

## **Balloch Village Trust**

Minutes of AGM – 13 September 2016

- 1. Present:** Gillian Spalding (Acting Chair), Susan Williams (Secretary), Carolyn Gethin (Treasurer), Emma Campbell, Rachel Campbell-Arkell, Hamish Johnston, Davie MacCulloch, Mike MacKinnon, June MacKinnon, Gary Murphy, Mary Jane Prentice, Mary Quemby, Ian Williams
- 2. Apologies:** Elspeth Fraser, Donald McDonald, Geoff Robson, Judith Thomson, Ian Thomson, Moira Unwin, Lesley Williams
- 3. Minutes of last year's AGM:** Proposed by Hamish Johnston and seconded by Mary Quemby
- 4. Matters arising:** The new board will implement the suggestion from 2015 AOB to display the woodland map on the BCC noticeboard at Scotmid and arrange for copies to be available in Scotmid.

### **5. Chairman's report**

BVT has existed since 2006 to support Balloch Community Council to promote the benefit of the community of Balloch and to manage community land and associated assets.

The main focus of the work of BVT this year has been the continuing implementation of the community woodland management and improvement plan. Many thanks to Davie MacCulloch and Adam Johnston for their continuing support in clearing several non-native Sitka spruce which dominate the woodland. This has really opened up the space, providing the opportunity to re-plant native species in the future. A weekend work party of volunteers again shredded and cleared the brash created by the felling. The compost bins added by the work party last year have been removed at the request of a resident. More recently, after a successful Ward Discretionary funding application, the worn-out footpaths have been redeveloped and an additional path added to enable improved access by reducing the gradient accessing the woods from the bus turning circle entrance. Additional funding for this project was provided by a Paths for All grant and a Scotmid grant. The total raised for the project was just under £10,000.

It was great to see the community using the woods in the recent paths launch event in August. Around 100 people attended the launch and much fun was had exploring the new space, building dens, eating cake and socialising. Children are really enjoying the "stump challenge" – many thanks to Alan Wells and his daughters for designing and creating this! The work is not complete and the re-planting of native trees and the addition of bat boxes and more bird boxes are part of this. A monthly rota of inspection is carried out by board members and this should highlight any ongoing maintenance issues.

Another major piece of work supported by BVT is the planning of a play park for Balloch. A lease for 25 years is currently being prepared by the Highland Council for the community, in order to use of a small part of the pitch for the installation of the play park. The community has been consulted over several designs approved by the Highland Council. One particular design was favoured and board members now face the challenge of obtaining funding for this. Funding possibilities are currently being considered and applications submitted in order

to raise the £40,000 required to make this a reality. It is hoped that this will provide a small play park and meeting point for all members of the community.

A smaller but important project continues as a result of BVT organisation. The Christmas Christmas Carols was a successful event again in 2015 and one we hope to be able to organise again this year.

BVT currently has 92 members. All residents of the community can join and there is no cost. It would be great to boost membership, please spread the word about BVT. Contact details and membership forms are available on the website at [www.ballochvillagetrust.com](http://www.ballochvillagetrust.com). Anyone interested in getting involved in any BVT activity in particular please let us know through the contact section of the website.

On behalf of the board can I say thank you to all members of the community who have supported BVT over the past year. The board is only a very small group and the activities it undertakes would not be possible without the help of others. However, a huge thank you must be extended to Susan Williams whose efforts over the past year have been instrumental in securing the funding for and organisation of the paths work in the woodland. In addition, a big thank you to Gary Murphy for his efforts and perseverance in identifying contractors, obtaining quotes and overseeing the paths work.

Gillian Spalding, Acting Chair

## **6. Treasurer's report:**

£21 was received from donations at the School Gala in 2015, and a further £75 as a contribution from BCC towards the hire of a chipper.

Grants from Scotmid (£261) and the Highland Council (£9,000) amounting to just over £9000 were received within the 2015/16 financial year, but these monies have been deferred in the annual accounts in order to match the corresponding activity and expenditure, which has taken place during the current year (2016/17).

Works undertaken in the Community Woodland (as part of the woodland plan) accounted for almost half of the 2015/16 expenditure (£148), with a further £25 being spent on Governance (Hall hire and Companies House return fee) and £10 going towards promotion (website, Carols at the Tree). A further £160 was used for a print run of the woodland map as stocks were running low.

At the end of the financial year the cash in hand / at bank was at £9,581.

During 2016/17, BVT has received 75% (£525) of a further £700 of grant funding from Paths for All. Further income of £66 has been received from donations and the sale of plants at the School Gala in June 2016.

The bank balance currently stands at £189; BVT is currently awaiting the remaining 25% (£175) from Paths for All to return the balance to a more realistic figure of £364.

Carolyn Gethin, Treasurer

## **7. Proposed change to Constitution to lower age of membership**

The Special Resolution to lower the minimum age for Ordinary membership from 18 to 16 in line with the recent change to voting age in Scottish elections was passed unanimously.

## **8. Appointment of Examiner**

The appointment of Stuart Pattison as independent examiner was carried unanimously.

## **9. Membership of the Board**

Susan Williams and Carolyn Gethin retired from the board.

Gary Murphy was co-opted for another year.

Rachel Campbell-Arkeel, Donald McDonald and Alan Walls were elected as directors.

Emma Campbell was confirmed as BCC representative.

## **10. Any other business**

Hamish Johnson commented that he was very impressed with the paths works, particularly the repairs to the stretch behind the forestry cottages, and that the woods were noticeably cleaner.

Ian Williams asked for an update on progress with the play park. The design is now in place, planning permission is not needed, and the lease is being progressed by Kate Stephen (local councillor). The preferred design is by Wicksteed and includes swings, climbing frames for younger and older children, a trim trail and seating to give a community meeting place. Fundraising options include Cash for Kids, and the National Lottery, contacting local companies, a poster campaign, and posting envelopes through doors for a cash donation. It is hoped to raise the required £40,000 by summer 2017.