**PENNEY’S WOOD MEETING**

**HELD AT HEN HURDLE ON WEDNESDAY 8 MARCH 2017 AT 7.30pm**

**Present:**

Duncan Pritchard; Ewen Cameron; Gill Kerr; Helena Thomson; Iain Campbell; Janine Brodie; Judy Dobson; Kate Somervail; Linda Thomson; Penny Pritchard;

**Apologies:**

Alastair Kerr; John Wheatley; Julie King; Rory Sheenan;

Ewan opened the meeting by welcoming and thanking the new members to the Committee (Janine, Judy, Duncan, Penny and Linda) and particularly to Janine for taking over the position of Chairperson from himself.

**Forward Planning**

Ewen suggested that the focus should be on ‘shaping the year’ with regard to maintenance & events, managing resources, future fundraising and grant income. He outlined that basics are in place with trees, fencing etc. and any maintenance would be the possible relocation of trees and weeding round the trees. There may be a need to raise income eventually to maintain the ‘buffer’ amount in the bank required against any contingencies.

**Funding**

Helena asked how much annual running costs were and Iain advised it was in the region of £1000/year – this year it had been mainly fencing & posts, insurance, ditch cleaning and general maintenance.

There was a general discussion regarding who we could approach for financial support, Judy suggesting the Hydro Scheme (who are giving £5000 to the Community Council) and PEKAVS; Janine suggesting liaison with Fossoway School to explore whether funding might be available for promotion of outdoor learning.

**Action: To source alternative funding – Judy and Duncan**

**Spring Maintenance**

It was suggested that some of the trees were being hindered in growth by the plastic sleeves and that some stakes were not strong enough for the bigger trees. Discussion held regarding when to remove sleeves and support and it was agreed that professional advice be sought to ascertain when this should best be done – Judy to ask contacts at Woodland Trust re this.

**Action: To seek advice from Woodland Trust – Judy**

Two dates for maintenance in April/May for a working party to clean-up, possible removal of sleeves/support and weeding. (John had previously intimated that he and Rory had re-staked about 25 trees which had blown down and cleared away dead ones).

Tree relocation was discussed and 3 have already been moved and more could be moved as and when required in the future - depending on how they quickly they grew in relation to properties and roads etc. Ewen asked if, and at what point, trees could not be replanted. Judy would ask the Woodland Trust but thought that it would depend on the size of the root system if they survived a move. He suggested that if there was anything urgent regarding tree relocation then let the committee know.

**Summer Event**

It was agreed that the Open Day in 2015 had been a success and another event would be planned for the Summer this year – possibly along the same lines - a picnic/BBQ and treasure hunt. Kate said the last event had been advertised on the gate and via a mail shot through doors. A meeting will be held prior to the event which is planned for Sunday 20th August.

**Drains/Ditches**

David Johnman has the appropriate sized digger to clear ditches and will be contacted by John regarding this. Approximate cost £300. He will also be asked to flatten the diagonal path from the centre of the woods to the top gate as it is difficult for the mower (and people) to negotiate!

The diagonal drainage appeared to be working well despite the deluge of rain we had recently.

**Action: To contact David Johnman re clearing ditches and flattening path - John**

**Paths/Bridge**

Materials had been bought (slabs and sleepers) for installation of the last bridge which John and Rory had agreed to undertake after the ditches had been cleared and also to make new paths. Rory had also agreed to install a step up to the top gate as it was quite steep and slippery.

**Action: Build bridge and steps (when time permits!) – John and Rory**

Iain suggested that grants would probably be available for making the woods more accessible and that we may be able to get cash back retrospectively if invoices were shown. It was agreed that it was good to be aware of this but we wouldn’t ‘hang back’ from improvements in the meanwhile.

**Noticeboard**

General discussion took place regarding the style of Noticeboard required and the consensus was that a noticeboard where we could add and remove notices and information would probably be the most useful.

**Action: To look into noticeboards – Penny, Iain & Kate**

**AOB**

None

**Date of next meeting(s)**

Suggested dates for the diary:

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| --- | --- |
| **Spring Maintenance working party** | **Saturday 29 April and follow up if required** **Saturday 6 May** |
| **Meeting to discuss Summer Event** | **Sunday 25 June** |
| **Summer Picnic/BBQ Event** | **Sunday 20 August** |
| **Autumn Maintenance working party** | **Saturday 14 October follow up if required Saturday 21 October** |
| **AGM** | **Sunday 26 November** |

**Ewen thanked Duncan & Penny for very kindly hosting the meeting. The meeting closed.**