

Arboricultural Association - Scottish Branch

Minutes of the Scottish Branch Committee meeting held at The Hawes Inn, South Queensferry on 6th March 2018

Present: Donald Rodger - Chair (DR), Fiona Melville - Vice Chair (FM), Robert Paterson - Treasurer (RP) Ken Harvey - Secretary (KH), Alan McDowall (AM), Will Hinchliffe (WH) and Nick Porter (NP).

1. **Apologies for absence:**

Apologies received from Struan Dalglish (SD), Stuart Leith (SL), and Jeremy Davies (JD) .

2. **Minutes from the last committee meeting.**

Minutes of the 2017 AGM of 27th January were approved, and are up on the Scottish Branch page of the AA website.

3. **Officers' reports.**

3.1 **Chair.**

DR started by welcoming Nick Porter to the Committee. Otherwise he didn't have anything in particular to say, but said there were several points he would raise relating to certain agenda items during the meeting.

3.2 **Secretary.**

KH said he has been trying to ascertain whether the Forestry Commission were intending repeating their presence at last year's Royal Highland Show where they had a large tent with CSGN, Confor, RSFS, ICF and Scottish Woodlands also being represented. If so, he would try to find out if The Arboricultural Association could also have a presence. He will report back in due course.

3.3 **Treasurer.**

RP said that the Branch's bank balance stood at £200 and was awaiting reimbursement of £50 spent on the Dr Tom Hall Literary Prize awarded at the AGM. The AGM at Dumfries House had cost £1064.12. This included £790 for the venue hire and catering, £224.12 for the Ken Martin Award, and £50 for the Dr Tom Hall Literary Prize.

He has sent out an email asking event organisers not to have invoices raised in their names in future, but to make sure they are made out to HQ instead. This will avoid personal liabilities.

He is seeking the agreement of HQ's financial controller to increase the Branch's float to £500, instead of the current £250.

4. **Links with the ICF in terms of promotion and sharing training programs in Scotland.**

This item had been raised by SD who was not present. It will therefore be carried over to the next meeting.

5. **Possible RBGE excursion for members, with a tour of the herbarium and archives as a joint RBGE/branch event.**

WH has suggested a Spring excursion to Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE) which would be split between

the archives and the tree collections. The archives have many important old books, photographs etc. of trees including David Douglas' telescope and letters. All agreed this would be a good visit. There would be no cost for the tours but if catering was required that would have to be paid for. It was suggested those taking part could bring their own picnic lunch.

Action: WH to suggest possible dates and progress matters.

6. 2018 Branching Out event.

The event (originally to have been held on 5th & 6th March) was postponed due to the extreme weather conditions which would have been prohibitive for many attendees. It is now to be held on 3rd & 4th June. A discussion followed on points the Branch would like raised at the reconvened event. RP said he would like to see the Branch Manual updated, as it hasn't been since 2014. WH would like to explore the possibility of the Association running Risk Assessment / TRAQ courses in Scotland and getting potential instructors based in Scotland trained to deliver the courses.

7. Keith Sacre Seminar

Suggested by FM, this could be along similar lines to the BS8545 one Keith presented previously. Topics would need to be confirmed, and it would probably require another presenter as it would be too onerous for one person on their own. Possible subjects of interest to arboriculturists were discussed, possibly to include updates on tree selection and production, the use of i-tree in the UK with a focus on operational inventory conversion, the work of TDAG, tree planting including discussions on below ground engineered solutions. All agreed this was worth investigating further.

Action: FM to speak to Keith and report back.

8. Scottish School of Forestry

FM will be attending the proposed courses on BS3998 and Approved Contractors Workshops to be run on 21st March. She will be meeting with Stewart Wardrop, Paul Smith (AA) and Dr Elizabeth Barron-Majerik of Inverness College. They will be discussing the future involvement of the Association with the SSF, who are struggling to run arboriculture courses (e.g. HND Arboriculture) as there is insufficient interest. This appears to be a major issue as there is little formal training currently available in Scotland. All agreed there is a need to review arboricultural education in Scotland and that The Association needs to be promoted in the colleges, but this is something best left to the Association's Education Committee.

Action: FM to report back after the meeting.

9. "Hazardous Trees - A Practitioner's Guide".

Following on from the successful seminar held with Chris Simpson in September last year, all agreed that there is clearly a demand for this course and we should run it again. Chris is agreeable but we would have to pay him this time (he did not charge last time). It should be run at the same venue (Stirling University) as before, as it was entirely suitable and would save having to organise a new venue. Late August or early September would be best. RP suggested that HQ should handle all the arrangements and booking this time.

Action: FM to speak to Chris Simpson about dates.

10. Calendar of proposed events.

Following on from the discussions, we have a possible Spring excursion to RBGE, a repeat of the "Hazardous Trees - A Practitioner's Guide" seminar, and a possible seminar with Keith Sacre. SD has suggested a visit to Haddo House in Aberdeenshire for an Autumn excursion, possibly in October. AM said he would be happy to run

the Climbing and Rigging Workshop he organised in November last year again, but said it would be better arranged for late summer this time. DR asked if all concerned could try to firm up dates for these events.

11. ARBmagazine articles.

There was a discussion about who should take over the editor's role following Mike Charkow's departure from the Committee. NP volunteered to take it on on a trial basis initially. DR thanked him for this.

12. Any other competent business.

WH suggested organising a coach, starting from Inverness, to visit the ARB Show on 11th & 12th May at Westonbirt. There is camping available at the venue.

13. Date & venue of next meeting.

Tuesday 1st May at The Hawes Inn.