

**Falkland Stewardship Trust
Minutes of Meeting of Trustees
Friday, 27 August 2010 in the Stables Workshop, Falkland Estate**

Present: Patrick Laughlin (Chair), John Smith, Peter Burman, Robert Steedman
(Items 5-10 only)

In Attendance: Helen Lawrenson, Lesley McLaren, Tess Darwin, Linda Akeroyd,
Neil Anderson, Amelia Stevenson (item 10 only)

1 Welcome and Apologies

Apologies were received from David Corner and Marietta Crichton Stuart.

2 Minutes of Trustees Meeting Held Friday, 30 April 2010

Were accepted as a true record.

3 Matters Arising

- ***Minute 7 - Stables Development***

PL informed members that he had spoken with DC, NA and Ninian Stuart regarding this matter. All were agreed that this needed to be discussed at this meeting.

4 Declaration of any Potential Conflicts of Interest Relating to Agenda Items

There were no potential conflicts of interest.

5 Strategic Action Plan

NA gave a brief outline of his report and invited Trustees to develop or challenge it. He explained that he had not broached the House of Falkland, as he had been asked not to by NS.

The meeting welcomed the broad thrust of the report and welcomed being given the chance to see "the bigger picture". Discussion focussed however on those elements of the report which fell under the remit of FST.

PB felt that the office working conditions (of Falkland Stewardship Trust employees) needed to be attended to as a matter of urgency. He also went on to say that we should interface much more effectively with the wider world. He questioned whether being called "The Hidden Place" sent out the right messages.

JS felt that if Falkland School moved from a 39 week to a 52 week term, it would be very challenging, as it would not allow us access to the House. He said that the local community are still not sure what happens on the estate, so we should try to get the message across to them as well as visitors from outwith the area.

PL said that he felt "quantum leaps" like those described in the report would be necessary to raise the large financial sums required for the House and Stables.

There was a lengthy discussion on the Stables development. The feedback from our HLF application was provided. HLF had acknowledged the project's benefits to the heritage of the project but felt that the capital costs were too high for the returns described. We could reapply but would have to show improved value for money. We have since spoken with Simpson and Brown and looked at the plans again and have now received an updated cost estimate, although the Stables working group had not met since.

RS expressed his dissatisfaction with the access to, outlook from, and ambience of the Workshop. He felt that a much better meeting space would be created if a new floor

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level was added, with access taken directly from the courtyard, which would become much more of a public space (however, others present liked the current Workshop).

It was agreed that the priorities, in order, were:

- To improve workspace for the team - whilst ensuring that any reconfiguration of the buildings resulted in offices that were fit for purpose and also capable of housing additional/temporary staff in future.
- To progress the development of the front facade buildings as a place of welcome for the public (resurrecting the Griff Boyle plans produced in 2008)
- To see what could be done with the workshop in terms of changing its floor level, entrance route and other aspects.

NA was asked to convene a meeting of the Stables Working Group in the immediate future to take these matters forward. It was recognised that the office element was unlikely to qualify for any grant aid and would have to be financed "internally".

It was also suggested that Trustees would welcome the chance of a tour round the Estate to see the properties and opportunity sites described in the report.

6 The Big Tent

A short film was shown to Trustees before discussions took place. HL reported that the number of visitors had increased - 11,500 came - and that Big Tent was a flagship event for Fife. The new site had been a big success with good audience feedback. Everything had gone smoothly with the exception of the campsite and toilets and there had been no major incidents. Personal effort had increased once again - although regrettably, some volunteers had not honoured their commitments. Big Tent had not had a huge impact on the community/estate and JS said that local feedback was dramatically better than last year. PL reported that there had been lots of positive messages and formally thanked the core team for pulling off such a huge event.

NA said that it had been a great success in terms of people there but pointed out the thin line between financial success and serious failure, and said that the business model needs to be looked at. He went on to say that we should invest in the site infrastructure if we were to go forward with Big Tent.

PB felt that it was a fantastic site but we needed to do better in getting the message across to the wider world regarding stewardship and that he was pleased with the House of Falkland tours that had taken place.

JS said that the organising team had been amazing but had been placed under great stress. He said that lessons had to be learnt if Big Tent was to go ahead next year. Ticket sales in advance would be one way to reduce financial uncertainties.

RS thought that it was tough on staff and too risky financially. He suggested that perhaps we could possibly do alternate years.

PL said that even in this successful year, Big Tent did not give the Trust any financial "nest egg" of the type required for the Stables development. The surplus was only £10,000, and would have been a loss if account had been taken of core staff costs.

Trustees agreed that the financial risks and staff stresses created meant that Big Tent could not be repeated along current lines within the existing organisational framework.

Falkland Stewardship Trust
Minutes of Meeting of Trustees
Friday, 27 August 2010 in the Stables Workshop, Falkland Estate

If the event was to continue (which was felt to be desirable) there would need to be financial safeguards in place and additional staff resources would be required. It was also agreed that even if the event proved to be of interest to commercial event promoters or other organisers, the Trust would want to retain control over the programming elements to ensure the event remained true to its aims.

Staff were asked as a matter of urgency to convene a meeting(s) with principal sponsors/supporter agencies including Scottish Government, Event Scotland, Fife Council and perhaps others. They would be told that despite all of its success in terms of attendance, audience feedback etc, the event simply could not continue to be run by FST under current circumstances.

7 One Planet Food/Research Project

Teresa Martinez, who is now on maternity leave, is in the final stages of her report to the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation, which will be sent to Pete Ritchie for a final edit ready for publishing on 24 November 2010. Trustees agreed that the project should be put on hold for the time being.

8 Bute House Partnership

PL reported that the BHP had met on 24 May 2010 at the House of Falkland. It had been agreed that better communications between the four Houses were required; henceforth, there would be quarterly newsletters produced and one meeting annually held (probably at Dumfries House next year). Opportunities to be explored would include sharing "friends" databases and specialist study tours.

9 Work Plan for 2010-11

Trustees agreed that the formulation of an annual work plan (with budget incorporated) was now a priority and should be produced for approval by the next Board meeting.

Wood project - TD circulated her own work plan and targets, and stressed the need to find a new funder to keep the position going post 2011. We have been awarded £4,000 from the Forestry Commission for training secondary pupils at Bell Baxter High School. JS asked who set the targets; TD explained that they had been created for the various funding applications with input from NS. PL thanked TD for her report.

10 Finance Report

This had been circulated previously, and was noted. AS advised that recent tree surgery work was not reflected in the figures but that a grant had been received for some of the work. She added that there would also be income derived from selling the wood for firewood.

11 Any Other Business

- ***Annual Stewardship Lecture***

It was agreed that it would be desirable to hold the lecture again in late 2010. JS said that it opens up "the hidden place" and the concept is good. It was noted that at that time of year the House was cold and that one way of reducing the heating costs would be to hold the event on a Saturday evening (when the building retrained residual heat). It was also agreed that a Saturday event might attract guests willing to pay a higher price. The preferred date was late November although the school would have to be consulted first.

It was agreed to ask NS to invite Adam Nicholson (Sissinghurst) to deliver the lecture with Robert Sackville-West as the second choice.

**Falkland Stewardship Trust
Minutes of Meeting of Trustees
Friday, 27 August 2010 in the Stables Workshop, Falkland Estate**

- ***New Trustees/Directors***

Whilst it was acknowledged that there was a need to recruit Trustees with additional skills and expertise, it was agreed that there should be a brief moratorium on recruitment until such time as the Trust's future direction had been mapped out more clearly.

12 Date of Next Meeting

Trustees agreed the date of the next meeting as Friday, 3 December 2010.