

N.H. OWL Meeting

Monday 2nd March 2020

Scout Hut, Evanton

Present – Simon Harry, Kerry Dolan, Julie Gordon Shirley Anne Stevenson, Gregor Comrie and KY.

Apologies – Karla Urquhart, Petria Brooke-Carr and Julie Brewer.

1. Simon welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Gregor for securing the Scout or the meeting.

2. Matters Arising

(i) Julia McGhee was unable to go ahead with the funding application to S.N.H. on our behalf for funding to celebrate the year of Coasts and Waters as the time scale was too small. She will keep us in mind should any applicable funding be available for our OWL group in the future.

(ii) Tools

Simon has costed out the remaining tools we wish to purchase for the group; the total cost of this will come in around £1,000.00. We are happy for Simon to proceed with this.

The group discussed how we were going to share our tools with the far north of the Highlands. Kerry will get in touch with Susan Watson from Castletown Primary (she has attended one of our C.P.D. events and is a former head teacher) to see if we can get a group of interested head teachers together in the north. Kerry will also talk to Ian Paterson, up in Lairg, to see if he would be interested in heading a group in the far north.

During the OWL networking event Shirley Anne mentioned that most groups adopted the safe working practice for tools and fires laid down by OWL Scotland. There are good practice guidelines available on the OWL Scotland website that our group could adopt when working with groups or to use for training for teachers/P.S.A.s who wish to use our tools but have no previous experience or qualifications in this area.

Simon is working with Mark McKerral; outdoor education officer for Highlife Highland to look at delivering training on tool use.

(iii) Kit

Gregor is going to work with the Glasgow OWL group in devising an online system which allows groups, schools or individuals to borrow kit and record when the kit is in use, where it is and when it will be returned. Great networking Gregor!

Julie asked if it was possible for groups who wish to use the consumable kit (clay, withies, card and paint etc.) to pay for the items used by way of an honesty box left in the cupboard. This will save people having to order up kit or having the expense of travelling to Inverness. It would also ensure that paint wouldn't split if left unused for too long. We would have to get a price list together for each item. We will discuss this further at the next meeting.

(iv) C.P.D. Events

Art

The willow workshop scheduled for Saturday 29th of February was unfortunately cancelled as we only had an uptake of 3 interested people. Simon asked why we thought this was. Kerry thought that we had to extend our advertising of events. She suggested that we advertise future events through Highland Council C.P.D website and our group page on the OWL Scotland website. Julie suggested that we plan our C.P.D. events annually and advertise them altogether and produce small flyers that can be distributed to schools. Shirley Anne had talked to fellow OWLS at the OWL networking event and this is what the majority of groups seem to be doing.

We will plan to do all of the above once we have our events and dates organised. We aim to start our calendar in May and run to the following April.

Literacy

Simon has secured the services of the Creeping Toad for 18th and 19th of May this year. It was suggested that we host both days in Spinningdale & Migdale woods as he had delivered training in Evanton last year. We intend to have Gordon deliver training for teachers on one of the days and for children on the other. We are delighted to have Gordon back to deliver his inspiring and unique literacy workshops.

Science

Simon will arrange a date in June to deliver the Rocket Making C.P.D. event this will take place in Milton Woods.

We will ask Marcia if she would be willing to deliver a Tree Identification in Winter workshop in November/December.

Jenni Martin of Wild things (Findhorn) will get a list of C.P.D. training that she can deliver to Simon. This will be wonderful for planning future events.

Kerry also suggested that we consider Dan Puplett for C.P.D. events as he had delivered 2 cracking workshops at the OWL networking event. Dan delivers training on naturalist skills, bushcraft, environmental education and wildlife conservation.

3. Milton Woods

The Milton community have formed a committee who are working to get Milton woods back as a community owned and run woods. The bank account from the previous group has been frozen due to unpaid fines. The new committee need £4,500.00 to unfreeze the account, be in a position to access the £3,000.00 currently sitting in the account and have a working bank account.

Simon suggested that we help the Milton community with this problem. Milton woods is currently used by the Men's Shed, Milton Primary School, Milton Nursery School, the general public, Tain Academy and N.H.S. Highland.

Simon suggested that we draw up a legal agreement and that N.H. OWL pay the £4,500.00 and that Milton pay us back the £3,000.00 they have in the account. This would mean that we donate £1,500.00 to Milton Woods and allow the committee to continue to secure the woods. The group unanimously agreed to lend this support.

4. Bi-annual Grant

Simon will get in touch with Bonnie Maggio regarding formulating a suitable criterium by which we can offer two £300.00 grants. This would be available for groups or individuals who wish to promote outdoor and woodland learning and experience in the North Highland area.

5. Deputy Treasurer

Julie Brewer will adopt the role of deputy treasurer. This is to ensure that should Shirley Anne be unavailable (lambing, holidays or illness) then our accounts will be looked after. Thank you, Julie.

6. Steel Container

Gregor said that there is a steel container at Invergordon Academy which we can have if we wish. We will discuss this at the next meeting as we were unsure if it would be of value; the container is not ideal for storage as there is condensation issues and it gets very cold in the winter.

7. OWL Scotland Networking Event

Gregor, Kerry and Shirley Anne all attended the event in Aberfeldy on the weekend of February 21st. They attended, between them, Literacy & Numeracy, Tree Identification in Winter, Skull & Bones, Willow Work and Green wood working.

Gregor, Shirley Anne and Kerry thought the folk delivering the workshops were top notch and that they had all learned a lot.

Gregor is now in touch with Juliet Robinson from South Highland OWL who is very happy to support us with administration issues and to share information on our events. Gregor will also liaise with the Glasgow OWL group to get an online borrowing library in place.

Kerry has sent all of our minutes to Bonnie at H.Q. and we will include H.Q. in future minutes. Kerry also managed to deliver an up-date on our group at the event. Shirley Anne found that most groups adopted the safe working practice for tools and fires laid down by OWL Scotland.

Gregor, Kerry and Shirley Anne had a great experience and recommended the weekend to all. Kerry expressed that they were all warmly welcomed and that everyone was keen to offer help and share information.

All three learned how to play Kubb (and not too badly as first timers apparently)!

8. Treasurer's Report

There has been no change in the accounts since the A.G.M.

9. Date of the next meeting will be-

Tuesday 24th March

at 4pm

Scout Hut

Evanton

(opposite Kiltearn Primary School, to the right of the sports hall)