

FINDHORN BAY LOCAL NATURE RESERVE (FBLNR)

MINUTES OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD IN THE ROYAL FINDHORN YACHT CLUB AT 1930HRS ON THURSDAY 7 JUNE 2018

Committee members present:

Roy Dennis (RHD) - Chair
Mo Hyde (MoH) - Vice Chair/Findhorn Heritage
Mike Crutch (MC) - Secretary
Bill Barber (WB) - Findhorn Angling Club
Glenn Buchanan (GB) - RFYC
Cllr Claire Feaver (CF) - The Moray Council
Pete Finch (PF) - Findhorn Foundation
Manja Hannon (MaH) - Friends of Findhorn Bay
Jen Heatley (JH) - Scottish Natural Heritage
Bob Mackay (RM) - FNDWA
Ian Suttie (IS) - ornithology
Davina Thomas (DT) - Findhorn Village Centre

Apologies: Colin Bell, Karen Cunningham, Simon Paterson, Dr Colin Shedden, Richard Somers-Cocks

1. Welcome & recent news

RHD welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Minutes of meeting held on 21 March 2018

The minutes were accepted.

Previous actions:

a. Information boards

GB stated that siting of the final board (at Binsness) is still in abeyance due to Ian Hampson's health issues. With recent restrictions on what little parking there is in the area, RHD questioned as to whether a board may encourage the public to an area which is now inappropriate to do. RHD will speak to Andy Wardley of Binsness Estate. **ACTION RHD**

b. Tern raft

RHD reported that the raft is In situ but needs to be re-positioned to the north, and in time for autumnal tern species passage (therefore by 1 August). **ACTION RHD/ Simon Paterson**

c. FBLNR management plan

Carried over due ongoing workload issues **ITEM CARRIED FORWARD**

3. Chairman's report

RHD drew the committee's attention to the announcement on wildfowling by The Moray Council (TMC) on 6 June - see Appendix A. The committee held a lengthy discussion on the matter, which included an overview by JH on SNH's position as well as other views; two members highlighted comments by one of the shooting organisations in the local press following TMC's announcement and expressed their displeasure at the language used and implication of the FBLNR in failure to reach agreement thus far. RHD commented that he believed that the higher levels of SNH had failed in their approach to uphold and even enhance the conservation status of the Bay.

In summary, RHD stated that he - echoed by the whole committee - wished the mediation well in its actions and would look to ensuring that this committee is represented properly in any talks. **ACTION RHD**

RHD then spoke on the continuing issue of plastic waste entering the Bay, in particular the wadding discharged from shotgun cartridges. With the issue now firmly in the political and public's eye, he will continue to progress the issue with the various partner agencies. **ACTION RHD**

4. Treasurer's update on finances

MC reported on behalf of Simon Paterson that no transactions had taken place since the last meeting. The accounts will shortly require their annual audit to be conducted in the coming month. **ACTION Simon Paterson**

5. New matters arising

Election of Officers

As per the committee constitution, both Secretary & Treasurer positions were opened for election/re-election as voting members. MC was re-elected as Secretary (proposed by MoH/seconded by MaH) and Simon Paterson was re-elected as Treasurer (proposed by GB/seconded by DT)

Hogweed/invasive plant species

MC passed on a report of recent activity and issues of such, supplied pre-meeting by Richard Somers-Cocks who had been engaging with TMC, the Findhorn & Kinloss Community Council (FKCC) and the Findhorn, Nairn and Lossie Fisheries Trust (FNLFT). The latter had been particularly busy in tackling the problem and had recently assisted in clearing hogweed from the bird hide area. JH also provided detail of the work carried out by the trust and others under the heavily funded Scottish Invasive Species Initiative (SISI) project.

After much discussion it was agreed that a) the equipment and protective clothing owned by the FBLNR (held by former member Pat Carroll) will be transferred *gratis* to the FNLFT for their use as required, and b) reporting of invasive species should probably best be directed at FNLFT - MC will discuss with them to establish such.

ACTION MC

6. Any other business

MoH had organised, on behalf of the committee, a litter pick on Saturday 9 June in the carse area of Kinloss Bay; RHD thanked her and others involved and wished them well.

MC raised a question from Richard Somers-Cocks regarding the continued defacing of the FBLNR information board in the Kinloss Bay area; the committee agreed that no further expense should be made.

CF asked for confirmation of the FBLNR's standpoint on the recent Core Paths proposals by TMC; RHD gave his confirmation that Core Path designation should not be afforded to the proposed tracks on the eastern edge of the Bay as no proper paths exist there currently and habitat disturbance should be prevented wherever possible.

MoH brought the David Urquhart memorial disabled access path fund raising to the committee's attention, which will be established between the piers northwards to the marina

RM raised the potential issue of Greylag Geese being placed on General Licence under the provisions of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, meaning that such birds can be shot between 1 July to 31 August. *Secretary's Note: after review of the detail of GL 02/2018 as issued by SNH, usual provisions for General Licences apply which means no shooting (or otherwise) will take place within the FBLNR*

A member of the public stated that the Findhorn Bay Arts Festival this year, from 26 September to 1 October, will heavily feature birds and wildlife.

10. Date of next meeting

The 2018 series of meetings will be held as follows, all at the James Milne Institute, Findhorn:

Thursday 20 September 1930hrs

Wednesday 5 December 1930hrs

prepared by Mike Crutch, Secretary FBLNR

APPENDIX A

Issued by The Moray Council, 6 June 2018

COUNCILLORS have today agreed that mediation should be the next step after the voluntary permit scheme for wildfowling in Findhorn Bay failed to secure universal support.

In a report to the full Moray Council it emerged that only 23 permits were applied for in the 2017/18 season, out of an estimated 100 local wildfowling.

An external mediator will now be brought in and, if successful, this will be a precursor to a further voluntary permit scheme.

It's estimated that mediation could cost in the region of £15,000, and councillors were told that Scottish Natural Heritage have pledged their support in cash terms and in the provision of mediation service.

Forres councillor, George Alexander, moved a motion that mediation should be progressed, with the unanimous backing of all councillors.

He said: "I would encourage all stakeholders to attend the meetings and discuss options with an open mind. There must be some sort of compromise."

Convener of Moray Council, Cllr James Allan, added: "I'm disappointed at the poor uptake of voluntary permits at Findhorn this season. It's clear that the current situation is unsustainable, and I hope that mediation allows all parties to come together to achieve a resolution."

Options under consideration included the introduction of a by-law, which would cost an estimated £35k, in addition to the cost to police of enforcement and a further £35k in regular review costs.

Moray Council has already banned shooting on a section of the Findhorn Bay area in council ownership.