

## Board Meeting Notes 15.8.22

**Location: The Anchor Tavern, Port Bannatyne @7pm**

### Agenda

Item		
1.	a) Welcome and agreement of previous minutes. b) Chair's update.	RW
2.	Community engagement update	SL
3.	Worksteam updates: a) Offgrid huts b) Quarry site/SLF	SG
4.	Woodland Management Plan	SL/SG
5.	Marketing activities for October	SG
6.	Finance update	RW/JR
7.	Resourcing (IT & staffing)	RW/JR
8.	AGM and future meeting dates	RW
9.	AOB	All

### Board Attendees

Richard Whitcomb – Chair  
Alexander Davey  
Peter Vincent  
Martin Catlin  
Peter Atkins  
Tony Edwards

### Apologies

John Reid – Finance Director

### BCF Employees

Samuel Lindsay – Community Woodland Ranger  
Shelley Gould – Project Officer

### Meeting Notes

1. Previous minutes from 29.7.22 were agreed by all. RW gave updates on BCF's recent activity including our project progress and meetings with key stakeholders (please see separate Chair's Update for full details).
2. SL gave an update on the BCF community engagement activities since the last meeting including:

- Leading a successful family woodland craft event at Butefest (including making pinecone bumble bees, stone painting, Bute Forest Bingo and Moss Wood Teepees) which we would be happy to repeat next year.
- Hosting an Achievement Bute 'Pop-up Playday' based on the forest's charcoal making history.
- Starting a 12-week forest school programme with Apple Tree Nursery.
- All three primary schools and the Academy have been contacted to set up our educational engagement programme for this academic year.
- SL has also joined the Entomologist society for a moth trapping event which is an excellent example of local nature interest groups accessing the forest and recording data.

It was agreed that there is possibly not enough time to attend Highland Games on 20 August but an events calendar would be useful to plan engagement events for next year and ensure we maximise all opportunities to boost membership and community outreach.

**Action: SL/SG to provide Event Plan and Community Engagement Programme to share with Board Members**

3. SG provided an update on the Off Grid Huts or 'Rhudans' which are still under construction with the frames complete and cladding due to start soon. To maximise marketing and launch activities we are hopeful completion and handover by October. SG also noted that the Scottish Land Fund Stage 1 application form for the proposed purchase of the Quarry Site has been submitted and we are waiting to hear if this has been successful so that we can proceed to Stage 2. A brief update was also provided on the proposed e-bike transfer station (funded by Argyll & Bute Council) and further details will be provided on this at the next meeting.
4. SL & RW provided an overview of the draft Woodland Management Plan (WMP) and comments were provided on the proposals for each of the 'compartments'. These comments will be incorporated into the draft for review before the next Board Meeting.

**Action: All Board Members to review the revised draft WMP and provide comments. SL/SG to provide timeline for approval.**

5. SG gave a brief update on marketing activities including signing BCF up to Argyll and the Isles Tourism Co-operative which opens up lots of sustainable tourism promotional opportunities. We are also making plans to launch the 'Rhudans' as part of an October Forest 'Open Day'. There is potential to host an exhibition at the Bank of Ideas as part of the launch and also combine with community consultation on the draft WMP.

**Action: SG to provide further marketing update at the next Board Meeting.**

**6. Action: Written finance update to be provided separately by JR.**

7. It was noted that employees have been provided with suitable IT equipment and that the new @buteforest.org emails are now operational.

**Action: RW/JR to provide SL with a contract extension letter.**

8. It was agreed that AGM will be held in October (date and venue TBC).

Next meeting date: Monday 18 September @ The Anchor to discuss marketing activities and continue to progress the draft WMP.

## Appendix 1

### Chair's Update

- A warm welcome to our first Board meeting at the Anchor Community Hub space. The Port Bannatyne Development Trust have done tremendously well to get the Community Pub up and running so quickly and the meeting space attached to the Pub here is very welcome. In time, we hope to develop closer links with the Trust – potentially even having some sort of office/hot desk facility based here.
- It has been another busy period in the 6-weeks since our last meeting and we have been active with community engagement events as well as progressing our funded projects during this time. Shelley has settled in to her role and both Shelley and Samuel have worked well together. Samuel will update us on the Community engagement activity over the last 6 weeks (and planned over the coming period) and Shelley can update on the off-grid huts and the Quarry site projects. Suffice to say project progress is good.
- In addition to the updates on Quarry site and off-grid huts, we have been able to make progress with the Community Shelter planning application and expect a positive decision very soon, having engaged with A&BC Roads Department. We also now able to pilot our Mountain bike hire having partnered with Fyne Futures over the booking system. We have had some initial thoughts too about how the Bike Handover station monies can be used, perhaps split over more than one part of the Community Forest, more akin to bike lockers.
- It is testament to our ability to show progress on delivery that is keeping funders on side. Highlands and Islands Enterprise continue to be supportive of our work and they are delighted to see the progress with the huts on-site. In our latest catch-up call, HIE were helping us to consider what further support may be required as we develop our forward plans.
- The support of HIE and others will be vital as we progress our Woodland Management Plans and think carefully about how we will implement these plans. Samuel and Shelley have been working on our Woodland Management Plan for the non-SSSI part of the Community Forest, the area which includes Moss Wood, our felled area and our remaining plantation. We will devote the larger share of the meeting discussing and shaping the draft under development.



- Our Woodland Management Plans will be vital to set out our vision for both parts of the Forest and for securing buy-in and support from external bodies. In the first instance, the non-SSSI Plan will be necessary to unlock funding from Scottish Forestry for fencing, re-stocking etc. It will also be vital to guide our infrastructure (paths etc.) and how the various elements work together (notably habitat and human interface).
- The profile of the Community Forest continues to rise and we continue to make important links to other organisations. Shelley will update on Marketing Activities but we have made good links with Argyle-wide organisations on the tourism side in particular. Partnership working remains a watch-word for the way we want to work.
- Last but not least, in terms of partnership working we were delighted with the opportunity to meet with Sophie Crichton-Stuart, from Mount Stuart Trust and factor Harry Bowman on site at the Community Forest last week. Sophie was very impressed with our work and with the off-grid huts under development and was very receptive to future ways of working together.
- For future habitat and woodland restoration linked to the temperate Atlantic rainforest, we will need a 'whole landscape approach' and it will be mutually beneficial for us to work closely with the Crichton-Stuart family. Most of the neighbouring land at Rhudodach is being overseen by the Executors for Johnny Bute. Sophie has put us in touch with Cathleen Crichton-Stuart (the late Johnny Bute's daughter) who is taking a close and active interest in the area, including their replanting of the sitka spruce at Rhudodach with native broadleaves. This is potentially a very exciting partnership in the offing here – and one which may lead to significant rainforest and woodland habitat expansion at the north end of the island which can benefit the whole island community and beyond.
- As we enter the next period, our priority will be to develop our non-SSSI Woodland Management Plan and we propose taking this to community as a set of options, around which we can engage the community and collectively agree our way forward.

Richard Whitcomb

Chair, 15.08.22