



Minutes

18.06.2024 19:30 Well Country Inn

1. Present: Louise, Natasha Currie (from University of St. Andrews), Jeff, Susan, Dave B, Tanji, Charlotte, Elaine, Dave C

2. Apologies: Marje & Graham, Izzy, Sheena, Michael, Lesley, Stuart, Nic, Stu, Callum

3. Previous meeting Minutes. Tanji Proposed, Charlotte seconded. Approved.

4. Treasurer's report some big Outgoings (total £837)

Incl £645 on Marje's biodiversity leaflet publishing and printing and £180 for oak leaflet holders

And incoming of £105.32 from voluntary donations from Vicky and Sean's concert in orchard which they kindly donated to PWG.

Susan would very kindly like to make a donation in her husband's name.

5. WT update: Some questions from Izzy:

- Did the lost drill battery turn up anywhere? Belonging to Kinross men's shed and lost at bird box event in Feb (I've emailed Dave B about this) *Dave has talked to everyone and it hasn't turned up.*
- Is the swift walk taking place at Portmoak or Kilmagad? I'm assuming it won't be but if it is, could you please send a RA and event form? *N/A*
- Same for the JMA orchard day please – I'm sure you are on it and this isn't for another few months anyway. *Louise to event lead and do Event form and TRA*
- Noted broken Kilmagad sign in the agenda. Is this the WT sign? If so, can you send a photo and location please so I can get replaced? *Dave has done this.*
- Is someone up for removing the management plan consultation posters from Portmoak and local noticeboards please? Thank you! *It's done.*
- Thanks for organising balsam pulling – last summer I noticed a patch in the attached W3W photo, not sure if this is on your radar, but great if you're able to check it? *Louise will check it.*

Updates:

- Thanks to Lesley, Dave and Linda for organising to monitor/re-distribute the bird boxes in the autumn.
- St Andrew's Uni
 - Had a great first visit with the two students and supervisors who are doing the summer projects. They have Louise's contact for the group and both sounded keen to be in touch. Great to hear Natasha has organised interviews for her project.

- Off the back of this, we've been offered a drone survey of Portmoak from Uni staff. The drone has the capacity to measure height (to produce a digital elevation model) and vegetation character (normalised difference vegetation index – NDVI). Proposed to happen late summer, with the flight taking around 15 mins. They're going to take off/land from car park or other busy place to avoid disturbing ground nesting birds on the bog, with drone flying at height of ~ 80m. They're in touch with gliding club to see how logistics will work.
- Also had interest from a final year undergrad to do her dissertation at Portmoak, will keep you posted as her plans develop.
- Scott's bird walk was fantastic – thanks to Stuart for organising and Louise for being the lead on the day.
- I've had the woodland mensuration survey back for Portmoak, which has given us a timber volume and tree species breakdown for the site. I've passed this onto NatureScot so they can overlay with water, drains and raised bog maps and come back to us with options for further bog restoration. Colin, our Peatland Action officer is on holiday for the rest of this month so not expecting much of an update until later in July as he indicated they are busy at the moment.
- Thanks for all your comments on the management plan review, I'm writing up individual responses to these now and incorporating your comments into the plan to be published. I'll email round once the plan is up on the website, the plan is meant to be updated during the five year period and we'll do this after we have some solid thoughts from Peatland Action and have collectively discussed.
- Our contractors have done their path cutting of Kilmagad a few weeks ago, and have the same scheduled for late July at Portmoak to allow the orchids to flower.
- Alexa has offered up Portmoak birch pulling as a volunteer task for our corporate groups, as yet no uptake but we will keep you posted.

6. PCWG update:

- The wooden Kilmagad Wood sign has fallen to bits
- Portmoak Festival; events went well. Marje got her beautiful new biodiversity leaflet, Biotastic, ready for the Festival and now we need to think about where we can make it available. Marje has met teachers re biodiversity education. The nest box project featured in the school exhibition in the hall, all about birds.
- Leven Catchment Landscape Regeneration Project - the organiser, Clara Shade-Poulsen, is looking for initiatives, for which she may be able to get funding. Louise met the organiser and will stay in touch.
- Interviews by St Andrew's undergrad, Natasha Currie, are about to take place. Batchelors on Thursday 20th; other group members have agreed to take part. She is creating a soundscape of the Portmoak Moss (interdisciplinary project music & geography). Will be available on Laidlaw Music site, hopefully Woodland Trust and a QR code, might be available for us to post-Natasha will keep us informed
- Emma Hinchcliffe of IUCN wants to know if we'd like to send anyone to their peatland conference in Aviemore which is September 17-19. It clashes with our AGM. But we could possibly attend some part of it. Louise will ask if there is a way we can contribute (presentation, or poster); Charlotte interested in attending. Jeff as well, as long as there is some value in it.
- Susan recently watched a program on BBC (iPlayer) about bogs

Events review: Events

Swift walk, not a PCWG event as such but has come out of the biodiversity mapping day.

The walk is on 30th June 8.30pm Kinnesswood bus stop

Balsam bashing date set for July 30th, 11am Moss. Will monitor the situation to see if needed earlier as well.

Apple thinning - need a date soon (some trees mustn't be touched as they're part of Marje's science project with school kids). Will meet in orchard Sunday 23rd at 12 noon. Apple day 29th September – Charlotte will organise scratter, Louise will confirm we have the hall and will ask Andrew Lear if he can attend.

Fungal foray - Cameron is running this on morning of the same day. WT asks if we can provide an event leader (or for Cameron to organise liability insurance)

7. Education report (Marje)

1. John Muir Trust – Estimating Apple Yields in the Community Orchard

As previously reported on the **12th of September** the class, who surveyed the apple blossoms, will return to count the apples from the same trees. If we are planning to have an apple thinning session could we please avoid thinning the apples on these particular trees (I can point them out) Miss Kettles and some of the P7 class would like to attend our Apple Day with the poster showing some of their results

2. Teacher Event - Biodiversity Walk and Talk

This event took place on the **4th of June**. The teachers walked and talked using the new Biotastic booklet. They also enjoyed afternoon tea at Loch Leven's Larder.

59 children from Portmoak School used the Biotastic Booklet the following week and completed part of the walk.

It would be good to have a discussion about how to ensure that the booklet meets a wider audience. There are several possibilities to discuss.

Many thanks to Marje for doing this.

3. Capturing Nature

Marjorie is considering applying to the Festival Funds for money to produce a further booklet. The plan would be to apply as the Community Woodland Group and this time to have an emphasis on ways in which you can capture/illustrate nature in the Orchard and the Moss. This idea is currently brewing in Marjorie's brain and she is very happy to discuss and adapt in the light of any ideas or comments which you might have.

We are excited about this proposal! Inspired us to think about organising an Arts event in the Moss next year incorporating art, music.

4. Marje has made contact with Jessica Wentworth (St Andrew's University) to discuss the Moss Invertebrate study.

8. Launch Biotastic booklet with a walk to Vane Farm?

9.Change our meeting time (i.e. meet earlier). Possibly of different day as live music and pub quiz on Tuesdays.

10.AOB

- Jeff met with a hydrologist! Kirsteen Tares (SEPA). She was well impressed with the data Jeff has been collating (and said we were lucky to have him). Sheena & Stu have recently completed their latest survey. Jeff hoping they can take the spreadsheet and input their data—he has made it easy to use. Jeff will keep in touch with Emma from Peatland Action.
- Susan mentioned ragwort-used to be an issue along the path
- Dave B: would like to organise some social events. Others felt not-woodland related so should be done separately.
- Elaine: steps were completely covered in strimming mess from contractor. We've heard some complaints from local community. Wildflowers, wild cherry boughs, etc. Particularly frustrating as Elaine had personally done some clearing of overgrowth (when doing Scotland in Bloom work), collecting and clearing the debris. Can debris be cleared, and margin of clearing be reduced.
- St Paul's art - we're welcome to sell calendars again, at one of their weekend exhibitions
- SURF (Scotland's regeneration forum) awards for community regeneration deadline for applications 2nd September. Louise has looked into it and doesn't believe we meet the requirements.

Date of next meeting: July 16, 2024