

Fife Coast and Countryside Trust Board of Management Meeting

Kinghorn office

Friday 20th June 2025

In attendance: Jill Miller (JM- Chair), Jeremy Harris (JH), Sheila Boardman (Treasurer, SB), Cllr. James Leslie (JL), Ed Heather-Hayes (EHH), George Eaves (GE), Fiona Partington (FP), Tom Quayle (TQ), Caroline Warburton (CW), Cllr Brian Goodall (BG), Phil Teale (PT), Sarah-Jane Latto (SJL), Neil McCormick (NMc), Zane Priekule (ZP-Minutes)

Apologies: Suzanne Roberts (SR), Robbie Blyth (RB), Rhona McInroy (RM), Sarah Lonie (SL), Cllr Colin Davidson (CD), Cllr Fiona Corps (FC)

1. Welcome and Apologies

JM welcomed all

- Apologies were noted from SR, RB, RM, CD and SL
- JM welcomed SJL who remains on maternity leave but is attending as part of one of her 'keeping in touch' days.

2. Declaration of Interest

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

3. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were noted as accurate by CW and seconded by SB.

4. Matters Arising

JH reviewed the actions, noting one completed—renaming 'aspirational targets' to 'targets' in the strategy document — and one in progress: EHH's upcoming presentation to the board on the Nature Finance Fife/Fife Transition Lab.

5. Health & Safety Report

GE reported on Annual Health Surveillance checks, noting the NHS has purchased new lawnmowing equipment at Lynebank Hospital to reduce HAVS risk. Health and safety assessments have been completed, and new working practices introduced for staff operating on slopes and embankments. NM observed improved H&S awareness within NHS teams since partnering with FCCT, crediting the success of the collaboration.

JH highlighted the development of partner supported water safety signage.

GE reported 4 minor vehicle accidents and 1 accident at work.

No RIDDOR cases were reported in the period.

6. Risk Register Review

JH spoke to the risk register noting 5 existing risks rated as moderate and 2 changed risks. JH noted ongoing evolution of the Risk Register and a need to conduct a more focused review with staff and board in coming months.

7. Nature Finance Fife/FIRNS 3

EHH spoke to a slide deck noting success in receiving FIRNS (Facility for Investment Ready Nature in Scotland) round 3 funding. The presentation will be circulated to all trustees for reference. Discussion followed.

EHH reiterated that through this large-scale project, FCCT aims to drive a long-term agricultural transition that enhances climate resilience, supports nature, and benefits both communities and the broader economy.

CW commended EHH and JH for their contributions to the project and inquired about FCCT's capacity to manage the increased responsibilities and administrative demands, as well as the support required to ensure successful delivery. JH confirmed that this was a key consideration in moving forward but that the current project activity was sufficiently resourced. EHH acknowledged the significant workload required over the next nine months to successfully implement the project.

JH acknowledged that as Nature Finance Fife gains momentum, additional resources will be required to manage increased workload. He proposed that FCCT's Trading Arm might be well suited to serving this function, providing the secretariat to support delivery of projects with profits returned to FCCT. JH invited Board Members to contribute their ideas regarding the structure of this activity and how to best use FCCT's trading arm Countryside Services Fife Ltd.

JM proposed including a FIRNS 3 project tracker in the next Board Meeting papers to assist trustees in identifying specific opportunities for contribution.

BG noted that a brief summary of the project and progress to date, that quickly provided an overview of both the successes and strategic intent would be helpful for Board Members to share with interested parties.

Actions:

- EHH to send the presentation slides to all trustees
- EHH to include FIRNS3 update as part of Board Papers
- EHH/JH to produce a consolidated overview of Nature Finance/Landscape-scale regeneration work for trustees to use in their public engagements

8. Board Member 1:1s

JM shared a summary document capturing insights from individual meetings held with trustees, noting their varied skill sets and strong commitment to supporting FCCT and their appreciation for FCCT staff. Several recommendations were submitted for consideration as part of the summary paper.

JM proposed extending Board Meetings to 2.5 hours to ensure sufficient time to consider all items and incorporate specific items of interest from different parts of the FCCT team. The proposal was unanimously approved by all members present.

JM also proposed a dedicated session for Board Members to focus on their governance of FCCT, and it was agreed that a session would be planned around the Board meeting in December 2025. A revised copy of the Directors Handbook will be circulated as part of the Board Papers at the next meeting to provide context ahead of the meeting in December.

JM also confirmed that further review of FCCT's strategy was scheduled for the first Board meeting in 2026 to check direction of travel and ensure the Board was satisfied with activity and performance against agreed targets.

JM noted that CEO performance was also a core responsibility of the Board, led by the Board Chair, and that this was in hand and would be aligned with the regular review by the CEO of the Senior Management Team.

Actions:

- FP to include Revised Director's Handbook in September Board Papers
- JH/SMT to make plans for an extended (full day) session with FCCT Board and staff in December in support of good governance/the role of trustees

Decision:

- JM/JH to plan future meeting agendas with allocated times for each item. The available time will be extended to 2.5 hours

9. Committee Reports

JH spoke to Communications & Fundraising papers noting 3 complete actions and 2 progressing.

JH spoke to HR & Remuneration papers noting 1 completed action and 1 progressing action.

SB noted one ongoing action in the Audit & Finance papers and confirmed the permanent adoption of the £50k trigger for full tender that had been piloted. SB thanked JH for the smooth onboarding of the new Finance Manager (Margaret McArthur, MM), and it was recommended the postholder attend the next meeting of the Board.

CW requested the specific figure for car parking income noted in the papers. SB identified the figure and proposed revising future reports to show car parking income as a clearly marked standalone item.

Actions:

- MM to attend next Board meeting
- MM/SB to identify parking income as a standalone figure in future Audit and Finance Committee Reports and Board Papers.

10. Executive Team Reports

FP spoke to Support Services noting good or satisfactory progress across all reporting standards. FP noted the shift to paperless remains ongoing but will alter it to green as progress against this task is acceptable.

TQ spoke to the Conservation & Engagement team report noting good or satisfactory progress across all reporting strands.

GE spoke to the Operations report noting good or satisfactory progress across all reporting strands.

EHH spoke to Development report noting that noting that the Trading Subsidiary implementation now follows a clearly defined plan.

Action: FP to change 'Going Paperless' task in the Support Services Report from Amber to Green

10. AOB

FP reminded members to complete Identity Verification and confirmed that Board Papers will be issued on Monday to allow additional preparation time.

As this will be TQ's final board meeting, JM expressed gratitude to him for his contribution during SJL's maternity leave and acknowledged his dedication to the organisation in keeping the department moving in the right direction. His final day with FCCT will be the 25th of August 2025 and thanks were noted from the full Board and Senior Team.

Meeting ended: 12:23pm

Date of the next meeting: Friday 19th September 10am-12:30pm

Summary of actions & Decisions:

Actions:

- EHH to send the presentation slides to all trustees
- EHH to include FIRNS3 update as part of Board Papers
- EHH/JH to produce a consolidated overview of Nature Finance/Landscape-scale regeneration work for trustees to use in their public engagements
- FP to include Revised Director's Handbook in September Board Papers
- JH/SMT to make plans for an extended (full day) session with FCCT Board and staff in December in support of good governance/the role of trustees
- MM to attend next Board meeting
- MM/SB to identify parking income as a standalone figure in future Audit and Finance Committee Reports and Board Papers.
- FP to change 'Going Paperless' task in the Support Services Report from Amber to Green

Decision:

- JM/JH to plan future meeting agendas with allocated times for each item. The available time will be extended to 2.5 hours