

Draft Minutes of SCTEAG meeting
11th September 2017, SCT office

Present: Roger Cottis (chair), Tim Godfrey, Alan Drever, Polly MacInnes, Dorothy Jackson (minutes)
Apologies: Peter Roberts, David Ashford, Catherine Dickey

1. Minutes of 12th June were approved for forwarding to SCT for placing on the web site. [Action: Dorothy]
2. Minutes and matters arising.
 - Polly will forward a link to the current version of the Tormore Forest Plan to the SCTEAG group email list.
3. Provisional 2017/18 Winter Talks programme
 - Early October: James Merryweather on 'Ferns'. [Action: Roger to obtain dates from James, Dorothy to check against Sleat Calendar]
 - Tuesday 21st November: Alison MacLennan '25 years of RSPB on Skye', Ardvasar Hall [Action: Alan to check whether Alison could do 28th November to avoid clash with a concert on 21st November. Tim: confirm availability of Ardvasar Hall]
 - January: Showing of 'Demain' film. [Action: Peter to source film, Dorothy to check out venues]
 - February: Roger Cottis 'Mammals of Skye and Lochalsh'.
 - March: James Merryweather on creatures of the sea shore, with option of a shore excursion suitable for youngsters a few days after the talk. [Action: Roger to confirm suitable dates with James taking account of tides]
 - April: Lauren Hartley-Mills, Science Officer, Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust. [Action: Alan to confirm date]
 - May: Phil Knott on 'Moths', possibly linked to moth trapping event. [Action: Dorothy to check dates with Phil].

Dates and venues will be circulated to the SCTEAG when confirmed.

Proposed talk by Charlie Phillips from Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society pencilled in for 2018/19 Winter Talks programme.

4. TWIG

- The last TWIG meeting was in June.
- Tormore Forest Volunteer days were sparsely attended over the summer due to people having other commitments. However the Summer Solstice event was very successful with a good turnout and range of events. The next volunteer day is Sunday 8th October at Capisdal with Martin Wildgoose. The event is advertised in the Archaeology Handbook so may attract a wider audience. Individuals are planning to do some preliminary bracken cutting at Capisdal before 8th.
- PostCode Lottery. SRL has been granted £20k by the PostCode lottery to support recreational aspects in Tormore Forest comprising:
 - Expanding the path network and making some of it accessible to all, including stiles, boardwalk etc. The new accessible path would be mapped by Donald Kennedy and included in the core path network.
 - Five information boards in English and Gaelic, including at the fank, gate and Capisdal. Polly is seeking help for translation from Bòrd na Gàidhlig.
 - A community tree nursery near Tormore Forest gate, with hardstanding and polytunnel, the idea being that people could grow trees for personal use or for planting in the forest. Polly has started working with primary school children planting rowan and sycamore seeds to get them enthused. Elm seed would be one to try as it germinates easily.
- When the revised Forest Plan is finally agreed, there will be another public meeting similar to the Tormore Futures meeting on 19th January 2017, at which the draft forest plan was presented and people were invited to comment and contribute their ideas. (This followed on from a survey conducted

by Peter during the August 2016 Charity Café, in which people were asked about their ideas and priorities for Tormore Forest). Polly explained that the follow up meeting will present the finalised forest plan, explain the use of the Post Code lottery money, and invite volunteers to come forward.

- Peatland restoration. Diane Baum, Peatland Restoration officer for SNH, visited Tormore Forest on 8th July with members of SRL and Sleat Environment Group to look at a 'failed' area of conifer planting on peat soils in the north of the forest and its potential for peatland restoration and increased carbon capture/sequestration. The first stage is to commission a survey of soil conditions and vegetation in the areas of failed planting on peat soils. The results of this survey will help SRL decide whether to a) leave the sites as is, b) make the sites wetter and boggy to increase sequestration, c) continue with forestry to increase carbon capture/sequestration.

6. AOCB

- The Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society will hold an event on Sunday 17th September, at Ardsvar Hall, on how to record cetaceans. Equipment will be left permanently at Armadale Pier for interested members of the public to carry out 10-minute duration surveys when visiting the pier.
- SRL has agreed to a request from Skye and Lochalsh Sea Eagle Stakeholders Group (comprising representatives of NFU, crofters, RSPB and SNH, and chaired by William Swann) to meet with them on Thursday 5th October to hear their proposal to research the effectiveness of moving the nesting pair of sea eagles in Tormore Forest. This would involve felling the tree on which they are nesting. Members had significant concerns about this proposal. Roger Cottis will attend the meeting and it may be useful to also invite Steve Bentall, who has been observing the nest. [Polly to action with Henrik].

7. Date of next meeting: Monday 6th November, 7 pm, at the SCT office, Armadale.