

Fife Coast and Countryside Trust Board of Management Meeting

The Old Manor Hotel, Leven

Friday 21st March 2025

In attendance: Stephen Carter (SC- Chair), Jeremy Harris (JH), Jill Miller (JM), Suzanne Roberts (SR), Sheila Boardman (Treasurer, SB), Robbie Blyth (RB), Rhona McInroy (RM), Cllr. James Leslie (JL), Ed Heather-Hayes (EHH), Cllr Colin Davidson (CD), Fiona Partington (FP), Sarah Lonie (SL), Tom Quayle (TQ), Cllr Fiona Corps (FC), Caroline Warburton (CW), Cllr Brian Goodall (BG), Zane Priekule (ZP-Minutes)

Apologies: Neil McCormick (NM), Phil Teale (PT)

1. Welcome and Apologies

SC welcomed all

- Apologies were noted from NM and PT
- SC congratulated FP for 2 years of service at FCCT

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 with one amendment to the day of the week the meeting was held (Monday changed to Friday), proposed by CW, seconded by JM and adopted as an accurate record with the amendment.

4. Matters Arising

JH spoke to the actions noting 5 completed actions and 4 actions progressing. JH noted that SC is retiring after this meeting with JM being the Chair going forward.

JH spoke to Aspirational Targets noting 6 targets that have changed, 6 that have remained unchanged and 4 that are under review. Discussion followed noting a change in some targets from qualitative to quantitative and vice versa. RM suggested targets be regularly reviewed and JH confirmed they would be reported on quarterly, with priority placed on amber or red according to RAG reporting. RM also suggested the removal of the word 'aspirational' suggesting the targets simply be fully adopted. This was agreed. JM suggested further work to identify quarterly goals associated with targets as appropriate and that action plans or alterations to the targets could be looked at by the Board if quarterly targets were missed. JH confirmed that changes to targets constitute a strategic shift and would be brought to the Board for consideration and approval.

Action:

- JH to change 'Aspirational Target' terminology to simply 'Target'.

Decision:

- Progress against each Target is to be reported on highlighting any target that is amber/red or any significant proposed changes.

5. Health & Safety Report

RB spoke to the report that was submitted. He noted progress on Annual Health Surveillance checks, HAVS assessments and Hearing Loss testing. RB stated that staff have also undertaken Pesticide Training.

RB reported 4 minor vehicle accidents, 2 workplace accidents, and 1 incident.

No RIDDOR cases were reported in the period.

RB continued noting ongoing safety improvements to outdoor infrastructure, including replacing the boardwalk in Earlshall Muir and addressing safety issues with a Single Span Bridge in Tayport.

6. Risk Register Review

JH spoke to the risk register noting 6 existing risks rated as moderate and 2 changed risks. JH Noted that Asset Replacement has been removed as a risk due to the allocation of capital funding by Fife Council, going on to note his thanks to Fife Council for this essential funding, particularly in light of the significant financial pressure the Council is under.

7. Committee Reports

SB spoke to the minutes of the A&F Committee and the corresponding actions. She outlined the position for FCCT following the approval of the Fife Council Budget that included funding for the replacement of FCCT's vehicles and people counters along with a temporary 1-year continuation of the additional £100k in support of FCCT's operations.

SB went on to note that the case for an additional £200k of revenue funding from Fife Council had been well-made but was unsuccessful. SB went on to explain that discussion at the A&F Committee in this regard resulted in a recommendation that the FCCT Board be requested to consider allocating unrestricted reserves in support of FCCT's strategy to achieve greater financial independence. Further detail was provided in a paper entitled *FCCT Budget Proposals – 2025*. Discussion ensued.

Motion: SB & JH move that FCCT Board approve the use of unrestricted reserve funding up to a maximum value of £200k in the financial year 2025/26 in support of FCCT's strategy to develop and attract additional revenue.

Decision: The motion was unanimously passed.

JH noted that improvements would be made to the budgeting process with a draft 26/27 budget being presented for adoption to the Board as early as possible in Q4 of 25/26 (subject to confirmed figures being made available by FC).

JH also noted that FCCT Finance Manager Lynn Mackenzie will be retiring in June 2025. The Board made a point of noting their thanks for the exceptional work Lynn has done over the years managing the finances of FCCT.

SC & JH spoke to the minutes of the HR & Remuneration Committee noting the actions completed.

JH also spoke to the results of the staff survey, highlighting key lessons and next steps. Discussion followed.

8. Executive Team Reports

FP spoke to the support service report noting good or satisfactory progress across all reporting strands.

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

RB spoke to the operations report noting good or satisfactory progress across all reporting strands.

BG left the meeting (12pm)

EHH spoke to the Development report noting good or satisfactory progress across all but 1 reporting strand.

EHH highlighted that activation of the Trust's trading subsidiary is yet to happen. Noting that work is progressing well with Nature Finance Fife and progress towards an operational blended finance model is good. EHH went on to explain that current thinking is that FCCT's trading subsidiary may be a good vehicle for delivering a component of this work. SL requested a separate meeting for EHH to provide more details about Nature Finance Fife and the lessons learned from the Dreel Burn Project.

Action: EHH to propose a separate session for Board Members on lessons learned through the Dreel Burn project, and the future direction of Nature Finance Fife/Fife Transition Lab.

9. AOB

JH noted that this was SC's final meeting as a member of the FCCT Board of Directors. JH presented a trophy and gifts to SC in recognition of his years of service. JH noted that the trophy marks the establishment of *The FCCT Chair's Cup for Service* and is to be an annual award for service open to FCCT Staff, Board, and volunteers.

SL left the meeting (12:30pm)

SC spoke to his long service with FCCT and expressed his pleasure in passing the baton to JM as the new Chair. Going on to note that he has felt immensely proud to see the organization flourish during his tenure and foresees an exciting future for FCCT.

Date of the next meeting: Friday 20th June 2025 at Kinghorn Coastal Office

Summary of actions & decisions:

Actions:

- JH to change 'Aspirational Target' terminology to simply 'Target'.
- EHH to propose a separate session for Board Members on lessons learned through the Dreel Burn project, and the future direction of Nature Finance Fife/Fife Transition Lab.

Decisions:

- Progress against each Target is to be reported on highlighting any target that is amber/red or any significant proposed changes.
- The motion to approve the use of unrestricted reserve funding up to a maximum value of £200k in the financial year 2025/26 in support of FCCT's strategy to develop and attract additional revenue.