

# West Fife Woodlands



## Minutes of Special General Meeting and Monthly Meeting Held at Blairhall Community Centre: Thursday 07 September 2017

### **SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING**

#### **Attendance:**

Stan Welch, Ronnie Collins, John Rogers, Andy Trumper, Hilda Carmichael, Alistair Hendry, David Welch, Maggie Dalgleish, Lynda Milne and Ian Marshall.

#### **Apologies:**

Frank Waterworth, Emily Le Marie, Peter and Liz McMullan, Alan and Geri McGuckin.

#### **Agenda:**

##### **1. Resolution:**

That the West Fife Woodlands group apply to become a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO), and incorporate the changes as necessary to the group's Constitution.

##### **2. Background information:**

The WFW group has been in existence for over eleven years and has steadily grown over the years with now forty nine registered members. For some time, many members have been concerned that the group has no personal financial protection for members if the group became financially liable due to a contractor issue, an unplanned funding overspend on a project, or for any other financial claim made against the group.

As a consequence, enquiries have been made to Fife Voluntary Action to establish what organisation structures are available and suitable for the group that would provide a high degree of protection to members against personal liability in the event of any of the circumstances I have described.

After much discussion by members at previous monthly meetings, the consensus of opinion is that the Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) would be the preferred option for the group.

This will require changes being made to the constitution and the governance structure of the group. Hence, we require this SGM, and a vote of members to be taken on the resolution with a majority vote to agree to the proposed change and thereafter commence an application to become a SCIO.

##### **3. Members' questions**

None

##### **4. Vote by members on resolution - For/Against**

All 10 members in attendance voted for the resolution plus 6 e mail votes from Frank Waterworth, Duncan Wilson, Peter McMullan, Liz McMullan, Alan McGuckin and Geri McGuckin, all were for the resolution. Overall 16 for, non against. The motion was passed.

## **5. End of Special General Meeting**

Notes: Voting is restricted to registered members of the group.

### **General Meeting**

#### **Attendance:**

Stan Welch, Ronnie Collins, John Rogers, Andy Trumper, Hilda Carmichael, Alistair Hendry, David Welch, Maggie Dalglish, Lynda Milne and Ian Marshall.

#### **1. Chair's Welcome**

Chair Stan Welch welcomed all to the meeting.

#### **2. Apologies**

Peter & Liz McMullan, Frank Waterworth, Emily Le Marie, Alan and Geri McGuckin.

#### **3. Minutes of Previous Meeting 03/08/17**

Proposed by Hilda Carmichael, Seconded by Ronnie Collins.

#### **4. Matters Arising**

No matters were raised by the group.

#### **5. Floor Limit expenditure :**

None

#### **6. Treasurer's Report**

John R provided details of the group's current financial position in Frank's absence. JR confirmed payment had been received from the Saline group. JR also provided an up to date with the Forestry Commission and IFLI funding.

#### **7. Correspondence**

JR advised that the group had been nominated by RSPB for the Community Award. JR and Andy T to attend the Scottish Parliament on 13 September.

#### **8. FCS update**

John R confirmed remaining funding from FCS has been used and he was to write a 500 word report for FCS as a requirement of the funding.

#### **9. Proposed organisational change to the group's status.**

Following today's vote JR will go back to Helen Rorrison, who will mentor WFW through the process of moving to a charitable status. This will take between 30 and 90 days if approved. Members of the group who wish to become Trustees will have to apply.

**Action: John R to arrange meeting with Helen.**

## **10. Woodland Workouts – scheduled activities to next meeting**

The planned activities for four Mondays are as follows:

11 September

Continue work in the orchard to cut grass and remove the vetch. Depending on weather to complete the painting of the second container.

18 September

Continue work in the orchard to cut grass and remove the vetch.

25 September

Continue with work in the orchard and if completed move to the walled garden.

2 October

Valleyfield Wood – walled garden – cut back regeneration growth on snowdrop walk route.

Total workout hours statistics not available.

SW raised the issue of keeping the orchard as a wild flower meadow as experienced recently with the amount of hours taken to cut the grass due to vetch. The seed sown at the outset may have included vetch seeds. JR agreed but IFLI ref 72 requires WFW to maintain a wild flower meadow. Agreed WFW should speak to IFLI to see if this requirement could be amended and that we move the location of the wild flowers to the fence line and or the section in the middle of the orchard.

**Action SW to speak to IFLI. SW to take advice from Duncan and Maggie on types of weed killer that can be used.**

## **11. Blairhall / Devilla Path project update**

AT advised that Leader had now confirmed the funding of the project but the condition was WFW used the lowest tenderer. This happens to be MW Groundworks who have failed to complete the community orchard project to the specification and standard required. FW and AT have prepared a report for Leader requesting we use the second lowest tenderer being Graham Construction. This company were appointed on the west bing path and bridge. FET had already agreed to this but we were still waiting for Leader's approval. Several members of the group, including Maggie D whose land the path crosses, raised concerns as to the capabilities of Gordon Walker to manage this project in light of the recent experience with the community orchard project. AT said he would speak to Gordon Walker about these concerns, and suggested Gordon W meets Maggie before the appointment of the contractor is confirmed.

RC confirmed that Forward West Fife had extended the requirement to use the £10K funding by a further 3 months from the end of September.

AT confirmed that 5 firms had submitted offers for the contract of which only two were within the budget range submitted to FET and Leader.

**12. Orchard Garden Project update Year 4**

JR reported that MW Groundworks had failed to complete the project to the specification and also the workmanship was of a very poor standard. A 7 day project had taken 29 working days to complete. SW/JR/AT met the project manager, Gordon Walker, on site and highlighted WFW concerns and that it was not acceptable and the main seating area needed to be taken away and rebuilt. Agreed MW Groundworks should be given the opportunity to rectify. It was confirmed that the contractor had **NOT** been paid for the contract. Kate Fuller had been made aware of the issues.

JR advised that it was unlikely that the planned school event would now take place in October.

**Action: JR/AT to meet project manager and contractor on site next week.**

**13. AOCB:**

JR put forward the suggestion that John Le Marie be asked to be a technical adviser to the group due to his experience with funding. AT said it would be helpful with the Leader application. It was agreed by the group.

David Welch and Linda Milne will investigate the possibility of WFW using the Therapy Centres grass cutter in the orchard.

Ian M said he had been approved to see if the group would provide advice on tree trimming at Blair Castle. The group raised concerns that this beyond our capabilities and also we didn't have the time to extend our workload to another project. However RC and SW said they would investigate.

**14. Date of next meeting**

The next monthly meeting of the group will on **Thursday 05 October 2017** commencing 7pm at Blairhall Community Centre.

Meeting ended 8.50pm.

Minutes prepared and completed by Andy Trumper, Assistant Secretary, West Fife Woodlands.

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