

## Sleat Community Trust Environment Advisory Group

1<sup>st</sup> June 2020, 7.30 pm, Zoom meeting

Present: Peter Roberts (chair), Alan Drever, Ade Stokes, Catherine de Vries, Chris Pendlebury, Dorothy Jackson (minutes).

Apologies: Roger Cottis

Ade Stokes introduced himself and was warmly welcomed to the Environment Advisory Group.

### 1 Minutes of the last meeting

The meeting discussed and revised the proposed MOU between SCTEAG and SCT. There was no other business. The final MOU was approved by the SCT Board on 28th April 2020.

### 2 Proposed EAG activities

- a) Beach cleans could be considered when the council skip becomes available again, providing suitable distancing was observed. On hold pending relaxation of COVID-19 social gathering rules.
- b) Invasive species. Catherine noted invasive *Gunnera* along the forestry track between Ardvasar and the Clan cottages, and along the footpath next to the Ardvasar Road. It grows rapidly, competing with native flora and can block drainage ditches. Other members noted Himalayan balsam around Kilmore Church, Japanese knotweed in various locations and *R. ponticum* in the copse by Ostaig old campus. Himalayan balsam spreads by seeds, and so must be tackled before mid-August. It is potentially the most invasive of the species.

It was decided to draft a leaflet on invasive plant species for householders in the first instance (Dorothy, with input from Catherine) and, when the COVID-19 emergency conditions have resolved, to contact Clan Donald about possible collaboration to tackle invasives on Clan lands (Catherine). EAG members are asked to send examples of existing leaflets and relevant information to Dorothy.

- c) Winter programme. Realistically, meetings are unlikely to be possible until next year, so this subject will be revisited towards the end of 2020.

### 3 EAG chair and Tormore volunteer co-ordinator roles

Peter will be stepping down after 6 years, leaving the roles of EAG chair and Tormore volunteer coordinator vacant. Peter was warmly thanked for his work, and appreciation was expressed for his representation of the EAG at the SCT board.

Chris Pendlebury will take over the Tormore volunteer coordination, under the umbrella of Sleat Renewables which has responsibility for managing Tormore forest. Peter and Chris to coordinate the transfer of information prior to the next Tormore work day on 14<sup>th</sup> June, in collaboration with Polly.

As the EAG members present at the meeting all have many other commitments, the discussion about the EAG chair focussed on how this role could be shared. It was proposed that co-chairs, or a chair and vice chair - to ensure backup is available when needed - could be drawn from a small subgroup of members who are willing to act as chair and to represent EAG to the board either in person or by sending in reports. Alternatively, or in addition, there could be a rota of 2-3 meetings at

a stretch, so that individuals do not have to take on a full year commitment. Catherine and Ade expressed willingness to take on the chair role providing there was sufficient flexibility and sharing of the work. EAG members who were not at the meeting are also welcome to join the subgroup of people willing to act as chair on a flexible basis.

EAG members will continue to carry out much of the work of the group, including organising talks and events, providing environmental advice to SCT and increasing environmental awareness in the community. Dorothy will continue as secretary, and Chris will take over the kitty.

This issue will be discussed further and a decision taken at the next meeting.

**4 Proposed date of next meeting:** Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> August.