



## **July 10th 2012 Minutes of Dunbar Community Woodland Group (DCWG)** **Committee Meeting**

**Present - Simon & Jacquie Bell, Isobel Knox, Eva Hurley, Dave Andrews, Isobel Campbell, Morag Haddow, Ute Penny - late arrival Dave Crosbie for a short while.**

1. Meeting opened by SB. Apologies from Keith Renshaw.
2. Minutes of the previous meeting were accepted.
3. Matters arising -
  - Learning Woods sign - IK has phoned Osprey with regard to this. It was noted also, that the other sign (on Kellie Rd), needs a new cover.
  - T-Shirts - this has been found to be a lengthy and involved process, so has been deferred for the time being.
  - Coralie Mills is still coming to look at tree sampling for aging.
  - Colin Baird - re upgrade of path from primary school, IK is to phone him back.
  - Thank you cards etc - IK sent a sympathy card to the Panton family.
4. Pump Track -
  1. Planning application - Planning permission will need to be applied for the track. The Community Council are supportive and Viridor are supplying the funds, subject to planning permission being approved. MH will be putting together the application for planning permission.
  2. Community consultation - MH has drafted a letter re consultation, which has been e-mailed to all members for comment. It was noted that there was an impression that the track was going to be bigger than it actually will be.
  3. Pump track plan - DC presented a draft plan to the committee. As it is still in the draft stages, there will inevitably be some changes and it was pointed out, that the track would have to be tailored to the funds available.

At this point, DC left the meeting.

4. Contracts between DCWG and contractors for future works in the woods - EH has offered to put together a draft contract for the pump track. Discussion then centred around us getting hold of copies of previous contracts, for work that has already been done e.g. from Glendinning. SB is to approach Mark Page for copies of contracts and MH is to make available the three quotes that she obtained for the pump track. SB is also to get hold of a Forestry Commission contract for future use. Finally, IK is to contact Alan Kilpatrick about whether or not an archaeological assessment would be required.

## 5. Inspection report and issues arising -

It was admitted that no one had done an inspection and it was noted that it would be useful to have some sort of rota, whereby routine inspections are carried out. SB suggested that a couple of people should be allocated at each meeting.

IK said that the residents of 4 John Muir Gdns, had complained about a sycamore.

## 6. Financial statement -

1. Bank statements - UP has handed all the documentation over to SB, that John Sparksman had given to her. He very kindly undertook the scrutiny of our accounts, but had difficulty in understanding our financial relationship with Dunbar Community Development Company. This is something that we will need to address in the future.
2. Forestry Commission payment - money will be coming from the Forestry Commission.
3. OSCR accounts audit - this has now been done.

## 7. Membership statement -

1. New membership secretary - Andy Morris has resigned as membership secretary, however until our AGM, UP will be the interim membership secretary. We then went on to discuss our website and whether or not we should continue to use it, or use Our Locality a website that provides links to local news and community projects. UP will discuss this with Andy Morris.
2. Current membership status - six more people have joined in the last couple of months. EH suggested using PayPal on our website and although it was pointed out that this had been tried in the past, we think it well worth another attempt. Gift Aid was also suggested as a more tax efficient way of managing membership subs. This is to be looked into.
3. Issues over recording members vis a vis audits - we need to have our accounts done by the time we have our AGM, so that an up to date record of members can be presented. Discussion centred around when we should have our accounting year and it was pointed out that we badly need a treasurer. IK has been dealing with things pro tem and has offered to stand-in, until such time as a new one can be found. She will get the spreadsheet from John Sparksman and both she and SB will get together to make some sense of our accounts.

## 8. Events publicity & PR aspects -

1. Civic Pride funding - strimming, woodland maintenance squad recruitment - DA put together a proposal for contract labour, which was presented to the committee - see appendix. After much discussion, it was decided to set up a sub-committee, who would meet from time to time, to plan programmes of works and who would contact the various contractors. SB, DA and IK will make up this committee. It was decided that we need to ask for a fixed price and hourly rate (estimate £7/hr) with expectation that the overall price would be around £500. Contractors will need to supply the equipment and insurance and they will also need to tell us how they are

to carry out the work. In future, we will advertise in the Courier and Jobcentres, but as the job is urgent, DC will be given the contract for this summer.

2. Seedcorn funding application - the application was returned to IK, by Liz Poulson, who is the new woodland officer covering East Lothian for the Forestry Commission. She was concerned about the mention of profit making and also the list of tools needed. She suggested that there was not enough emphasis on community involvement. It was felt that the application contained all that was needed and it was decided to reword it. IK is to contact her to see what was the problem.
3. CWA conference 1st & 2nd September 2012 - IK will attend as one of the directors, but both EH and UP will go and represent DCWG.

Further items were to be discussed, but as the time was now 11pm, it was decided to end the meeting.

The next meeting will be on Wednesday 15th August in the new community centre.

## **APPENDIX**

### **DCWG - Proposal for Contract Labour**

#### **Background**

From time to time significant work is required in the woodland, and may need specific skills and more time and effort than volunteers are prepared to commit. The coordination of contracts is often time consuming, particularly seeking competitive bids, awarding and overseeing contracts. It is important that the DCWG can show that the money being awarded is spent and can be accounted for with a robust audit trail. This includes how the contract work is awarded, and that the projects meet the funding conditions. In order to be seen to operate in an impartial way, one of the principles should be that we do not pay members of the DCWG to complete work, and those seeking an award of contract work cannot be part of the funding bid or be present at committee meetings relating to the award for work.

#### **Proposal**

As much of the time consuming and skilled work will require ad hoc contracts, there are two options that may be considered.

##### **1. Short List of approved contractors**

Advertise a casual call off contract for general woodland work, inviting local workers with appropriate skills and experience to be added to a short list of approved contractors. These could be individuals or companies, with perhaps preferences for job seekers and the 16 -25 age group.

Work would be awarded by an appointed committee group who would contact those on the short list to confirm availability.

Payment would be fixed on a scale of hourly rates related to the skills required and an approved budget.

#### **Advantages**

DCWG would have control over who completes work and the terms and conditions.  
A good pool of locals would have more commitment and pride in the outcomes  
It would satisfy community objectives  
It is in line with job creation priorities  
Could be supported by Job Seekers

#### **Disadvantages**

Liability for the work would rest with DCWG.  
It would take more individual time coordinating than option 2

Tools and H&S equipment may would need to be provided  
Individuals may be able to work at best together without coordination

## **2. Appoint a Project Contract Manager**

Rather than a DCWG and a CommitteeGroup directly employing and having liability for the workers and their work, we would employ, on a casual basis, one company or organisation to coordinate and complete works allocated by the appointed committee group.

The responsibility would include overseeing contract work and also the coordination and use of volunteers. Liability for completing work would be with this company or organisation.

Payment would be on an hourly rate for the Contract Management, leaving the Project Contract Manager to meet the conditions and outcomes required, and use the available funds to best effect.

### **Advantages**

- Less liability issues
- More manageable
- Cost and time effective

### **Disadvantages**

- May present difficulties seeking funding in certain project bids
- May not tick as many community involvement boxes
- May not be attractive due to volume and level of work
- Could be more expensive

### **Summary**

This proposal is for discussion and is open to further options and suggestions. I suggest that we approve an option to be taken forward, and look at setting up a committee group to be able to progress and support the outcome. I would be happy to lead this group.

David Andrews