

JOHN MUIR TRUST: TRUSTEES' MEETING

Minutes of Meeting held on Friday 12 June 2015 at Tower House, Pitlochry

Present:

Peter Pearson (Chair), Gill Bond, John Finney, John Fox-Davies, Steve Green, Patricia Jordan, David MacLehose, Rob Mc Morran, Duncan Macniven, Jo Moulin, Chris Townsend, Will Williams, Deirdre Wilson, Bill Wright (left after item 9)

Apologies: Jim Gibson

In attendance:

Stuart Brooks (Chief Executive), Fiona Kindness (Director of Resources), Mike Daniels (Head of Land Management) for items 1 – 6, Kate Barclay (Head of Fundraising) and Jeremy Prall (Development Manager) for item 10, Helen McDade (Head of Policy) for items 12 and 13, Kevin Lelland (Head of Communications) for items 14 and 15, Linda Coupar (minute taker)

Item 1 – Welcome

The Trust's Chair, Peter Pearson, welcomed everyone, especially the new trustees, to the meeting. He asked whether there were any conflicts of interest and none were declared.

Item 2 – Minutes of meeting of 23 March 2015

It was requested that in future the amended minutes would be circulated to trustees with tracked changes.

The minutes were **approved**.

Item 3 – Matters Arising

An update on the Dick Balharry Award was requested. It was clarified that the award was for wild land conservation, with the first award being made at the 2016 AGM. The Working Group has not yet been formalised. Brief information about the award is contained in the March minute on the website.

Item 4 – Action Points from Previous Meetings (Paper A)

8 December 2014

AP2 – the Governance Working Group to consider media relations – outstanding

23 March 2015

AP5 – The Risk Register has been updated and SB will circulate this to trustees. New action:

AP1 - SB to circulate the updated Risk Register to trustees

AP6 – H&S committee minute – Bill Wright to have access to the cloud drive – outstanding

AP8 – Communications Strategy – draft strategy to be provided to trustees in Q4 – outstanding

AP9 – HR Policy committee remit to be reviewed - outstanding

Item 5 –Kylesku Partnership Agreement (Paper B)

MD spoke to the circulated paper providing background to seek approval from trustees for a partnership agreement between Kylesku estate and the John Muir Trust. He also circulated a map. It was clarified that the payment of an agreed annual fee was in accord with the Trust's charitable status.

Trustees gave strong support and **approved** the agreement.

Item 6 – Rewilding Policy Addendum – Wild Boar (Paper C)

MD stated that boar are already well established in some areas of the UK although not officially 're-introduced'. The addendum states the Trust's position on wild boar in that we are ecologically in favour of wild boar whilst recognising their impact on the countryside. He clarified that wild boar are a different species to domestic pigs, although there are also hybrids. There is a genetic test to determine the species. It was suggested that it should be clear in the addendum that the Trust does not encourage their release. Also, that 'plain English' be used in the wording in order to be explicit.

AP2 - Add to final sentence 'the Trust does not support or condone illegal reintroductions'.

It was questioned whether Scottish legislation would be brought in line with legislation in England and Wales. More specifically, in response to the question of the Trust introducing wild boar on our own properties, it was stated that we would be supportive if the habitat was suitable, although we have no immediate plans to reintroduce them on our properties.

Trustees **approved** the paper in principle and SB & MD will incorporate the suggested changes and recirculate for sign off.

Trustees will be kept up to date with the debate via MD's involvement in 'Rewilding Britain'.

AP3 - MD to circulate updated statement for trustee agreement.

Item 7 – Appointments to Boards, Groups & Committees (Paper D)

This is an annual process following the AGM. The process aims for some continuity whilst making best use of Trustees' skills.

Finance Committee

Jim Gibson will continue as Convenor.

David MacLehose, John Finney and John Fox-Davies continue as members.

Steve Green joined as new member.

HR Policy Committee

Bill Wright appointed as Convenor

Gill Bond continues as member.

Duncan Macniven, Rob Mc Morran and Jo Moulin join as members.

The Committee aims to meet at least once a year.

Governance Working Group

John Finney appointed as Convenor

Peter Pearson, Will Williams, David MacLehose continue as members.

Deirdre Wilson joined as new member.

John Muir Birthplace Trust

Existing members are John Thomas (retired trustee) and Susan Wright (ex Head of Comms). John Thomas is currently the Chair and he is willing to continue in that role as the JMT's representative. Duncan Macniven had volunteered to take on the role in the event of JT standing down. SB will ask Rob Bushby to join the committee.
AP4 – SB to confirm whether JT & RB will be the Trust's representatives on the JMBT committee.

Wales Working Group

Stuart Brooks appointed as Chair
Will Williams and Gill Bond as members
Sheila Wren and Phil Stubbington as staff member.
3 additional people from Wales are required and having heard background information on 7 candidates, Trustees **agreed** to invite Margaret Thomas, Peter Foulkes & Barbara Jones as advisors. Trustees were very keen to involve the other volunteers who had come forward in some capacity.
AP5 – SB to invite the three advisors to join the Wales Working Group

H&S Committee

Bill Wright will continue as the trustees' representative.
AP6 – Bill to gain access to the cloud H&S drive.

JMT Trading Company

Peter Pearson, Jim Gibson, Stuart Brooks and Fiona Kindness will continue as directors.

Dick Balharry Working Group - NEW

SB stated that the Dick Balharry Award for wild land conservation is currently being created – following discussion with Dick and the family earlier in the year. It will first be awarded at the 2016 AGM. The working group will identify potential recipients, discuss with Dick's family and make a recommendation to trustees. Members of the group to be Mike Daniels, Rob Bushby, Deirdre Wilson and Gill Bond.

This group would also consider any proposals for the Lifetime Achievement Award.

AP7 – SB will circulate information about the Lifetime Achievement Award for information.

Trustees **agreed** the appointments.

Item 8 – Chair's Update (Paper E)

Peter Pearson circulated his paper highlighting his meetings and activities over the past 3 months. He highlighted a meeting with the North Harris Trust and his meeting with the Edinburgh Lord Provost who has offered to host a reception for the Trust, possibly tying in with the JMA. Peter stated that the Environment Minister showed interest in the work of the JMT and had agreed to present some JMAs in the CNP later in the year. It was felt that an invitation to a JMT property – Schiehallion or Glenlude - would be very valuable. A further highlight will be our attendance at the Royal Highland Show to receive the 'Scotland's Finest Woods Award' from the Minister– for our native woods in Knoydart. Congratulations were given to Lester Standen on his application and work which resulted in the Award. Trustees asking about the extent to which the JMT had been involved in the campaign for additional National Parks in Scotland, were informed that there is joint collaboration with APRS and we had supported them in their campaign.

Will Williams highlighted the involvement of Rory Stewart, the new DEFRA minister, and his presentation of JMAs in Cumbria, suggesting that JMT might seek a follow up meeting.

Trustees **noted** the report.

Item 9 – Operational & Financial Update (Paper F)

FK updated the trustees on the financial position of the Trust and Trading Company as at 30 April 2015. With our fundraising initiatives, we appear to be on track to achieve £1.6 m income by the end of the year although this is very challenging.

In respect of the Stronelairg decision, detailed financial scenarios are required, depending upon the decision. FK clarified the 2015 budget figures and stated the intention to increase the level of membership recruitment and footfall in the Wild Space. SB and Kate Barclay were congratulated on the Reece Foundation funding.

Trustees **noted** the financial update.

SB spoke to the detailed Operational report which covers the period since the last meeting of Trustees in March. Trustees were appreciative of the detail contained in the report. SB highlighted his visit to the Rewilding weekend at Corrou and provided background of the Trust's close relationship with Corrou and its owner. MD continues to be an advisor on their management board.

AP 8 - SB will circulate the Rewilding weekend attendance list to trustees.

He provided an update on deer management at Quinag, with continuing negotiation with SNH. Ardvar have reduced deer numbers and JMT is resisting demands to erect fencing as a solution to protect the woodland. SB will involve trustees if we are forced to fence – management order. Trustees queried the required work at the Steall Gorge path and were informed that damage from severe weather over the winter necessitated repairs. SB stated that the JMT are supportive of the proposed community initiative catering facility at Sandwood.

Trustees asked how the JMT tracked its progress on all the (circa 60) objections which it has made against windfarms. SB stated that we do have a register which can be requested from Helen.

Trustees flagged up how good the new property films are, particularly the interaction / connection with the community. The Wild Land 34 film was praised for its positive narrative.

Item 10 – Fundraising Progress & Strategy (Paper G)

KB updated the trustees on the progress of fundraising activity and future strategy. A Powerpoint presentation supported the circulated paper. Congratulations were again given on the generous Reece Foundation contribution. Progress has been made since the fundraising audit. The 'Imagine it Better' leaflet is in production, highlighting the work of the Trust and therefore useful in presenting donors with background to JMT. New Trustees requested to see the fundraising audit.

AP9 - KB will circulate the fundraising audit to new trustees.

Jeremy Prall spoke to the circulated paper on major donor fundraising. It was recognised that there is a shortage of focus on work in England and Wales to attract English charitable trusts. He focused upon what was going well, the challenges facing us, and the next steps & priorities. KB asked trustees, through their own networks, to be ambassadors for the Trust and identify any opportunities.

Item 11 – 2015 AGM (Paper H)

SB provided an initial overview of this year's AGM and Members' Gathering and announced that the 2016 AGM will be held next May in Inverness. AGM attendees have been asked to provide feedback and a report will come back to Trustees in due course.

AP10 – SB to circulate AGM feedback report to trustees.

Trustees passed on their **thanks** to Iona for her circulated report and the excellent organisation of the AGM and Members Gathering, and to Will Williams for his contribution.

Item 12 – Stronelairg Legal Action (Paper I)

HM spoke to her circulated paper which informed trustees of the background to the Judicial Review which was attended by HM, SB and several trustees. HM warned that it will be hard to win against the government. Although she had expected a result before now, it is difficult to read anything either positive or negative into that. Trustees asked questions about potential costs. Trustees discussed potential next steps. HM urged trustees to watch the Wild Land Area 34 film about the real and present threat to wild land by the proposed Glencassley and Sallachy wind farms.

Trustees **appreciated** the information and noted the report.

Item 13 – Register of Paid Memberships (Paper J)

This was presented for information as requested at the last trustees' meeting and was noted.

Item 14 - Spirit of John Muir Events (Paper K)

KL stated that the event in London is a collaborative effort by a number of JMT departments. The Spirit of John Muir is a new initiative and will encompass a series of high profile events designed to raise membership and awareness of the Trust and drive major donor interaction. The event is being promoted using various channels. 20 tickets sold so far in these early days. Partnerships are to be arranged for sponsorship.

Trustees were **appreciative and supportive** of the event and noted the report.

Item 15 New Website (Paper L)

KL provided an update on the role of the Trust's new website and its current development status. It will enable us to access analytical data, which will assist us, for example, with driving membership. It is in the final stage of the process leading to launch in the summer.

Trustees **noted** the position.

Item 16 Trustees Meeting September (Paper M)

There will be a Topical Forum in July – focusing on land reform and community involvement. SB outlined the proposals for the trustees weekend meeting on Skye in September.

Trustees **noted** the information.

AOB

Community partnerships - SG is keen for the Trust to consider fresh ideas to work constructively and effectively with communities.

Land reform – this, together with community working, will be covered in July’s Topical Forum.

Date of next meeting – Saturday 6th September 2015 at Elgol Village Hall, Isle of Skye.

Summary of Action Points

AP1 - SB to circulate the updated Risk Register to trustees

AP2 – Wild Boar – Rewilding Policy Addendum - Add to final sentence ‘the Trust does not support or condone illegal reintroductions’.

AP3 – Wild Boar - MD to circulate amended statement to trustees for approval.

AP4 – JMBT Committee - SB to confirm JT & RB will be the Trust’s representatives.

AP5 – SB to invite the three advisors to join the Wales Working Group AP6 – H&S Committee – Bill Wright to gain access to the cloud H&S drive.

AP7 – SB will circulate information about the Lifetime Achievement Award.

AP 8 – Corroul Rewilding event - SB will circulate an attendance list.

AP9 - KB will circulate the fundraising audit to new trustees.

AP10 – SB to circulate AGM feedback report to trustees.