

## **Portmoak Community Woodland Steering Group**

**Meeting** 18th February 2009, The Well Country Inn

Present J.Shepherd, KMcDonnell, J.Gunnell, L.Batchelor, D.Batchelor, M.Brown, M.McGinness, L.Botten

Apols: R.Barlow, M.Hogg

The January meeting had focussed on Burns Supper arrangements, no minutes

### **Woodland Trust Update**

**The Thank-you event** for donors on the 17th of January, had been very well attended between 40-50 people, including major funders. Excellent weather and refreshments.

RB advised that he was working on Kilmagadwood design and that should target the March meeting for consultation with group and members of the public. Awaiting feedback from D.Stubbs P&K Council regards path inside the field edge however no response as yet. RB will be meeting with Stewarts Turf and Niall Loblely P&K Council sometime in March to discuss access issues.

Issue of signage relating to access during shoot on Stewart Turf land discussed, agreed that this should be removed and that concerns regarding it's positioning and message should be raised by WT at the meeting with P&KC and Stewarts turf in March.

### **First Aid Training**

KMcD had asked about minimum duration of first aid training in order group can support chainsaw operation within the Moss, both RMcD and DB hold appropriate certification. 4hr duration, £290+VAT for up to 10 delegates. Proposed dates for March meeting. In relation to chainsaw training DB now reimbursed for initial chainsaw training (£300)

**Sing a Long** WT have reimbursed £140 to cover costs of Sing a Long. J.Gunnell has some pictures which will be put on website, requests from WT HQ also for inclusion in Broadleaf and other publications. D.Crighton has agreed that pictures can be used in this way.

### **Duke of Edinburgh Award**

Additional volunteers will be required to assist DoE plus provide additional activities for those undertaking the award scheme. Need a list of tasks plus timescales to work towards, this will become easier to move forward once clocks change at the end of March.

### **Interpretation**

Cost to produce interpretation boards £135 each, WT has in budget. Agreed that Group will produce mounts for the boards.

### **Burns Supper**

Incredible success, generated £548.15 profit. Caterer pleased with event and keen to next year, seated 112 people, service very good, food excellent

### **Curling Pond**

WT advised that this potential project does not fit within their acquisition criteria for a number of reasons, they can however provide advice to Curling Club if required. Scotlandwell in Bloom are interested in taking this forward and would seek involvement from PCW group to take forward. The willow could be towed out and cut for wood burners, EC to speak to M. Silvera and update at March meeting

### **Calender**

JG has started to take pictures within the woodland for a 2010 calendar, other folk should also consider capturing suitable pictures for inclusion.

### **AoCB**

### **Birch**

Some birch will be removed from the peat bank and planted along the access road to the Moss, will be maintained by Scotlandwell in Bloom.

### **Car Park**

The 'informal' car park adjacent to the Moss entrance is for sale by public auction on 25<sup>th</sup> of Feb, Scottish Water have no further use for the site. KMcD had been in touch with Scottish Water to find out if it could be withdrawn from sale and that the group could raise funds and purchase, this is not possible. One of the local residents works on behalf of the housing developer on site next to car park, they will be bidding for land at auction, as they can re-route pipe work across site which will be to their benefit. There are concerns that the site could be purchased by an unknown party which could lead to it's use for other purposes, siting caravan for example.

Key points from WT regards sale:

- You'll need a solicitor to do the conveyancing, so there will be legal fees (SW will presumably pay their own free as its an auction).
- As its an ex-sewage punping station, it could be contaminated land - initial indications from PKC indicate that it is not registered as such, but this is not gospel. There is a clause in the sales particulars stating that the vendor takes on all responsibility for meeting environmental requirements or claims arising thereof (or something to that effect).
- It may need planning consent to be used as car park - however Trust got this consent in 2000, so this may still be valid - also it has been a defacto car park so may not need consent anyway. Also unlikely to be a problem getting consent I would have thought. My contact at PKC is keen on it remaining public parking.
- In theory, if it's a car park the council may give it a rateable value (i.e. demand rates). This is the case for most of our car parks (I think backmuir car park is rated at £500). However, we usually get 100% exemption as a charity, although this is discretionary. Not sure how this would work for community group.

- There are restrictions on use due to live sewer pipes underneath, and SW reserve rights of access. This is good, as it means its probably not much use to anyone else.

WT aware of situation and waiting from feedback from the meeting, agreed that should bid for the site, have a budget of £1000. KMcD to advise RB.

### **Reforestation Scotland**

To rejoin.

### **Grey Squirrels**

These have been spotted locally, what is Woodland Trust policy in relation to their control on WT properties, concerned about impact on red squirrel population especially within the Moss.

### **Oak at entrance to Moss**

L.Batchelor has made contact with a local contractor who would be interested in the oak and will provide the group with a few slabs for our own use. The large silver birch trunks will be used for firewood, R.McD and DB to do.

### **Public Consultation in relation to recent land purchase**

RB drafting plan for consultation, should raise awareness to ensure public have their say, working towards 19<sup>th</sup> of March, to hold at the Well Country Inn. LB raised concerns that we need to have a broad array of people involved, KMcD aware that the WT will be undertaking some specific activity with the primary school no timescale as yet.

### **Portmoak Moss**

MMcG highlighted some basics that need to be taken forward, birch and conifer removal the latter could be harvested at Christmas? Scots Pine on peat crown could be relocated to the east side of the Moss to assist in supporting red squirrel population, believe there are 4 squirrels in total.

**Next Meeting Thursday 19th March 2009**