

▪ **FRIENDS OF GLENAN WOOD INAUGURAL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

- **Date:** 27th October, 2018
- **Time:** 2.00pm
- **Place:** Kames Village Hall
- **Attendees:** **Nine** members of the Friends of Glenan Wood (FoGW) steering group and around 25 members and members of the public. The quorum was met.

FoGW chairman **Robin Webster** chaired and convened the meeting, welcoming everyone in attendance and thanking them for taking an interest in the work of the charity.

Election of members

Interim Trustees Robin Webster, Eve MacFarlane and Lucy Roper resigned. Robin Webster then read out the names of all the proposed Directors: Eve MacFarlane, Robin Webster, Rob Borusso, Lucy Roper, Robbie Baird, Andree Hawke, Heather Muir, Mark Appleton and Mick Eyre. The members present approved the nominations.

Eve MacFarlane gave a summary of how and why the charity came in being and she explained the process which is now underway by why FoGW hope to acquire Glenan Wood for the benefit of the local and wider community.

Community Asset Transfer Scheme

Eve explained Forestry Commission Scotland's publicised a statutory notice of its intention to sell the wood, under new rules which gives local communities the right to try and acquire and manage public assets which are being offered for disposal. This is known as the Community Asset Transfer Scheme. Having seen the notice, a meeting of local residents primarily from Portavadie and Millhouse was organised to determine the appetite for acquiring the land. This was followed up by a further meeting and presentation to which the wider Kilfinan parish community was invited. Following these meetings, the Friends of Glenan Wood was constituted as a charity and a membership organisation which now has around 100 members. Local community membership is seen as important as members will have the right to vote on the charity's individual decisions and help steer its overall direction of travel.

Feasibility Study

Eve went on to explain how the charity successfully applied for funds from the Scottish Land Fund to engage a consultant who has drafted a feasibility study for the acquisition of the Wood, including a business plan covering the five years post acquisition (if successful) setting out potential income streams and likely expenditures. This document forms the basis of FoGW's application to acquire the Wood which, as part of the process, has been independently valued at an open market value of £300,000.

The feasibility study highlighted Glenan Wood's

- potential to continue to operate as a nature reserve,
- its biodiversity,
- its heritage in terms of human habitation and land use.

The study also highlighted

- the need to carefully manage the Wood's biodiversity
- the need to facilitate public access
- the potential for various income streams

If the bid is successful, Eve explained that FoGW would look to engage a development officer who would be a shared resource with the Kilfinan Community Forest Company (KCFC). It is the Friends of Glenan Wood's intention work in partnership with KCFC and other local entities including the Tighnabruaich and Kilmodan Primary Schools, Portavadie Estates Limited.

Bio Blitz

The primary schools have, in fact already engaged with the charity through a so-called Bio Blitz which was a two-day exercise to catalogue flora and fauna within the Wood, but also served as a platform for wider community engagement with children and adults. This was done using a marquee as a hub at Glenan Wood, with the help of entities such as the Tighnabruaich Art Gallery who facilitated art activities, and the King's Court addiction recovery facility whose staff and residents ran a barbecue using produce provided by Shellfield Farm, and Portavadie Estates Ltd who provided pizza and ice cream.

Based on the success of the first Bio Blitz there is the possibility of making it an annual event.

PAWS Report

The meeting attendees heard how in July 2018 Angus Bevan of Integrated Woodland Management Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) undertook an assessment of Glenan Wood funded by the Woodland Trust. The report identified three out of five zones in Glenan as 'threatened' (unlikely to be lost in the short term, but long term survival is doubtful without intervention). Rhododendron control, conifer removal and deer control are the key management priorities recommended in the short term.

Work parties and maintenance

Eve explained how steering group members and other volunteers did a spot of bracken smashing on the high path one Saturday during the summer to help keep the path clear. If the bid to acquire the Wood is successful, this is the type of activity which would take place on a regular basis and would allow the community to get involved in a hands-on manner. The group used wooden planks to crush the bracken rather than cut it. Steering group members have also been keeping an eye on wild camping in the area, particularly after a huge mess was left by one group, including two discarded tents, broken glass, and several bin bags' worth of assorted rubbish which the group cleared up.

Treasurer's Report

Following on from Eve's presentation, the FoGW treasurer, **Lucy Roper**, gave an overview of the charity's finances to date. Lucy explained how the charity has received £11,120 in grant funding to cover consultancy fees. That money, once received, was immediately paid out to the consultants. A small amount of additional cash has been generated through fund raising at the Bio Blitz and a

market stall at the Kames Allotment Group Producers' Market. There are some ongoing cost associated with publicity (website, flyers etc) meaning the charity is currently £159 in credit.

Lucy explained that in order to meet the requirements of the Community Asset Transfer Scheme, the FoGW charity was obliged to find future income streams to cover its ongoing running costs and statutory liabilities.

Questions from attendees

Those attending the meeting were given the opportunity to ask questions and the question of what would happen if the bid was unsuccessful was raised. It was explained that in this event, the land would simply be put onto the open market and that the local community would most likely lose the ability to influence its future use.

Closing

In closing the meeting, **Robin Webster** once again thanked everyone for their attendance and invited them to stay and discuss any other matters relating to Friends of Glenan Wood over refreshments which were provided.