

**Minutes of the Committee Meeting of the Federation of Cumbria Commoners at 7.00 pm
on Tuesday 7th February 2017, Threlkeld Village Hall**

Present: Joe Relph (Chairman), Carl Walters, Ernest Coulthard, William Steele, Dave Smith, Viv Lewis, (Administrator), Tom Lorains, Charles Raine, Duncan Ellwood, Jim Campbell

Apologies: John Rowland, Mark Jenkinson, Julia Aglionby, Andrew Humphries, Pauline Blair

1. **Previous Minutes:** the minutes were agreed.
2. **Matters arising**
 - a. **Research on commoning:** Andrew Humphries has been in touch with Charles Scott, Newcastle University
 - b. **Constitution:** it was set up with elaborate voting arrangements for local representation but as it is difficult to get local representatives to put themselves forward these have not been used in recent times and may not be necessary now. It was agreed to inform members at this year's AGM that the committee will be reviewing the constitution and any changes will be presented for ratification at the 2018 AGM.
 - c. **Hefts mapping project:** Mervyn Edwards is progressing well with this work. Action: Viv will meet Mervyn to discuss the work.
 - d. **FOI: SSSI and consent to graze:** NE is having to go through a European process called 'Review of consents' so we expect the process to speed up somewhat. Agreed that we need to get the consents to graze for those commons where their HLS expires in 2019 onwards **Action:** Viv to compile a list and follow through with Ewan Nugent.
3. **Finance update** - the books are with the accountant for auditing for the AGM. As noted we made a loss of £2,134 last year. It is expected that the rise in membership subscription to £20 per year will offset this loss.
4. **AGM arrangements** – agreed to meet for lunch at the Sun Inn, Newton Reigny before the AGM. Viv to circulate menu.
5. **Commons Council progress update** – held three meeting for Chairmen of CAs with over 70 people attending - generally a positive response from members. The latest newsletter with a long article on commons councils has been sent to all members. Agreed that committee members will try to keep up this momentum in their own CAs and when talking to other commoners and refer them to the Facebook page and website for more information. The next event is the AGM.
6. **Other updates:**

Lake District National Park – Glenridding Common – on 10th February Viv and Julia are meeting the outgoing CEO of John Muir Trust, Stuart Brookes; the Chairman of the Board Peter Pearson and Pete Baron (formally LDNP ranger) who is now employed by JMT to discuss JMT's ambitions and approach to the management of Glenridding Common. Martin Curry of LDNPA will also attend,

LDNPA Farming Officer/Task Force – second round of recruitment is underway with an advert circulated internally within the LDNPA last Friday 3rd Feb. If no internal candidate is recruited it is likely there will be a joint recruitment process with the National Trust who are also recruiting for a Farming Officer. These roles are similar but distinct. We are asking for at least one of the interview panel members to be involved with FCC.

Andrew Herbert is calling a farming get-together meeting as a follow on from the Uplands Alliance meeting at Newton Rigg in January. On the agenda will be Post Brexit policy, Natural Flood Management and the Defra25 year environment plan with the proposed Catchment Pioneer in Cumbria. **Action:** Viv and Joe to attend.

BPS payments on commons - From Monday 6th February 2017 commoners will be put directly through to the RPA Commons Team when they ring the RPA Helpline. This is a most welcome development as it has been frustrating for commoners not to be able to speak to someone who understands their claim. As of 2nd February RPA stated they have made payments on 85.2% of 2016 BPS claims that include common land. This leaves approximately 550 commoners still to receive a payment for 2016.

National Trust: Thorneythwaite –a meeting is planned for late February between Farmer Liaison Group and NT, date not circulated yet.

BBC North Inside Out programme – Viv appeared for the FCC in a short film about graziers concerns with the NT's actions at Thorneythwaite.

Uplands Alliance meeting at Newton Rigg in January was attended by a number of committee members.

7. **Work plan 2017** – agreed that currently FCC has enough on its plate with restarting the Commons Council , along with reacting/ holding conservation organisations to account
8. **AOB - Livestock movements on commons** - committee member wanted to know if Defra had brought out updated CHP guidance on sheep movements on commons. **Action;** Viv to check

Date of next meeting: brief meeting after AGM on March 3rd 2017