

FINDHORN BAY LOCAL NATURE RESERVE (FBLNR)

MINUTES OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD IN THE JAMES MILNE INSTITUTE, FINDHORN AT 1930HRS ON WEDNESDAY 21 SEPTEMBER 2017

Committee members present:

Roy Dennis (RHD) - Chair
Mike Crutch (MC) - Secretary
Bill Barber (WB) - Findhorn Angling Club
Colin Bell (CB) - The Moray Council
Glenn Buchanan (GB), Royal Findhorn Yacht Club
Pat Carroll (PC), Findhorn & Kinloss Community Council
Karen Cunningham (KC), RSPB
Pete Finch (PF), Findhorn Foundation
Manja Hannon (MH), Friends of Findhorn Bay
Jen Heatley (JH), SNH
Bob MacKay (RM), FNDWA
Dr Colin Shedden (CS), BASC
Ian Suttie (IS), nature conservation/ornithology
Davina Thomas (DT), Findhorn Village Centre

Apologies: Cllr Lorna Creswell, Simon Paterson, David Shaw, Richard Somers-Cocks

1. Welcome & recent news

RHD welcomed everyone to the meeting. In recent news, DT reported that the Findhorn Regatta 2017 was held on 9 September. RHD reported that of the nine Osprey nests that use the bay as a major food source, eight of those had had a successful breeding season and produced a total of 17 young.

2. Minutes of meeting held on 21 June 2017

The minutes were accepted - proposed by GB, seconded by IS.

Previous actions:

a. Information boards

GB reported that just one more board was left to be put in place, with the one earmarked for Netherton in abeyance for the foreseeable future. RHD added that one of the boards had been amended slightly following a complaint from the Friends of Findhorn Bay with regards to wildfowling information; the board now displays a quick response (QR) code to enable those interested to access the full history. **ITEM CARRIED FORWARD**

b. Tern raft

Simon Paterson (SP) had fed back to the Chairman before the meeting that this is ready to be moored with only surface material required to be sourced and applied; the mooring of the raft has been approved by the Fairway Committee. SP also confirmed that there are no costs in relation to the raft as all materials and labour have been provided by North 58 Sea Adventures, with some ancillary costs being picked up by a local pontoon company. **ITEM CARRIED FORWARD**

c. Future bird hide

MC reported that no further action had been yet taken to scope the requirement due to time constraints, and recommended it be removed from the agenda until we could be in a position to progress it, to which the meeting agreed. **ITEM DELETED**

3. Chairman's report

RHD commented on the recent developments on the wildfowling situation and the voluntary permit scheme for such. Statements had been made by persons and bodies online, casting doubts on matters such as the security of the FBLNR website for sending the required permit data.

On this aspect alone, RHD apprised the meeting that the permit proforma for both local and visiting wildfowling on the website simply generate an email which is sent to the permit administrator - no data is held on the website and the website designer confirmed that the integrity is more than sufficient and only acts as an e-mail transmission portal. The e-mail application is then received, processed, permit issued and the application e-mail deleted all to ensure compliance with the Data Protection Act, which had previously been self-tested with the Information Commissioner and which confirmed that DPA principles were heeded to but the way in which said data is handled did not require mandatory registration. RHD stated that everything being conducted is similar to other nature reserves which process their wildfowling permits electronically; CS observed that some require photocopies of firearms certificates

that provide more detail than that required for a FBLNR permit.

RM, during this part of the meeting and during acceptance of the minutes earlier, made his observations with regard to the current position and why some wildfowling are boycotting the trial permit scheme.

RHD continued to report that in recent weeks he had met with The Moray Council (officers and elected members) as well as Richard Lochhead MSP, Scottish Natural Heritage and Police Scotland on the wildfowling situation, and remains concerned that tensions over the situation remain at a level that could lead to an accident involving firearms at the bay.

To that end also, RHD is not pursuing the requirement for the establishment of honorary wardens for the FBLNR. Anyone witnessing what they believe is an act contrary to legislation, such as obstructing legal wildfowling activity or a wildfowler shooting above the mean high water without the approval of the landowner, the matter should be reported direct to Police Scotland.

Another aspect of misreporting in media and online has been the re-affirmation on 5 September by The Moray Council's Economic Development and Services Committee that no wildfowling was permitted to take place on their land (i.e. above the mean high water mark) around the eastern edge of the Bay. This situation has been in place for many years and is not 'new' as some headlines have tried to make out. RM commented that he believed that permission was granted by TMC's forerunner (Moray District Council) although has been so far unable to locate the agreement. RM also sought clarification on the exact FBLNR boundary in order to clarify land access and ownership issues; RHD requested CB to check the documentation and advise accordingly. **ACTION CB**

Lastly, on non-wildfowling aspects, RHD noted the standing down of David Shaw (Dyke & Landward Community Council representative, replacement to be nominated after the forthcoming CC elections) and Lisa Mead (Friends of Findhorn Bay, replaced by Manja Hannon). *Secretary's note: post-meeting, Pat Carroll also announced that he too will not be standing in the forthcoming Community Council elections, and a replacement from the Findhorn & Kinloss CC will be appointed in due course).*

4. Treasurer's update on finances

No report.

5. New matters arising

RM commented on the activities around the new nature trail pavilion, namely overnight camping; MC added that significant litter has been noted in the area also.

6. Any other business

Nil.

RHD invited any comments from the members of the public present. One asked as to why the information for Netherton is not being installed; RHD and others replied that parking issues and the requests of the landowner had led to a decision to not encourage further use of the area at the present time.

A Findhorn village resident stated that recent cases of firearms being discharged from around 0500hrs was of concern and upset to her and her husband, who is ex-military. RHD commented that her situation is something that The Moray Council is and should continue to be aware of in overseeing activities on the Bay.

Lastly, RHD extended the committee's thanks to Pete Finch and his volunteer team for the repainting of the bird hide.

10. Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 6 December 2017 at 1930hrs, at the James Milne Institute, Findhorn.

prepared by Mike Crutch, Secretary FBLNR