

Minutes from Portmoak Community Woodland Steering Group Meeting : 21st October 2010, Well Inn, Scotlandwell

Present: MMcGinnes, L.Botten,ABradley, RMcDonnell,KMcDonnell,JShepherd,JGilmour,JGunnell, DBatchelor, E Carruthers, D Carruthers

Apols:LBatchelor

1. Woodland Trust Update:

Birch Clearance: SWT will be back on site w/c 25th October to undertake further clearance, a mix of brush cutting and hand pulling, anticipate a minimum of 8 persons per day.

Kilmagadwood : School tree planting week is fully booked, will conclude the week with Community day.

Community Day: Opportunity to plant trees, participate in a Drumming Workshop and watch Woodmiser within the Moss. There will be free food and drink available on Kilmagadwood. Discussed timber specifications for the saw mill, including planks, posts, shelves, beams, and rails. KMcD has to provide 'wish list' to the operator on Friday 5th November. JG suggested that we make simple woodland perches for people to take home, KMcD to locate a pattern and provide to operator on 6th. Drumfun will cost £560, PCW to pay for and reclaim from WT.

Woodfuel Potential, Chainsaw Use and Managing Portmoak Moss: Discussed the issues raised by withdrawal of chainsaw use and how this will impact on 'harvesting' timber. The management plan for the Moss is due for renewal, WT policy has modified in that man made interventions are not now deemed economic so there will be no more thinning and focus will be on public benefit and biodiversity. WT are fully committed to the bog restoration which will require routine intervention.

The modification in WT policy had not been obvious in any recent discussions with PCW group and there was considerable consternation about how this policy change would impact on the woodlands managed by PCW. For example using timber locally; JGilmour had given some consideration to potential routes forward, primarily because the level of local involvement with the woodlands is unusual within the WT estate. These options were outlined and discussed however we would be required to consult locally on the appropriate way forward.

Option 1: PCWG as contractor, contract law is a potential barrier, PCWG become members of BTCV and become insured via BTCV. This doesn't get around WT policy for long term benefit and 'development' of woodland given revised focus on public benefit and biodiversity with minimal intervention.

Option2: A form of lease or management agreement which would effectively hand over areas for harvesting linked to a local woodfuel scheme.

Considerable discussion followed regards what shape this new way of working would take, require to consider an array of questions

- What area would be 'worth' having for PCWG?
- How would 'we' like the site to look like in 20-50 years?
- How would a WT wood look under new policy of minimal intervention?
- What would be involved in either process?

We would need to consider all of the above as pre-work for a public meeting: KMcD stated that her own and EC's time over the next 12-18 months would be committed to the Wash House Project so others within the group would need to step up to take this additional work forward.

KMcD would contact CWA to seek their advice and identify associated groups that have taken a similar approach with a view to meeting with to discuss,

- What is involved in the process?
- What were the barriers to progress and how were these overcome?
- What are the positive benefits

Again we would need to seek advice in preparation for a public meeting to present options.

2. Orchard update: A further £200 has been donated for Fruit trees, and delivery of the first batch is expected during November.

3. Land by Car Park: no update

4. Storage of tools etc. No update

5. Information Boards: WT have provided a specification, can be run off on 6th.

6. Timber inside Moss gate: This will be machined on 6th November to agreed specifications.

7. Paths Network: no update

8. Shooting in Moss: No update, however this is a seasonal activity so we should encourage vigilance over the next few months.

9. View Point Indicator: This should be reconsidered over the winter months, should adopt a more simplistic approach and consider locating adjacent to the bench in the Field a'bin the Kirk.

10. Additional/Renewed Dams: no update.

11. Woodfuel Resource Assessments: Portmoak Moss Assessment carried out on 14th September, copy attached. Note that all volumes figures are estimates and need further checking before a business plan is built around them. There had been some discussion around leasing back an area to harvest timber from, JG intimated that the Exxon funding generated from his volunteer activity could be used to fund insurance linked to felling/clearing activity. This needs to be taken forward as one component of discussions with CWA.

12. Treasurers Report : £2267 in account.

13. Iron HorseDC has assisted in producing a balance sheet which PCW can submit alongside Kinross-shire fund application. This is on hold currently until the issues around woodland management are resolved.

15. Burns Supper Date: Hall booked for 22nd January 2010. Bill Carr to be approached, EC to chair the evening, DB to deliver the Immortal Memory.

Post meeting Brian and Moira Ogilvie to deliver Toast and Reply

Stuart Garvie to be approached regards Mosses, Waters.

Gerry Marshall has been in touch regards the Gliding Club sponsoring the top table, DB to feedback. Gerry also to be approached regards singing.

AoB

Christmas Trees: EC requested assistance to remove 30 small Christmas trees from the arised bog surface, these will be potted and given to members of the church by Sunday school pupils immediately prior to Christmas.

Next Meeting 18th November 2010