

Minutes:
Meeting of SCT Environment Advisory Group
on 19th December 2016, SCT Office

Present: Peter Roberts, Roger Cottis, David Ashford, Tim Godfrey, Alan Drever, Henrik Micski, Chris Pendlebury, Phil Knott, Dorothy Jackson (minutes)

The group welcomed Phil Knott from Drumfearn, with experience in national and international wildlife tours.

1. Minutes of the meeting of 1st November were agreed. Peter to forward to the Trust. (Done).
2. Matters arising.
 - Tormore fank/forest school leaflet: Dorothy has added a location map. Leaflet to be reviewed by members with a view to updating/expanding. Action: Dorothy to circulate leaflet.
 - Roger reported that, following a meeting on 24th November about closed containment fish farming & aquaponics, HIE is interested in contributing support.
 - Follow-on from SSSI meeting: the proposed project is being publicised/discussed via the pages of WHFP. Henrik suggested the Beatrix off-shore wind farm might be interested in providing funding. Action: Henrik.
 - SSSI is able to contribute to EAG's hall hire costs for their meeting. Action: Roger
3. Update from SCT Board meeting
 - Staff changes at SCT provide opportunities for review and changes in structure/approach. To be discussed at SCT Board meeting of 20th December.
 - The consultation on selling house plots at Tormore was well attended. The community is being informed of the results by email, social media and hard copy.
4. 2017 EAG future structure
 - Peter will not need to take minutes when Dorothy is away; other group members will do this, on an ad hoc basis.
 - Tim volunteered to take over responsibility for the group's kitty, pay room hire bills etc.
 - Chris P is willing to share the task of developing ideas for Tormore and coordinating volunteers with Peter. As Chris has just accepted the SRL's invitation to join the SRL Board this will strengthen links between the EAG and SRL concerning the Tormore environment & volunteers.
 - More work is needed at Tormore and more volunteers. There could also be wider environmental volunteering eg beach cleans and work with SSSI.
 - A discussion evening with Tormore volunteers will be held on Thurs 19th January in SMO Seòmar Chruinneachaidh to brainstorm volunteering possibilities, things that need doing and priorities. Action: Dorothy – poster after New Year + room booking (Done). Peter + Chris P re planning. Peter to ask SCT whether part of the Tormore:Explore Charity Café donations can be used for room hire costs.
 - A follow-up social meeting is planned in February to thank volunteers and share the plans for future volunteering. Action: Peter + Chris P initial planning.
5. Winter Programme
 - Still waiting for date for HWDT talk in February. Likely speaker costs: £150 + hall rental. Action: Alan + Dorothy
 - 14th March: Giles Brockman on Kinloch Woods. 7.30 pm Ardvasar Hall. Action: Tim to book hall from 7 pm.
 - 11th April: Stephen Bungard "From orchids to invasives" CDI An Crùbh, 7.30 pm. Action: Roger
 - Lucy Conway: Talk on Eigg sustainability initiatives in May. Date t.b.c. Action: Peter
6. Tormore – discussion of future developments
 - The Tormore Forest Plan is being updated and amended. EAG members will be asked to comment on the draft. Action: Henrik to inform EAG of date when draft will be ready, ideally in time for discussion at the next EAG meeting in February.

- Ideas for additional Tormore paths:
 - A northern loop from the fank using the old peat road, mainly for bikes. A second path is probably needed for walkers;
 - Subsidiary spur off this loop to a good view point;
 - Access route for Aird residents to get into the forest from the south;
 - Link from Tormore entrance following the contours to connect to the Forest School-Fank path at the big culvert. This would include tidying up the Tormore entrance to allow access to the bothy. Could be an information site.
- Henrik + SRL to look into forestry grant schemes to support recreational access.
- Signage: Dylan Cameron won the Bun-sgoil Shleite competition to design a new logo for Tomore Forest. A consistent style is needed for all signage, which will also include the new logo. Action: Henrik to look into designers for signage and interpretation, EAG to think about signage content around the fank.

7. AOCB

- The Highland Council is planning to abolish the whole Highland Ranger Service and Access Team, which would have serious consequences for education, environmental awareness and tourism. Action: Peter to request SCT Board to write letter of objection (Request sent). EAG members are urged to write in individually as well. See David Ashford's recent email for people to contact.

8. Dates of EAG meetings in 2017

- Monday 13th February
- Monday 10th April
- Monday 12th June
- Monday 11th September
- Monday 6th November