**Outdoor Woodland & learning North East Group Meeting**

**Via Zoom**

**7th February 2022 2pm-4pm**

**Minutes**

**1. Welcome & Apologies**

**Present:** Joanne Evans, Julia MacKay, Lindsey Duncan, Neil Taylor, Caroline Hay-Crawford, Claire Marsden, Estee Farrar, Eric Baird, Simon Whitworth, Frida Mittman,

Jill Birch, Doug Gooday (Aberdeenshire Council Ranger), John Malster.

**Apologies:** Jackie McBeath, Rhona Mowat, Stephen Reeves, Claire Hudson, Mandy Tulloch.

**2. Minutes of previous meeting 4th October 2021, matters arising**

* Freshwater workshop - Jill to look at dates.
* Minutes approved by Julia and seconded by Doug.
* No other matters arising.

**3. Future direction of OWLNEG**

* A new chairperson will be needed at the AGM in March. Doug is interim chair at present.
* New members also needed.
* Tool use workshop planned for October 2021 received no bookings.
* New direction needed.

**4. Members’ survey (John M)**

* A draft survey was sent to some core OWLNEG members for feedback on questions. Feedback being collated.
* Survey needs to be progressed but currently on hold.
* Plan is to issue in Spring 2022 to members when people are more likely to be getting outdoors. group to find out about skills in the group.

**5. Workshops/Events 2022**

* April 23rd/24th 2022 Network gathering - Aller Croft?? For core contributors to meet, brainstorm and share news/ideas/skills. Bring something to share (Skill, activity, poems, songs arts and crafts etc) and food to share around a fire
* May 14th/15th 2022 Cairngorms Nature, Big Weekend. Eric to begin to organise at Glen Tanar, OWLS group to be one group amongst other groups and NGOs.
* May 28th 2022 Bird ID and bird activities for groups: Claire Marsden. Location: TBC.
* May/June 2022. Eric to apply for OWLS special grant funding to run forestry careers event for yr3 Academy pupils at Glen Tanar. Committee approval for this was minuted. Doug and Jill to assist. **Action:** Joanne to confirm with Eilidh that group’s bank balance is not taken into account with special grant application.
* Summer 2022. How to lead rockpool and other beach activities, maybe two events: Sarah Gosden. Balmedie for sandy beach and dune activities, New Aberdour for Rockpools.
* Autumn 2022 (August-October 2022). How to lead a fungal event, Claire Marsden, possible venue Glen Tanar.
* October 19th 2022. Foraging event, Dan Puplett. Suggestion locations: Loch of Blairs, Moray or Foraging Trail, Huntly.
* 15th February 2022. Doug is at Echt School running an event for headteachers on Nature Connection and John is at Midmill School, Kintore running a similar event.
* John is also running willow structure and wildflower workshops and a coppicing day for a community wood in Forgue. Dates TBC.
* Julia is organising an outdoor first aid course in February/March 2022 at Mucky Boots and in September 2022. Action: Doug to forward Julia contact details for booking Bennachie Centre.
* Jill is considering running a Freshwater Biology Day at Glen Tanar.

**6. Branching Out South Aberdeenshire (BOSA)**

* BOSA’s programme 7 was completed at the end of November 2021.
* BO Plus has continued with visits to parks in Stonehaven and Crathes Castle where there has been lots of storm damage.
* Jill is looking into applying for extra funding for travel.
* Programme 8 starts in March 2022. There are 8 referrals so far. Other referrals welcome. Some of the sessions will be based at Birse with Toni Watt. Activities include taking off tree tubes.
* Julia thanked the BOSA partners – NTS and ADA – for all their hard work in making this programme a success.
* Wendy Masterston, Stirling University, is writing a research proposal on the use of green space and BOSA would like to collaborate. This would provide BOSA with independently verified outcomes which could be useful for future funding cases.

**7. Finance**

* OWLNEG balance – December 2021 - £45,212.20p. £17,646.20p has been paid out to BOSA, leaving a total balance of £27,566.00p. TBC, Branching Out balance TBC. OWLNEG only balance TBC. **Action:** JE to email Claire for details.
* Estee Farrar is now our new treasurer.
* **Action:** Estee to review current signatories.

**8. AOCB**

* Julia – volunteering 1 day per week at Loch of Blairs.
* Lindsey – working at Clatt, Tough and Dunecht Schools. Attending OWL Networking Event. **Action:** Doug to send Lindsey OWLNEG update from December 2021.
* Neil – lots of storm damage to clear on FLS sites. Also delivering a SCRA workshop on visitor access.
* Claire – event planning on birds underway. Hoping to reboot local woodland community group. Also BTO work.
* Estee – new OWLNEG treasurer and Bailies of Bennachie work.
* Caroline – completed her coastal activity leader course with WALT. Planning employability outdoors events and family events.
* John – planning wildflower workshops and writing a paper for James Hutton Institute on wildflowers. Doug to lend John billhooks if needed.
* Eric – schools have been in touch with him as well as local eco groups.
* Simon – establishing a wee forest near Woodside School in Aberdeen. This will also be a community project. Leadership of Aberdeen City Ranger Service is being done on a 3 month rotation between Simon and Duncan. Planning summer events with more public engagement project-based events.
* Jill – BOSA work and wee forest in Banchory.
* Doug – school starting to contact Aberdeenshire Council Ranger Service. Biodiversity education being issued soon. You Tube channel with videos on tree planting and maintenance. Summer events programme planning.
* Joanne – working in Elrick School one morning a week delivering an LPP session. Garden design projects. Recently successful in being accredited by Learning Through Landscapes.

**8. Date for next meeting**

AGM meeting is on Monday 14th March 2022 at 2pm on Zoom.

Ordinary meeting will follow AGM on same date.

**9. Updates**

Updates received.

**Stephen Reeves (Dorenell Ranger Service)**

We have been playing catch up with survey work ever since last October so unfortunately haven’t had the time to invest in outreach work. We continue to do a weekly Health Walk in Dufftown on a Tuesday morning which has been a great success and we’ve been getting enquiries in from Speyside High, Grantown Grammar and SRUC Aberdeen for visits from March onwards. We also have an events programme due to come out soon for the first half of the year. Within the next month we’re also planning to advertise for the full-time permanent position, up until now Emily has been working with us on a contractor basis.

**Julia (NESOLG Update)**

We have recently had 5 students complete their FOLA Award, Jackie MacBeath, Lorna Nelson & Megan Primrose C11 Level 8, Joanne Simpson C10 Level 8 and Oonagh Brady C10 Level 5.

We continue to support a few students from C10 with the aim to complete by end March 2022.

We have 20 C11 students working on their Level 8 and 2 on their Level 6 coursework, completion date by end April 2022. There will be no more FOLA training with NESOLG but we hope to see it continue in the safe hands of Mucky Boots.

The Early Years in Nature Programme has also moved over to Mucky Boots.

NESOLG will continue to deliver the Campfire Food & Safety Course.

In partnership with Mucky Boots and Kate Latham we organised a Zoom consultation event which was hosted by Julia Mackay, facilitated by Kate Latham with additional support from Dawn Ewan, Claire Hudson, Natalie Campbell & Mandy Tulloch. The aim of the event was to discuss the current FOLA training and to come up with some new, creative ideas for refreshing the FOLA training.

Kate has written a report which will be shared with all interested partners once its completed.

We have organised a 2 day, paediatric first aid course at Mucky Boots on Sat 26th Feb & Sat 26th March delivered by Jane Hay. W e have only 3 places available.

**Lindsey Duncan**

Continuing to work with Dunecht School running weekly Forest school sessions. The school received funding from a covid relief fund I believe so that has financed these extra sessions.

Continuing to work with Tough School running Forest school sessions.

Dates being arranged for outdoor learning sessions with Clatt School.