

PORTMOAK COMMUNITY WOODLAND GROUP STEERING COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING

held at

on

Tuesday 21 August 2012

The Well Inn

Present: Dave Batchelor, Louise Batchelor (in Chair), Gary Bolton (WT), Lesley Botten, Alison Bradley, Jill Aitken (WT), Elaine Carruthers, Stuart Garvie, Jeff Gunnell, Mike McGinnes, David Robb (RSPB) (for part of meeting), Jim Shepherd "Shep"

Apologies: Karen McDonnell

Minutes: Acceptance of the Minutes of the Meeting of 17 July 2012 was proposed by Mike McGinnes and seconded by Elaine Carruthers.

Matters arising: Correction of the name of the Appletree Man (Andrew Lear, not Andrew Leigh)

Woodland Trust Update: Noted that Gary Bolton's mobile no. and email have been taken over from James.

Gary listed various points that had come to his attention as he visited

(a) Portmoak Moss:-

1. Access point signage needs cleaning and renewing. It was agreed that WT would deal with this.
2. Rabbit netting on steps needs renewed in some places. The question of whether non-slip boards would be better than weldmesh, which becomes icy in winter, was discussed.
3. Seats - Gary suggested dedicated seats.
4. Rhododendrons require herbicide.
5. Numbers on existing dams require repainting and additional dams are also required.
6. Leaflet dispenser requires refilling. It was noted that this empties very quickly and that a revamp of the text is required. Labels will be produced bearing the updated address of WT and, thus amended, the existing leaflets will continue to be used until exhausted. A new leaflet will be produced in the new year.

(b) Kilmagad

7. Suggested tree shelters be removed once trees grown. If left they can distort tree growth: they can be re-used or re-cycled.
8. Barbed wire at the gate above the golf course should be removed.
9. Gate on path to Bishop Hill requires renewal and removal of barbed wire.
10. Wooden steps along path to Bishop Hill now obsolete.
11. Deer fence gate at entrance requires new padlock.
12. Removal of excess padlocks on main gate at Portmoak Moss. They will supply PCWG with a key. Shep will have additional keys cut with one to be held at The Well.
13. Rabbit netting on Kilmagad: it was agreed that this should be removed.

14. Noted 1 – 2 m. tubes will work with roe deer if replanting considered. Agreed to stick to Management Plan.

Work to be split between WT and volunteers. Jill mentioned that WT budget includes funds for weed wiping and other activities at the Moss.

9th August meeting at Bog: Present: Jill Aitken, Pete Matthews, Louise Batchelor, Jonny Hughes.

Louise reported that Pete's initial feeling was that the Bog was rather dry in some places but the centre was good and overall it was not bad considering how young the project is. Jonny Hughes was very excited at progress of regeneration of Bog and found specimens of sphagnum indicating regeneration. Mike to supply map of the dams to Jonny and to Pete Matthews.

Louise said we proposed to hold seminar (Boginar) with Bog experts at the end of the year.

Group looked at where the Bog is leaking. Big benefit if 50% reduction could be achieved in worst places. 3 extra dams would control the worst area. Three main places will be mapped.

Bog: Mike pointed out that the hydrology of the Bog is very complicated and closing off one leak would not affect the water table under it. The level of water in the surrounding land governs how much there is in the Bog.

Stuart measures the water within the Bog every six weeks. There are approximately 150,000 tons (tonnes?) of water in the Bog. A hydrologist is required and dams are required. Funds have been put aside by WT for their purchase WT will organise volunteers for birch cutting.

Mike met with Alex Page a paid consultant of Living Lomonds Landscape Partnership who is pulling together all projects presented to them.. We have 2 weeks to put in application for money.

Jill suggested any funds received might be used for training people in Bog damming.

Mike: SNH require us to put forward Structural Management Plan for Bog to sustain it for next fifty years plus ten years costings i.e. is Bog saveable or not – if it is not, then the project is sunk. Mike expects Boginar will cover a large range of possibilities. We need to get surrounding land included as this affects the Moss. Mike will write it up. He is seeking guidance on costings. SNH will support us and will contribute finance. A suggestion is to dam the whole Bog with dead trees. SNH would prefer the Boginar to be held in the spring when their Consultant is appointed. A series of Boginars are proposed with consultants etc. invited to November Boginar. Original cash application could be dropped.

David Anderson; Futurescapes Officer of RSPB – spoke of approach to conservation, building partnerships in community, etc. Wants to work with Loch Leven community to find out what other groups are doing. Sees positive change through working with other groups – no funding offered. Will supply copy of end of year report on how Futurescapes works and how it will be taken forward next year. RSPB trying to widen focus to include environmental management, woodlands, wetlands, raised bogs etc.

Jeff summarised our aims. Invited David to Boginar to see what we are thinking. David said there are bog experts in RSPB, Edinburgh, who could assist. He said their scale of thinking is big, trying to consolidate habitats. Jeff asked if what we are trying to do would fall within their remit. David was not too sure of precise position but was generally positive. Louise asked if there was anything David wanted to know – he will either attend another meeting or send an email. RSPB have funded groups of small organisations and NGOs in schemes. Now seeking to pool knowledge with other groups. Dave noted RSPB can bring expertise and clout of large organisation. David handed over a copy of report on Futurescapes.

(David Anderson left meeting at this point)

Boginar – 16th November – afternoon at Portmoak Hall. Meet at Well at 10.00 for Registration and Coffee; 10.30 am visit to Bog, 12.00 Lunch at Well, 1.00 start meeting, 4.00/4.30 finish.

List of names, titles and emails required.

Who are we going to invite? Carol Evans (WT) has suggested the new head of Conservation, based in Lincolnshire, should be invited, also Carol or Tim Hall. Jonny Hughes from SWT.

It was agreed to discuss the Agenda at a later meeting.

Mike noted that we want these people to meet with their peers in other areas at our meeting. The SNH chap from Flanders Moss should be asked to do introduction. Ideally a strategic plan would emerge from the meeting, but a more likely outcome would be to get a list of possibilities and to put people in contact with one another and thereafter a "management person" would put it all together.

Dave produced photo of red squirrel in middle of Bog. It is thought there are also two young.

Xmas Tree Sale: There are sufficient trees left to have a tree sale again. Agreed date - 16th December.

Viewpoint Indicator: A group from PCWG went up the hill prior to the meeting together with Jill, Gary and David. Shep went up at Kinneston on Tuesday and noted the trees there have grown considerably. He suggested a quad be taken through the orchard to carry the equipment and Karen will be asked to do the required risk assessment for this - to erect the Viewpoint Board two poles and Postcrete as well as the Board itself are required. Louise suggested WT might help and Dave would like someone to supervise. Jill reckoned contractors could be brought in to install the Board and £150 from PCWG funds was offered towards the cost this. PCWG will cut back gorse, Jill will arrange contractors and Shep will produce the Board and supervise the installation. WT to pay contractor and PCWG to reimburse. Gary will get quote from contractor.

AOCB:

(i) Puddle: Elaine said there is a very big puddle in the Moss which is hard to get round.

(ii) "Car Park" – Dave asked about position with regard to leasing this. The area has a drain in it, hence it cannot be built over. Stuart explained we do not want to take it over as a car park, only as a "technical area". Alison explained why a practising lawyer is required. Shep is to ask local lawyer if he would deal with this.

(iii) Burns Supper – 26th January 2013. Advertising would cost £13/day for 3 months with article and picture of Bill Carr in full flight. Agreed. Jill and Gary both invited. It was agreed whisky miniatures are preferable to nips poured from bottle.

(iv) Orchard Pruning Course: 2nd March 2013.

(v) Meetings: Dave suggested we might generally aim to finish by 9pm and form team for Pub Quiz!

Meeting closed: 10.26