

## MINUTES OF PORTMOAK COMMUNITY WOODLAND GROUP – 19<sup>TH</sup> November 2013

Present: Karen McDonnell (Chair), Dave and Louise Batchelor, Gary Bolton (Woodland Trust), Lesley Botten, Alison Bradley, Dave Carruthers, Stuart Garvie, Jeff Gunnell, Mike McGinness, Scott Paterson (Bird Recorder – P & KC)

1. **Welcome:** The Chairman welcomed all present.

2. **Apologies:** Elaine Carruthers, Jim Shepherd.

3. **Woodland Trust Update:** (a) Lantern Festival was very successful. It is hoped to do it again in two years time at Portmoak and it may be held on another Scottish site next year though the Committee indicated it would be happy to host it every year. It was noted that it took place during the school holiday and earlier in October was proposed. Dave B suggested it should have started at 7pm as there was a queue at the Lochend Farm Shop. Helen would like people to eat there first. 200+ people attended. **Agreed 7pm start, 9.30 finish.** Keeping people at the Farm Shop controls queue. Suggested there should be entertainment at the Shop also. It was observed that powerful lights e.g. at the top of steps, impaired night vision. The strung lights at the entrance may not be available again – an alternative could be found

(b) Portmoak Moss and SNH: Is it considered to be a good idea to put mulching machines across the Moss. A small "Bog Cat" could be hired to travel between the drainage channels and if money is available the whole area could be covered. This would temporarily destroy dragonfly, etc. habitats, but it could be done in sections. The total area weeded this year was about 9ha. so three sections of 3ha. Much of the water in the bog is held in plant material and the open drains put pressure on the ground and could cause water to pour out destroying the bog. Trees around some of the edges will require to be removed as also will those in the Christmas tree area. The edges should be sculpted to a 20 – 30<sup>0</sup> angle. Andrew McBride would be able to advise on sequence. **A meeting should be arranged with Andrew and the hydrologist – a half day, part on site and part indoors.**

(c) **Dipwells:** Gary presented a report on these. There is a new one for manual recording. SNH is getting some with telemetry

4. **Birds:** Scott Paterson, Perth & Kinross Bird Recorder explained that the last Perth & Kinross bird survey report was made in 2006. He is now administering a fresh one and is basing it on the Moss. Developers want this information and he hopes to interest people in bird recognition. Scott has worked for RSPB around UK and is doing a bird report on the Moss. 40 species recorded in 2 visits in October and November including Bullfinches and Lesser Redpole (a red listed bird). He hopes to see Snipe and has a Curlew. And an Owl survey is possible – should be Tawny Owls in the winter and Long-eared Owls in spring. Conifers are important for owls. There are also Barn Owls on the fringes. He would expect to see Jays and Green Woodpeckers which have been seen on Bishop Hill and at Westfield. The Moss and the surrounding area are rich in terms of wildlife. Kestrels are suffering from a declining food supply except in the fenced areas where voles abound. It was noted that generally dogs should not cause disturbance as they go round the path rather than across the Moss. **It was proposed that the paths be moved.** Jeff asked that the scalping of the Moss be explained in terms of bird life etc. **Scott offered to do guided walks.** He had seen 9 deer today and hare in the middle of the Moss. He had seen one Crossbill today and several in October. They nest during January and February and start singing in December. He had seen one red squirrel. Goshawks have been recorded in Fife. **Scott will produce a Winter Report in about March and a spring one over May/June.** BTO Bird Track – includes Portmoak site. He wants records from others to support the observations. **Jeff suggested two habitation education events each year and other activities to recruit the local community. Mike to put records on website.** There is a Garden web recorder in the village. The Moss is producing more and more opportunities to engage with people – this should be incorporated into the Management Plan. Louise suggested we should target people who use the Moss.

5. **Curling Pond: Dave C to keep up to date with this.**

6. **Treasurer:** Bank balance as at 26 September 2013 **£2,234.31.** Outstanding payment: Jeff Gunnell £56.50 re Glow sticks etc. Outstanding receipt: Donations from Lantern Event £123.74. It was agreed that Lesley Botten should now be authorised to sign cheques.

7. **Maintenance:** No more since last meeting. Extra pegs obtained for mulch mats. Gorse cleared from orchard by Dave C. and Elaine. Bulbs for wild flower bed.

8. **Website: Jeff to put on information for next event and also put on Minutes.**

9. **Christmas Trees:** There are sufficient for another event. Two Christmas trees are required for the churches. **Preparations for tree activity: Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> December at 11am. Event – Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> December. From 11.30 – 2.00\*. Louise will send an e-poster to school.** Some trees should be pre-cut.

10. **Kilmagad:** Gary says sign is imminent as are Portmoak leaflets of which draft copies are awaited. Feedback required.

11. **Burns Supper:** Tickets will be available from 30<sup>th</sup> November. Organisation is well under way.

12. **Living Lomonds Landscape Partnership:** Our financial requirement can now be reduced. Procurement rules are to be changed and further discussion required.

13. **AOCB:** Mike – Birch trees required – we can supply.

14. Stuart – payment required for high viz. jackets. **Matt to make bird table.** A woman has complained she cannot use path alongside ditch because of fallen timber. Difficulties with new owner of Grahamstone. **Gary to ensure no pheasant feeders are placed on Moss.** Shooting notices need times and dates without which they will be contravening Access Code. Raise question in Community Council. Perth & Kinross Council lawyers will clarify law. Karen has spoken to Willie Robertson and Mike Barnacle. If Portmoak Moss wants to become part of National Nature Reserve there is a need for connectivity – may need to formalise this. **Louise to contact Community Council through website.** Commercial shooting and access issues at Portmoak Moss.

Next meeting: 17<sup>th</sup> December. Attend Community Council on 10<sup>th</sup> followed by pre-tree event meeting.

Trees 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>.

Meeting closed 10.05 pm

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\* Times subsequently modified.