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

**Aller Croft, Huntly**

**14th June 2021 2pm-4pm**

**Minutes**

**1. Welcome & Apologies**

**Present:** Joanne Evans, Ian Talboys (Aberdeen City Council Ranger

Service), Jill Birch, Doug Gooday (Aberdeenshire Council Ranger), Stephen Reeves (Dorenell Ranger Service), John Malster.

**Apologies:** Lindsey Duncan, Aileen Salway, Claire Hudson, Julia Mackay.

**2. Minutes of previous meeting 15th March 2021, matters arising**

* Julia made contact with Aberdeen City Council regarding outdoor learning CPD for teaching staff in secondary schools. She had a tel con with Gael Simpson and Erin McGowan and has not heard back anything since from them.
* No further progress on finding a bookkeeper. Possibility of buying bookkeeping software e.g. QuickBooks or Xero.
* No other matters arising. Approved Doug Gooday, seconded John Malster.

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

* JB updated the meeting on BOSA. Pleased to report that BOSA had been able to adapt and successfully continue to run programmes during COVID. This has been recognised with approval from TNL (main funder).
* 6th cohort is nearing the end of their programme. Currently in week 11.
* JB/JM have had to run split camps for the session this time so that there are smaller groups due to COVID. There are 2 groups of 3 participants plus tutors.
* Programme is funding by the National Lottery and ADP for Bryan Duncan’s time. There is funding in place until August 2023 with 4 more cohorts to run (2 per year). There is also some ad hoc funding for projects such as the drystone dyking course recently run. This was funded by ADP South Aberdeenshire.
* JB is looking to make BOSA more sustainable financially going forward. National Lottery is unlikely to fund going forward. JB is looking at research funding grants. JB is taking a webinar on Tuesday 15th June 2021 to find out more. JB is investigating evaluative research links to underpin future funding bids.
* It was agreed that OWLs will continue to help with treasurer support (JB to assist with detailing BO funding grants) until the end of the funding period in August 2023. After this period BOSA will be working independently from OWLS. Further research and discussion for this transition ongoing over next 6 months. SR offered helpful contact at ACVO. **Action:** JB to contact ACVO.

**4. Workshop Events 2021/22**

* No progress on events yet.
* Tools for complete beginners’ course – Doug Gooday – August 2021 TBC.
* Tools for FS leaders progression in skills – Doug Gooday/Justin Dearsley. Location TBC: Murtle. August 2021 TBC.
* Hedge Laying course is back on the programme. Likely to be in Insch. Zoom meeting to plan TBC. Possibly 8 participants.
* Willow Workshop – John Malster – Possible locations – Oyne School, Inverallochy School. Could also produce a video and post online.
* Seed collection – John Malster – possible locations – Duthie Park August 2021 TBC. Twilight session for teachers. Also, Woodhead of Fyvie a possibility but lack of toilet facilities.
* Freshwater workshop – Jill Birch – possible locations: Nordic Centre, Huntly. **Action:** Doug to speak to Alison Sutherland re water activities which have been run at Bennachie before. **Action:** Jill to speak to Welly Walkers re contacts for workshop.

**5. Woods for Learning Grants**

* We will not be offering these this year due to cuts in funding.
* JE is still receiving reports and she was chase previous successful applicants.

**6. Finance**

* Covered in Treasurer’s Report from the AGM. Total balance is £36,486.73, including Branching Out as of 6th July 2021. OWLNEG only balance is £16,128.04.

**7. AOCB**

* Ian T to stand down as Vice Chair as he is retiring from his post in Aberdeen City Council Ranger Service. New person is needed to take over as Vice Chair.

**8. Date for next meeting**

Next meeting is on Monday 4th October 2021 at 2pm on Zoom or at Aller Croft TBC.