

Minutes of CALLP Scheme Delivery Committee Meeting

Monday 5th October 2020, 10am-12:30pm, remotely via Zoom

(rescheduled from 21st September 2020 due to delays with papers)

<p>1</p>	<p>Welcome, introductions & apologies</p> <p><i>Present</i> Claire Belshaw (CB) – Assynt Foundation, Chair Fiona Saywell (FS) – CCWT, Project Officer/CALLP Education Manager Gordon Sleight (GS) – Historic Assynt, Director Julia Campbell (JC) – Coigach Community Development Company, Local Development Officer Mark Foxwell (MF) - SWT, Reserves Manager – North Peter Lowe (PL) – Woodland Trust, Senior Outreach Advisor/Ancient Woodland Lead Scotland Peter Muir (PM) – Coigach Salmon Fisheries Limited Richard Williams (RW) – JMT, Land Operations Manager Sarah Robinson (SR) – SWT, Director of Conservation (Chair)</p> <p><i>In Attendance</i> Ann Marie Firth-Bernard (AMFB) – Coigach Community Development Company, Local Development Officer Boyd Alexander (BA) – CALLP Scheme Manager Elaine Macaskill (EM) – Woodland Trust, CALLP Woodland Manager Laura Traynor (LT) – CALLP Assistant Scheme Manager (Minutes) Lucy Graham (LG) – SWT, Head of Development</p> <p><i>Apologies</i> James McDougall (JMD) – Woodland Trust, Senior Outreach Officer Jorine van Delft (JvD) – CCWT, Director Meryl Carr (MC) - SNH, Operations Officer, Wester Ross and Skye</p>	
<p>2</p>	<p>Introduction to Zoom and Zoom voting features</p> <p>Agreement to record meeting.</p> <p>SDC agrees to record meeting for the purpose of assisting the writing of the minutes.</p>	
<p>3</p>	<p>a. Minutes of the Previous Meeting (19th August 2020)</p> <p>Minutes of previous meeting on 19th August 2020 agreed by committee that they are a true account of the meeting, subject to the following amendments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11.b. second paragraph states “underspend budget at discretion at the SDC”. BA awaiting clarification from NLHF on whether they need to give final approval. 	

	<p>Change to “underspend budget at discretion at the SDC, subject to approval by NLHF” if NLHF state that they need to give final approval.</p> <p>LT to make amendment to 19th August 2020 minutes as stated above.</p> <p>Action Points from 19th August 2020 and other matters arising not covered by agenda.</p> <p>Actions points: See Action Point Summary Table at end of minutes.</p> <p>Matters arising: No matters arising</p>	<p>AP1 LT</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>Review and confirmation of confidence to implement CALLP Projects</p> <p>BA presented paper stating that almost all projects are confident of implementing before the end date for projects of end of September 2021. However, the following issues were highlighted and will be kept under review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Woodland Project – issues with tree supply, particularly birch. Supply may improve if planting schemes elsewhere no longer proceed and trees reserved for those become available. May need to extend planting past scheme end date if stock is unavailable. BA to highlight Woodland Project tree supply issue to NLHF. ● Sustainable Deer Management – project outputs under review. The helicopter count is unlikely to go ahead following concerns about environmental impact of helicopter counts from NatureScot (formerly SNH). Paper for Deer Larder proposal on agenda. ● Fox Point Path – if match funding cannot be secured this project will be unlikely to proceed. ● Fox Point Bothy – on agenda for approval of increased budget and associated match funding. ● Isle Martin Croft House – on agenda for approval of increased budget and associated match funding. ● Coigach & Assynt Signage – on agenda for approval of budget and match funding. ● Eisg Brachaidh Habitat Restoration – awaiting confirmation by NLHF. <p>Other issues highlighted to the SDC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Woodland Project - EM highlighted that she can only use contractors who don't require accommodation due to coronavirus restrictions. This will mean only being able to use local suppliers and asked whether an exemption could be granted to allow her not to have to go through wider tendering. BA to bring to NLHF's attention so they can provide a quick process for exemptions due to accommodation difficulties owing to coronavirus restrictions. Forestry Commission also not giving permission to plant currently. ● Outdoor & Woodland Learning - FS stated that due to ongoing restrictions several activities planned for Spring might be impacted, e.g. Hill to Grill, Isle Martin residential trip. ● CCDC led capital projects – JC reiterated EM's comments about the impact of restrictions on contractors' costs and availability of accommodation. 	<p>AP2 BA</p> <p>AP3 BA</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clachtoll Ranger Hut - LG queried the confidence of completion of the Clachtoll Ranger Hut project as paper refers to assistance needed with the tendering process. BA stated he was taking that forward and the tender brief had been drafted. BA confident project will be completed within next 12 months. • Eisg Brachaidh Habitat Restoration - PL stated that NatureScot have given flexibility in the expiration date of the Biodiversity Challenge Fund grant awarded. PL stated that WT would like to put in a request that if projects fall out of the scheme the resulting underspend would be applied to the Eisg Brachaidh project, subject to NLHF approval. SR stated the process for the reallocation of underspend would be to submit a formal request to the SDC. <p>SR stated that the SDC should be confident that the projects are going ahead to maximise the amount of grant money that can be spent in the area. This is a key factor in spending all the grant money because if any of these projects cannot deliver it will be very difficult to reallocate and spend that money in the time remaining. Projects where match funding is an issue are highlighted later on the agenda.</p> <p><u>Decision: SDC confident of completion of all projects as presented in paper B, subject to items 5, 6 and 7 on agenda.</u></p>	Decision 1
5	<p>Review of Match Funding Allocation</p> <p>LG presented paper C reviewing the current match funding situation. The situation has been clarified since the last SDC, where it was noted that the status of some match funding needed to be verified with project leads. The paper acknowledges that the scheme has only 12 months left of delivery and the match funding environment is more difficult now due to the impact of Covid-19 on funders.</p> <p>The general principle remains that projects will receive 60% NLHF funding with the remaining 40% (match) funding being secured from elsewhere, however there is an understanding that fundraising is more difficult for some projects and/or partners. SWT has raised more than their “40% funding target”. To date this has enabled SDC to provide certain project partners with exemptions from/amendments to their 40% match funding target and therefore are able to support projects that, firstly, were originally part of the CALLP Scheme and, secondly, additional project.</p> <p>Annex 1 of paper C provided a project by project financial update. Cognisant of this, the following principles were presented and discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove the remaining match funding burden from the delivery partners of following four projects through an additional allocation of NLHF funding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ P27 Artist in Residence (Assynt residency) ○ P32 Isle Martin Croft House ○ AP03 Coigach & Assynt Heritage Signs ○ AP05 Assynt Fisheries Oral Project • Should any match funding applications currently in progress be declined or should the partner decide that awaiting these decisions is placing their project at risk of not delivering in full and on schedule it is proposed they can request additional CALLP financial support. 	

PM stated that he had received a quote for the work on the Fox Point Bothy which was greater than the approved project budget which had been costed in 2015. NLHF had previously stated that they were keen to keep the project in the scheme. PM stated project is ready to start if additional funds are approved. JC highlighted that the Fox Point Bothy complements the Fox Point Path project.

RW queried if project costs could be reduced by removing or reducing any elements of the building work. PM stated that the budget reflected a minimum standard for use and that reducing this would render the building unfit for the intended purposes.

AMFB queried how the bothy will operate. PM stated that he is speaking to a kayaking operator in the area to manage bookings.

Applying the principles agreed in Item 5 – there would be no requirement for the delivery partner to raise additional match funding against this allocation of underspend

b. Annex 2 P25 Achlochan Coastal Heritage (£2,600)

MF stated that additional budget is requested for additional dry stone dyking work to create a barrier to prevent cattle gaining access to the buildings and causing damage. Initially the project had built a fence to protect the buildings, but this had been damaged in high sea swells.

Applying the principles agreed in Item 5 – there would be no requirement for the delivery partner to raise additional match funding against this allocation of underspend

c. Annex 3 P32 Isle Martin Croft House (£12,087.13)

BA stated that Isle Martin Trust were seeking additional budget following an increase in expected costs identified during the tendering process.

PL queried the likelihood of these three projects completing in the time remaining for the scheme, for example whether there any issues with contractor availability. BA stated that the contractors involved with the projects are local and should not be badly impacted by upcoming Covid-19 restrictions.

Applying the principles agreed in Item 5 – there would be no requirement for the delivery partner to raise additional match funding against this allocation of underspend

SR asked BA what risk there was associated with these increased costs. BA stated that the costs related to capital projects and therefore were at risk of increased costs as the projects progress.

MF asked whether approving this use of underspend is more of a question of how much contingency or underspend the scheme should retain for future emergencies.

LG stated that although approving all 3 requests would leave a small amount of underspend in reserve, SWT had over-fundraised against their target and therefore had

	<p>access to additional money that could be used to contribute to future emergency increases in budgets, the use of which would be subject to approval by SWT.</p> <p><u>Decision: SDC approves all 3 budget requests, pending approval from NLHF.</u></p>	Decision 5
	BREAK 15 minutes	
7	<p>Project Changes</p> <p>a. P11 Sustainable Deer Management – Deer Larder Brief</p> <p>RW presented a paper outlining the proposal to add the replacement and upgrade of a modern fit for purpose deer larder at Glencanisp Lodge to the Venison Marketing & Community Engagement section of the Sustainable Deer Management Project. Following the removal of the former chiller this replacement larder will allow for the preparation and chilling of deer carcasses prior to game dealer collection, and for a small amount of ‘home’ processing, with all elements available to members of the local community with the relevant skills and experience. JMT will lead this element of the project, be responsible for the ongoing management and maintenance of the unit, and will be working closely with the Assynt Foundation who own the land where the larder would be sited.</p> <p>The proposal has been costed at £48,000 plus VAT where applicable. A minimum of £17,000 of this cost is proposed to come from within the Sustainable Deer Management project, with the remainder of the budget being outwith the CALLP Scheme. The budget within the scheme has already secured match funding and JMT will fully fund the budget outwith the scheme. Previously £10,000 of the venison budget had been allocated to the installation of a new larder. The helicopter count will no longer be taking place and there are other smaller underspends within the wider Sustainable Deer Management project. In the event that estimated costs increase as the project develops, the project is seeking approval to use up to £20,000 of the budget for the new larder.</p> <p>BA stated that the previous larder proposal had been met very favourably by NLHF and NatureScot have indicated support although may not be able to allocate their funding to it.</p> <p>MF expressed disappointment at the removal of a helicopter count from the project due to difficulties in counting deer by foot. FS stated this was due to a change in the view of helicopter counts from NatureScot due to sustainability issues, and the low likelihood of estates contributing funds towards the full cost of the helicopter count. FS stated that NatureScot are investigating new count practices and FS had enquired whether the CALL area could take part in a pilot but that it was not likely to happen before the end of the CALLP scheme. FS suggested if we increased the amount CALL contributed to the helicopter count it could be possible to fully fund the helicopter count but highlighted whether that would offer value for money.</p> <p>CB stated that AF are particularly keen on the additional outcome of the education resource and that the larder is a great location to host information. BA to highlight at NatureScot meeting the educational interpretation aspect of the deer larder proposal</p>	AP5 BA

	<p>and see if NatureScot want to contribute towards interpretation content or if there are any related key messages they would like promoted.</p> <p><u>Decision: SDC approves taking forward deer larder proposal to NLHF and NatureScot for approval, and allocates up to £20,000 of the Sustainable Deer Management Project budget to it.</u></p> <p>b. AP03 Coigach & Assynt Signage – update on changes</p> <p>BA stated that although it was decided at the last SDC to reduce the budget for this project, NLHF had requested that the project install plinths instead of the smaller signs proposed in the lower budget. As a result, the larger initial budget remains in place and the remaining match funding burden has been removed, as agreed earlier in the meeting.</p> <p><u>Decision: SDC approves the reinstatement of the larger budget for AP03 Coigach & Assynt Signage project and remove the remaining match funding burden as agreed in Decision 2</u></p> <p>c. AP05 Assynt Fishery Oral History – Permission to start</p> <p>GS stated that the match funding application had been approved but the details are under embargo by the funder. GS requested permission to start subject to the match funder granting permission to start once the embargo is lifted.</p> <p><u>Decision: SDC approves permission to start for AP05 Assynt Fishery Oral History, subject to the match funder granting permission to start</u></p>	<p>Decision 6</p> <p>Decision 7</p> <p>Decision 8</p>
<p>8</p>	<p>Any Other Competent Business</p> <p><u>Lochinver Deer Fence</u></p> <p>EM stated that following a community survey on a deer cull in Lochinver support appeared to be growing for a deer fence around the village and asked 1) if her time could be spent developing possible solutions with the understanding that it may not directly relate to planting trees, and 2) if approximately £10,000 could be used from the Woodland Project budget or scheme underspend to pay for the proposed fencing works.</p> <p>The proposed fencing works would improve the condition of the fencing around Culag Woods, linking and carrying out maintenance on existing fences behind the village, linking fencing to existing cattle grids, and assessing whether there could be a grazing scheme to the North of the village. These improvements to the fencing would lead to better protection of areas of woodland surrounding the village including Culag Woods.</p> <p>BA stated that the proposal seemed to fit within the aims of the LCAP, specifically “provide an example of best practice land management by and for local communities”.</p> <p>CB supported the fencing proposal being part of the Woodland Project but queried whether the survey did show increased support for fencing or just for the cull.</p> <p>SR stated that if this is classed as a new project it would be required to find match funding, as per the principles agreed earlier in the meeting. EM stated that there were no</p>	

	<p>identified potential match funding routes available for work of this nature and so would need to be part of the Woodland Project.</p> <p>BA to ask NLHF if the Lochinver deer fence proposal would be permitted within the Woodland Expansion project.</p> <p><u>Request of SDC minutes from member of the public</u></p> <p>BA stated that the neighbouring landowner to Eisg Brachaidh Estate had requested to see the minutes of the SDC meetings. SR stated that the SDC is not obliged to disclose the minutes to the public however it was possible that he could raise a subject access request under GDPR and obtain the minutes that way. SR to consult within SWT for a recommendation from their point of view and bring back to the SDC for decision. BA to respond to the landowner saying that the SDC were considering his request.</p>	<p>AP6 BA</p> <p>AP7 SR</p> <p>AP8 BA</p>
9	<p>Date of the next meeting(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 17th November 2020, 10am-12:30pm Zoom SDC 20 · 2nd February 2021, 10am-12:30pm Zoom SDC 21 	