

Minutes of the Tarland Development Group Trustees Meeting

Monday 4th May 2020 at 7.30pm
Video-conference

Attendees and apologies

Present (10): K Redpath (KR) (Chair), K Dale (KD), A McKee (AM), D Hirst (DH), C Redmond (CR), Megan Albon (MA), Y Davidson (YD), E Shepherd (ES), S Power (SP), Ana Pena del Vale (APD).

Apologies: none.

1. Matters arising

- a) The Local Development Plan (LDP) consultation, which had been at the stage of gathering feedback from the public, has been paused due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- b) DTAS have announced that they are waving subscription fees for this year.
- c) The new version of the TDG logo has been circulated among trustees.

2. Decisions made between meetings

The TDG Project Plan pro-forma, produced by KD, has been approved. KD has filled in the first Project Plan for the wetlands project to provide a template for other project leaders, and this is available via Dropbox.

3. Membership

There were no applications for membership.

4. Cromar Community Council and Cromar Community Helpline

The most recent Cromar Community Council (CCC) minutes include the following relevant items:

- a) Willem van Heusden has offered to provide a site for a new mobile phone mast at Corrachree. SP added that there may be complications getting services to this site, and it may be too far from the village to provide 5G.
- b) Craig Morrison of CCC put forward the suggestion of making council-managed land such as verges more biodiverse.
- c) Nigel Healey of CCC raised the issue of whether or not TDG compost collections could take place under lock-down (see item 5 below).

DH gave an update on the Cromar Community Helpline. The project is a collaboration between CCC, TDG and Marr Area Partnership (MAP). Deliveries are relatively small, mainly groceries and newspapers. Most groceries come from the shop in Tarland, but some bigger grocery deliveries



come from Aboyne Co-op. A well-developed operational system is in place. LS asked for more detailed addresses for newspaper deliveries to help volunteers.

5. Composting

The initial response to Covid-19 had been to make sure that all collection teams were family groups. However, the council garden waste collection services are currently suspended, therefore the composting scheme must also be suspended until countywide services resume. In the meantime composting scheme members have been given suggestions for alternative uses for grass clippings, such as mulch for vegetable patches.

6. Tarland Community Housing

The job advert for the Housing Development Worker post is out and has been widely shared on social media. If there are not enough applications the deadline may be extended by 2-3 weeks.

TCH has been feeding back to Savills who have been commissioned to produce a report for the Scottish Land Commission. AM and MA have taken part in calls with Graham Reid, who has used TCH as a case study.

7. Wetlands

- a) Ian Francis has collected good video footage from the wetland at the former sewage works, showing 53 curlews and around 10 lapwings.
- b) MA has submitted an expression of interest on behalf of TDG for the Historic Environment Scotland (HES) Coasts and Waters Heritage Fund for a project to restore mill ponds.
- c) The Dee Catchment Partnership (DCP) have offered TWG a page on their new website.
- d) Concern has been raised by a local resident about the rolling of the field next to the wetland at the former sewage works, which is within the 'management area'. Waders and hares have been observed raising young in this field. There has been a noticeable negative effect on wildlife since the field was rolled, including the disappearance of previously numerous birds, and distress in a hare whose leveret has likely been killed. SP recommended that public complaints about incidents of this nature should be directed to TWG to be fed back to the estate.

8. Paths and Access

Gillian Needham and David Currie have carried out various maintenance tasks including replacing roundels. More roundels are needed although there are currently limited funds. There is no organized group dedicated to paths maintenance at present.

CR asked how the grilles on the Tarland Way could be removed to enable cleaning out of the drains. LS recommended he ask Murray Swapp of the Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust (COAT).

9. Tarland Trails

There is currently no progress to report on Tarland Trails 2 (TT2). People are still visiting Tarland Trails 1 (TT1) in cars, despite being discouraged via social media. At present Aberdeenshire Council does not have a policy of blocking recreational carparks and TT is limited in what they can do to stop cars coming.

10. Tarland Food and Music Festival

Shona Donaldson continues to do an excellent job of organising the festival despite the challenging circumstances. The steering group is waiting for further advice from the government on live music events to review the options for this year's festival.

11. Tarland Bee Group

- a) TBG have started their Project Plan.
- b) Many of the nucs that had been started for the beginners' course have been sold. The course has been postponed until November.
- c) Guidance has been sought on how beekeeping can be done in groups in the context of the pandemic.
- d) MA continues to make applications for funding for the new apiary.
- e) A donation of £150 has been received.
- f) The information boards for the apiary are ready and one of the members is making panels for them.
- g) Lease hives are now ready and one lease hive has been sold.
- h) A new isolation apiary has been agreed with the MacRobert Trust (MRT). It will be set up in the solar farm next to Douneside House.
- i) Subscriptions have been paid and there have been a significant number of new members.

12. Accounts, grants, awards and funding

DH has created a new category for SCP/ICF funding (paying for TDG staff) so that TDG unallocated reserves can be monitored more easily. TDG ongoing costs are limited, mainly insurance and trustee expenses, however, it was suggested that a more active policy of fundraising might be pursued, for example a raffle at events. Some funds were generated from a donations tin in Angie's Café but this income stream has ceased since the lock-down began. SP suggested that projects might contribute more to the main TDG fund.

DH has had constructive discussions with Carol Hutchinson of the Investing in Communities Fund (ICF) over issues caused by a delay in the confirmation of staff funding.

13. Governance

Nothing to report.



14. AOB

SP announced that MRT have started work on a Community Engagement Plan. The Scottish Government encourage all landowners to develop community engagement plans and mechanisms. MRT are inviting views from key local organisations to create a draft proposal. SP indicated that managers of land may also have a responsibility to produce a Community Engagement Plan of some sort.

15. Date of next meeting

The next meeting will take place on Monday 1st June.