

Fife Coast and Countryside Trust Board of Management Meeting

Kinghorn office

Friday 19th September 2025

In attendance: Jill Miller (JM- Chair), Jeremy Harris (JH), Sheila Boardman (Treasurer, SB), Cllr. James Leslie (JL), Robbie Blyth (RB), Fiona Partington (FP), Sarah-Jane Latto (SJL), Caroline Warburton (CW), Phil Teale (PT), Suzanne Roberts (SR), Rhona McInroy (RM), Sarah Lonie (SL), Neil McCormick (NMc), Margaret McArthur (MMC) Zane Priekule (ZP-Minutes)

Apologies: Ed Heather-Hayes (EHH), Cllr Brian Goodall (BG), Cllr Colin Davidson (CD), Cllr Fiona Corps (FC)

1. Welcome and Apologies

JM welcomed all. Apologies were noted from EHH, BG, CD and FC

2. Declaration of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest noted for any agenda items of this meeting.

3. Minutes of previous meeting

The meeting minutes were adopted as accurate and were approved by CW and seconded by JL.

4. Matters Arising

JM provided an update on the previous Board meeting actions, confirming that 5 have been completed and 3 remain in progress.

SL offered to provide legal advice on the Directors Handbook, if needed.

5. Health & Safety Report

RB presented the Health & Safety report, highlighting staff participation in training courses such as Outdoor First Aid, Pesticide Application, and machinery refresher sessions. RB reported 4 incidents involving accidents or near misses, 3 vehicle-related accidents, and confirmed that no complaints/aggression, or RIDDOR cases were recorded.

NMc commended FCCT for effectively managing NHS sites and staff during the busy season. NMc highlighted that NHS has a dedicated staff member responsible for providing support and training on managing public aggression and anti-social behaviour. NMc offered to organise a Toolbox Talk with the FCCT team on this topic, referencing the relevant policy document.

PT praised the FCCT team for their efforts in maintaining Fife's beaches during the busy summer season, noting he had received numerous compliments.

SL echoed the praise for FCCT, commending the installation of disposable BBQ refuse points on the beaches. JL inquired about the management of the Aberdour Silver Sands site, to which RB responded that, despite occasional challenges, the team has upheld the high standards of this popular location.

Actions:

- RB to liaise with NMc to organise Toolbox Talks addressing aggression and anti-social behaviour
- FP to check if the H&S policy contains a statement explaining the Boards role in regards to H&S

6. Risk Register Review

JH spoke to the risk register noting 6 existing risks rated as moderate and 1 changed risks.

7. Director's Handbook

JH initiated the discussion by proposing printed copies of the Director's Handbook be made available at the next meeting. SL recommended a paperless approach, suggesting digital copies instead. JH agreed to provide digital format, allowing members to request a printed version if required.

SL noted that the Articles are well referenced in the Handbook which makes the information more accessible in this format. CW pointed out typographical errors in the Handbook, and JH invited her to share the details so that corrections could be made.

JM added that the handbook remains open to adaptation and will continue to evolve through ongoing discussions, serving as a guiding resource for fulfilling the role of a Board Director.

JH requested Board Members submit changes or ideas regarding the format or content of the Director's Handbook within the next two weeks (by 3rd October) so a final copy could be disseminated for further discussion scheduled for the December 2025 meeting.

Actions:

- CW to provide detail on errors in the Director's Handbook so that amendments can be made
- Board Members to provide feedback/changes/amendments to Director's Handbook by October 3rd 2025

8. Committee Reports

SR provided a summary of the Communications & Fundraising meetings, highlighting 5 ongoing actions and 4 completed ones. SR noted that the previous meeting involved extensive action planning aimed at strengthening Board Members' support for FCCT and advancing the organisation's narrative.

CW raised the impact of AI on website usage and offered FCCT the opportunity to review her employer's AI policy. A discussion on AI usage followed.

Decision: The Communication & Fundraising Committee Terms of Reference were unanimously approved by the Board.

JM presented a summary of the HR & Remuneration Committee meetings, noting one action in progress and one completed. She highlighted that the policy review table included in the papers illustrates the volume of work undertaken and the number of policies under consideration. JH suggested adding this to the Board papers.

Actions:

- FP to include Policy Review Table in next HR & Remuneration minutes
- JH & JM to confirm process for staff to contact trustees if required as per whistleblowing policy

Decision: The HR & Remuneration Committee Terms of Reference were unanimously approved by the Board.

SB presented a summary of the Audit & Finance Committee meetings, noting 3 completed actions and 4 being in progress.

Decision: The Audit & Finance Committee Terms of Reference were unanimously approved by the Board.

PT left the meeting 11:40am

9. Executive Team Reports

FP presented the Support Services report, noting progress on the development of the Staff Handbook, a policy review scheduled for completion by year-end 2025, and the organisation of new training for line managers on updated performance management processes.

JH commended FP for her exceptional management of the new mobile phone launch, which involved navigating numerous unforeseen technical challenges.

FP presented a Support Services video she created for the Staff Training Day held in May 2025.

SJL presented the Conservation & Engagement team report, highlighting 6 green and 3 amber sections. SJL noted that the delivery of the Biodiversity Action Plan, in partnership with FC, has been postponed from November 2025 to January 2026. FCCT site management plans are on track for completion by year-end, and further discussions with RB are required to ensure adequate staffing for busy sites next season.

SJL expressed gratitude to Tom Quayle (TQ) for his outstanding work during her maternity leave.

SJL reported that the Trust has delivered 40 community events, engaging over 900 participants, and 36 volunteering events totalling 1,207 hours. In response to SL's enquiry about volunteer sources, SJL explained that FCCT draws from a pool of 200 registered individuals and corporate partners, particularly for larger events. JH added that volunteer coordination is managed by a single part-time employee. SL requested that the next meeting include a calculation translating volunteering hours into a monetary value to reflect the contribution added to the Trust.

JL left meeting 12:12pm

SJL went on to note the successful meeting with Donald Mcleod, Executive Director of Education to discuss FCCT involvement with outdoor learning activities.

JH and car parks managed by FCCT, and noted that Aberdour Silver Sands car park has been added to FCCT's portfolio, with plans to install ANPR.

RB also acknowledged Jim Bell's retirement, expressing appreciation for his dedication and many years of outstanding service to FCCT.

JH presented the Development report, noting 5 green sections and 1 red. RM recommended reclassifying the Fife Coastal Path (FCP) section to amber due to the absence of funding. JH responded that FCCT continues to meet FCP objectives through funded initiatives such as new signage. RB noted the dynamic nature of the coastline and unpredictable weather conditions.

CW suggested that Board Members consider strategically promoting or redirecting visitors to the Fife Pilgrim Way, which has greater capacity for footfall.

RM requested further information on the Fife Environment Bank (FEB) and its potential impact on the Trust. JH explained that several legally viable operational models for FEB are currently under review to determine the most suitable approach.

Action: SJL to include in the next committee papers a calculation converting volunteering hours into a financial benefit, to demonstrate the contribution added to the Trust.

JH praised SJL for successfully converting numerous amber-rated areas to green in the report, recognising rapid progress.

RB presented Operations report, highlighting 4 green and 1 amber sections. RB discussed challenges with the Ardross Sea Wall project, citing the shoreline management plan's insufficient consideration of severe natural erosion. RB announced £1 million in funding from FC for refurbishing public toilets

10. AOB

SL enquired about the ongoing dispute between a landowner and FCCT regarding car parking, seeking assurance that there is no conflict of interest involving her employer. JH confirmed that no conflict exists.

A discussion followed regarding the most suitable date for the next meeting in December. It was agreed that the next meeting will take place on 12th December 2025, with the venue yet to be confirmed.

Action: FP to change the next Board Meeting date to be 12th December 2025

Meeting ended 12:50pm

Next meeting: 12th December 10am TBC

Summary of Actions & Decisions:

Actions:

- RB to liaise with NMc to organise Toolbox Talks addressing aggression and anti-social behaviour
- FP to check if the H&S policy contains statement explaining the Boards role in regard to H&S
- CW to provide detail on errors in the Director's Handbook so that amendments can be made

- Board Members to provide feedback/changes/amendments to Director's Handbook by October 3rd 2025
- FP to include Policy Review Table in next HR & Remuneration minutes
- JH & JM to confirm process for staff to contact trustees if required as per whistleblowing policy
- SJL to include in the next committee papers a calculation converting volunteering hours into a financial benefit, to demonstrate the contribution added to the Trust
- FP to change the next Board Meeting date to be 12th December 2025

Decisions:

- The Communication & Fundraising Committee Terms of Reference were unanimously approved by the Board.
- The HR & Remuneration Committee Terms of Reference were unanimously approved by the Board.
- The Audit & Finance Committee Terms of Reference were unanimously approved by the Board.