highland Council had been in touch and had informed her that the Group would have to get full approval for any felling or pruning. He sent MP the application form and she agreed to complete and send around the group and get sign off from the MAC committee. ▪ MP has investigated possible funding sources and Scottish Forestry offer a discretionary fund to the possible value of £5,000. This could be used for the initial work which must take place. Woodland Improvement Grant – Woods In and Around Towns could also be another source of funding. ▪ MP highlighted that during her walk through of the wood she has spotted a possible squirrel drey not far from the fallen tree clump. This must be observed to examine activity. If there is a squirrel present the Group may have to seek a Disturbance Licence. ▪ JMacK informed the Group that he had spoken to Roderick Rolfe at Brahan who will be happy to take down the two trees highlighted in the survey. He has some concerns about the height of the trees. Ropes will have to be used. He possesses a chainsaw licence and a windblown certificate but no rope certificate. <p>MP to complete the planning application and send around the group and get sign off from the MAC committee.</p> <p>MP to circulate information on the funding and accompanying guidance.</p> <p>JMacK agreed to have a look at the drey</p>

		<p>MP suggested that it may be worthwhile getting additional quotes for the felling. CE agreed to contact Simon Logan to ask for a quote and EN agreed to contact Paul Sharpe.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ EN agreed to write to Brahan Estate informing them of the Community purchase of the woodland and the work about to be undertaken. ▪ CE informed the Group that everyone was happy with the wording and that the signs would be erected at the appropriate entry areas by the end of February. 	<p>CE to contact Simon Logan to ask for a quote and EN to contact Paul Sharpe.</p> <p>EN to write to Brahan Estate informing them of the Community purchase of the woodland.</p>
3.	Declarations of Interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ MP said that it was important to highlight any links to forestry or woodland organisations, and to that end she declared that she was employed by Scottish Woodlands who may at some point be involved in the tendering process. ▪ There were no other declarations of interest. 	
4.	<p>Works required/ongoing in the woods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Hazard Trees ➤ Signs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ MP informed the group that during her walk through she had spotted a large rhododendron, which may have to be removed especially if it is found to be a Ponticum specimen. It was agreed by all present that this is something which should be observed carefully and be controlled. ▪ CE had already highlighted that the hazard signs will be erected by the end of February. 	
5.	<p>Permissions, Authorisations, Permits etc</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ TPO consent (tree preservation order) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ IF asked if formal certificates should be sought from any contractor hired to do work. MP said that this would be good practice which would also involve getting detailed risk assessment documents. These papers would be held in a file by the Group, ▪ MP indicated that as long as the Group informed the contractor of any environmental considerations, tree survey results, and the Inventory Garden & Designed Landscape information then the landowner role is then fulfilled in line with current guidance and the contractor fulfils the FWM responsibilities. ▪ IF asked if the Group would require to get a Mammal Survey carried out. MP highlighted that this would be useful in the preparation of the Management Plan. SF suggested that a before and after survey could show how the wood has improved under appropriate management. MP agreed to research who could do a Mammal survey. ▪ MP Informed the group that getting permission for felling woodland under a TPO can take some time. DS said that if the delay was getting too close to May 	<p>All Parties to ensure formal certificates and risk assessments are sought from any contractor undertaking work in the wood. EN to prepare a file of documentation.</p> <p>MP to research who could do a Mammal survey.</p>

		<p>then perhaps we could ask Councillor MacLean to use her influence.</p>	
6.	<p>Woodland Management Plan Development and Community Consultation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ MP had circulated a paper with suggestions about the content of the consultation. ▪ There followed a discussion about who should be consulted. It was felt that SSE should be added along with Gavin Sinclair, who's property adjoins the wood. This raised a question about the three small areas behind the houses at the top of Birch Drive which are adjacent to the path but are not included in the woodland plan. CE agreed to contact Pat Black (solicitor) to examine the title deed of the locality. ▪ MP suggested that the group should use the WIAT Woodland Management Standard (tabled) as our guide to inform our plan and our community consultation. ▪ There followed a discussion about the content of the consultation. Most present said that on general consultation with friends and family, most people wanted the wood to be as natural as possible, however, there were issues around accessibility. ▪ The group felt that the initial aims for the wood could be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Make the woodland safe for members of the Community. ➤ Make it accessible for all members of our Community. ➤ Develop and implement practices to protect and enhance the biodiversity of the woodland. ▪ EN asked how many copies of the consultation would be required. DS informed the group that 600 copies of the Roundabout are produced. ▪ It was agreed by the group that the consultation paper should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A cover letter ➤ Notice of the felling ➤ Questionnaire ➤ Request for volunteers. ▪ It was also agreed by all present that members of the Community would have two weeks to return their responses and the formal Consultees should have one month. ▪ EN agreed to start to prepare the draft document. 	<p>CE to contact Pat Black (solicitor) to examine the title deed of the locality.</p> <p>EN to start to prepare the draft document.</p>

7.	Funding/grants/budgeting/accounts/etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It was suggested that a request for any financial or resource help should be added to the consultation document. ▪ The group then considered the Capital Grants document which had been circulated. Everyone agreed that the felling of the dangerous trees should be our priority, but that the consultation will inform the Management Plan and therefore will direct the funding. ▪ DS informed the group that the MAC treasurer was checking with their accountant to ask for a second account to deal with the funding for the wood. ▪ With the opening of an account and dealing with various funding streams it was agreed that this group should appoint a treasurer. DS nominated Rosie Macleod and Rosie kindly agreed to be treasurer. 	<p>EN to add resource request to the consultation document.</p> <p>DS will inform the group of opening the second account.</p>
8.	AOCB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DS highlighted that the 'Clean & Green' van initiative was no longer running in Muir of Ord, but that 25% of this initiative belonged to Maryburgh. Everyone agreed that the upkeep of the van would be difficult to take on, but if the van were to be sold the Community could possibly recoup 25% of the value. DS agreed to explore this issue more with Councillor MacLean. ▪ EN asked the members present to settle on the name of the group. It was agreed that from now on the group would go by the name: Maryburgh Woodland Community Group. ▪ DS highlighted that he had been contacted by Conon & Maryburgh Beavers with a request to carry out a bush craft session in the woods. After a discussion it was felt best to ask the beavers to wait until the wood had been made safe before consideration would be given to any requests to use the woods for activities. DS agreed to inform the Beaver group. 	<p>DS agreed to explore this issue more with Councillor MacLean.</p> <p>DS to inform the Beaver group of the decision.</p>
9.	Date of next meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Everyone present agreed to meet again on Thursday 9th of March at 7pm. 	<p>EN to contact Steph about the hall booking.</p>