

Arboricultural Association – Scottish branch

Minutes of a Committee meeting at SAC, Lanark on Thursday 13th November '08

Present: - Paul Hanson
Eric Hamilton
Jamie Boyle
Bill Cairns
Mark MacKenzie
Chris Simpson
Peter Robinson
Ted Radford

- 1. Apologies for absence** – Apologies had been tendered by Andrew Jenkins, John Cairns & Thomas Gifford.
- 2. Minutes 19th June '08** – These were adopted as a true record.
- 3. Matters arising**

3.1 HQ follow up to letter of complaint from the Branch – HQ's belated E mail seeking a Branch response to their original reply (received after the last Committee meeting) was agreed to be typically tardy, plead ignorance of formal correspondence and failed to address the issues raised in the original Branch letter. It was agreed that Paul & Ted would draft a reply, in the form of an open letter to the "Newsletter", reiterating the Committee's continuing concerns, including the lack of action to address the misuse of "Approved Contractor" designation reported by Andrew Jenkins (subsuming item 3.3). The letter would invite HQ representatives to attend the Branch AGM to respond directly to membership concerns.

Action – Paul & Ted

3.2 Branch Awards to Scottish centres offering Arb. qualifications – Despite invitations to all centres, in addition to SSF, only SAC had replied positively. Chris & Ted had congratulated their nominee. It was agreed to invite the SAC & SSF prize winners to attend the AGM together with their partners. It was further agreed not to pursue the two centres who had failed to accept the offer of Branch awards.

Action – Ted

4.0 Officers' reports

4.1 Chairman – Paul had nothing to report.

4.2 Secretary – Ted said that he continued to carry out routine admin.

4.3 Treasurer – Eric reported a very healthy balance as a result of the success of the New Lanark seminar. In order to comply with procedure those receipts would be surrendered to HQ. Despite this Eric forecast a Branch balance of ca. £2K which should be adequate to fund Branch activities in 2009.

5.0 2008 Programme

5.1 Ted thanked all those who had contributed to the success of the Branch's presence at Edinburgh Treefest, Bowhill Tremendous day and the Tweed Valley Forest Festival all of which gave the opportunity to promote the AA to the general public. Attendance at the 2009 Treefest will depend on the organiser adopting a less authoritative stance.

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5.2 Planning seminar- It was agreed that this had been very worthwhile and more than viable financially. There is potential to repeat it at a NE Scotland venue in 2009. Paul & Chris was congratulated on the content and venue.

5.3 Fungal foray – This very successful social excursion was again an occasion to thank Chris for his organisation of the event that had an interesting topic and was held at a first class venue.

5.4 Christmas Party – Ted said he would check with the Dunkeld Hilton on the take up of the AA allocation and re-promote the event if there was a shortfall.

6. Programme 2009

6.1 Thomas Gifford will be asked to confirm the May date of the WAH seminar at the RBG, Edinburgh. **Action - Thomas**

6.2 Paul confirmed the dates of the Arbor day(s) at Crarae, Inveraray as Friday 22nd May – Sunday 24th May. Accommodation is reserved at the local YH that sleeps 28. It was agreed that the incoming Committee should, as a matter of urgency, confirm an at least three year programme of Arbor Day venues. Bill's suggestion that this should include more deserving venues was agreed. **Action - All**

6.3 Mark's suggestion of a social excursion to Dawyck to have a guided tour of woodland ground flora was agreed. Mark will liaise with the guide to agree a late March/early April date (provisionally 18th April). He will also arrange refreshments with the franchised caterers. **Action - Mark**

6.4 Peter will negotiate with his contacts to arrange an autumn social tour of either Balcarres, Rossi Priory or Blair Castle policies. **Action - Peter**

6.5 Eric will report back on the feasibility of the Branch actively participating in the Dundee Flower & produce show if FCS agree to move their Woodfair there.

7.0 2008 AGM

7.1 Date & venue – Eric confirmed the availability of Baxter Park, Dundee and will set in train the necessary arrangements. *Due to a clash of commitments the date has been deferred to Saturday 7th February '09.*

7.2 AGM content – Eric will arrange a tour of the Park including the recently refurbished pavilion. Paul will invite Nigel Price to speak.

7.3 Paul, Eric & Chris Simpson expressed their willingness to serve in their current roles in 2009. Ted said he was also willing to carry on but stressed this was for one more year only. Peter said he remained willing to source & collate Newsletter material but wished to stand down from the Committee.

If Chris Taylor & Andrew Jenkins also stand down this creates three Committee vacancies.

Action - All

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8. 2008 Ken Martin award - Ted said he had received only one nomination. The proposed recipient had declined to accept. The Committee agreed on two other potential recipients. Ted was instructed to write to each in turn inviting them to accept the award. Action - Ted

9. Newsletter copy – Peter asked for a write up of the Christmas Party, ideally with pictures from the grounds and/or the party. He would negotiate with Simon Richmond to try to get the AGM report in the same edition. Action – AN Other at the party & Peter

10. Any other competent business

10.1 The Committee accepted Chris's contention that the Awarding Body for the RFS Level 2 Arb. Award & the Technician's Certificate should amend their guidance to candidates to give equal merit to answers that reflected knowledge of Scottish and English law as it applied to trees & woods, planning and other relevant matters. The Committee agreed that this did not require any change to National Occupational Standards (NOS). What was required was clarification of the need for candidates to be able to demonstrate their knowledge of legislation as it applied in Scotland as well as elsewhere in the UK since despite a significant commonality the Scottish Government had enacted laws that diverged from those in force in England & Wales. It was further agreed that Chris & Ted should draft a letter for HQ to take forward as the issue is relevant throughout the UK. Action – Chris & Ted.

11.0 Date of next meeting – There will be a brief meeting of the new Committee after the AGM to determine a date & venue for an early formal meeting to confirm the 2009 programme & progress outstanding business.

Ted Radford, Secretary, 17th November '09

Provisional 2009 Programme (*Lead organiser in italics*)

1. **Saturday 7th February** – AGM at Baxter Park, Dundee *Eric Hamilton*
2. **Saturday 18th April** – Social excursion, Dawyck Arboretum to tour Woodland ground flora
Mark MacKenzie
3. **Saturday ? May** – WAH workshop, RBG Edinburgh *Thomas Gifford*
4. **Friday 22nd – Sunday 24th May** – Arbor Days at Crarae *Paul Hanson*
5. **Sunday 12th July**- Treemendous Day, Bowhill, Selkirk *Ted Radford*
6. **Sat/Sun July** – *Possibly* Edinburgh Treefest *Ted Radford*
7. **Late Summer**- Possible Planning seminar at a NE venue *Paul & Chris*
8. **Autumn** – Excursion Balcarres, Rossi Priory or Blair Castle *Peter Robinson*
9. **December** – Christmas Party *Ted Radford*
10. **Last Saturday in January '10** – 2009 AGM, venue to be decided