

ELCV Trustee's Meeting

24th November 2023

Venue: Saltire Room, John Muir House, Haddington

Time: 14:15

Those Present:

Trustees: John Hardy (Chair), Dave Quarendon (Treasurer), Zoe Goldstone, Valerie Brown, Paul Ince, Terry Page (Secretary).

ELC: Dave Wild

Retired Trustees: Dick Gill, Anne Pearson

Apologies for Absence: Anne Watson, Peter Wells, Colin Ballantyne.

1. **Welcome & Opening Remarks:** The chair opened the meeting by welcoming everyone present and stated that he wished to open up a discussion on the purpose of the charity. He had been giving this some thought as a new trustee and considered it could be to organise projects to enhance the countryside in East Lothian. We should not be seeking to build an empire but assist EL Council Countryside Dept and Rangers in order to maintain and enhance the countryside throughout E Lothian

Val Brown stated that she had been invited to discuss the ELVC with Prestonpans and Port Seton Community Councils. The meeting agreed that this was an excellent development.

2. Actions from the Last Meeting:

- 2.1 Volunteer Management System: Dave Wild reported that there had not been any progress to date but there was a meeting in the next fortnight that should allow progress. Dave offered to give the trustees a presentation on the system once a preferred provider had been identified. The intention of the system was to provide a central platform of information on volunteers, tasks, rotas, projects etc. and it would allow easier communication within and between groups in a GDPR compliant manner. The system would be owned by the ELC but, where appropriate, limited access could be given to appropriate volunteers. The incorporation of any VMS system would be subject to funding approval from within ELC.
- 2.2 Purchase of Path Warden Tools and Hedge Trimmer: These have been purchased and received. One hedge trimmer training session had taken place and another one will be organised. Authorisation had been given to reimburse the council for the cost of the tools but, from the accounts, it does not appear if this has happened. Dave Quarendon will speak to Peter Wells to progress the payment. **Action Dave Quarendon.**
- 2.3 Update to the Constitution: This was agreed at the AGM but still has to be updated on the website. **Action: Dick Gill** to send the wording to Dave Quarendon.

3 Progress on Projects

- 3.1 Giant Hogweed Removal: Dave Quarendon noted that, although he had reported to the last meeting that the Tyne & Esk had been cleared, the plant will come back next year and will have to be treated again. The project does not use any ELCV money but it does benefit from 50 litres of weed killer donated by Bayer UK. This would be worth about £500.

- 3.2 Linkfield Salt March 'Dry' Path: This project is being progressed by ELC. It would be too big a project for ELCV to take on.
- 3.3 Seafeld Pond: There will be a need for volunteers to transplant reeds but there is not enough work for a ELCV project. Dave Wild will ask Tara Sykes (ELC Ranger) to feedback on this. **Action Dave Wild.**
- 3.4 Levenhall Floating Islands: There was no new information but the understanding was that ELCV would provide around £300 for materials and the ponds would be constructed by the local Men's Shed. **Action Dick Gill** to contact Eric Macdonald for an update.
- 3.5 Pencraig Information Boards: Costings and an outline have been produced but there has been no further progress. **Action Dave Quarendon** to progress.
- 3.6 East Linton to Pencraig Footpath: Anne Pearson has applied for funding to the Dunbar and East Linton Area Partnership who will discuss the application on Monday 27th December. The maximum they will provide is £5,000 and, on the current estimate, the work will need £6,000. **Action Anne Person** to keep the trustees informed of developments.
- 3.7 Typha Head Collection: Anne Pearson reported that less had been collected this year than last year. She has not yet heard what the value of the collection is. She expected we would be able to repeat the collection next year although there was some uncertainty as the company that uses the material had recently been taken over by another concern.
- 3.8 Spartina Grass at Tynninghame: ELC are discussing with NatureScot what action, if any, should be taken on this invasive species.

4 Overview of the Countryside Ranger Service and the Role of Volunteers

Dave Wild has produced a summary of the ELC Countryside Department that will be circulated separately from the minutes. He stated that the council has a large land holding of 31 sites plus Biodiversity Sites. Most of the sites are SSSIs. He also stated that, at the last count there were 415 volunteers. (Dave Wild has added that the circa 10'000 hours of volunteer time a year that helps the council fulfil its responsibilities and manage Countryside Sites appropriately.)

5 Finance/Banking:

- 5.1 Transfer of Signatories: This is progressing slowly but the authorisations still stand with Dick Gill & Peter Wells.
- 5.2 Transactions Since Last Meeting: Dick Gill reported that there had not been any transactions since the last meeting.
- 5.3 Fundraising Strategy: Zoe Goldstone asked if we had a fundraising strategy. So far, we have not had a strategy and funds have been raised on an ad hoc basis. She suggested that, with the number of houses being built in East Lothian it would be worth approaching the developers for funds. We would need to approach with specific projects and find out what recognition we could offer them.

- 6 Thoughts on Review of EVLC Business Plan**: The trustees agreed that the business plan needs to be revised and Dick Gill agreed to facilitate a discussion by the current

and immediate past trustees to revise the plan. The discussion was scheduled for Saturday 6th January between 10:00 & 12:00 at a venue to be decided. **Action Dick Gill.**

7 AOB:

7.1 Membership Records: Colin Ballantyne has passed the membership list to John Hardy.

7.2 OSCAR: Although the new trustees need to check that there is no reason they would be barred from being trustees we do not have to inform OSCAR of the new trustee names. Terry Page is now the official contact with OSCAR.

7.3 Butterfly Transits: Jen Newcome has asked if ELCV could help with training, equipment and volunteers. **Action Dave Wild** to ask Jen to clarify what would be required.

8 Date & Time of Next Meeting: Friday 26th January 2024 14:00 to 16:00 in the John Muir House (Saltire Room 1)