

**Minutes of the Committee Meeting of the Federation of Cumbria Commoners at 7.30 pm on
Tuesday 8th December 2015, Threlkeld Village Hall**

Present: Joe Relph (Chairman) Carl Walters, John Rowland, Ernest Coulthard, Duncan Ellwood, Harry Hutchinson, Julia Aglionby and Viv Lewis (Administrator)

Apologies, Robert Benson, Andrew Humphries, Pauline Blair, Dave Smith, William Steele, Jim Campbell, John Turner, Ian Gorst, Charles Raine

- 1) **Previous Minutes:** the minutes were agreed.
- 2) **Matter arising:** Livestock record keeping meeting EU's requirements – noted that we have not received any feedback/ proposals from Natural England since the meeting in July
Action: Viv to e-mail Naomi Oakley and Clove Porro to request an update
Research: Viv has contacted Natural England for access to information from UELS/HLS schemes with limited response.
Action: Viv to follow-up and find if it is possible to obtain this information. Viv and Andrew to meet to develop research work
- 3) **Chairman's Report:** Attended LDNP Farming and Forestry Task Force (FFTF) meeting with Julia. Noted that LDNP as usual has been poor at engaging with, or listening to farmers, but asks for FCC's support/endorsement for their work. Examples discussed:
 - a) At FFTF meeting Julia expressed her disappointment that she and Andrew had not been sent the latest version of the nomination document despite writing sections for the document as requested by LDNP.
 - b) Carl mentioned that Andrew Herbert has not taken up his suggestion to get in touch with Viv about sponsoring the newsletter. Viv will follow-up
 - c) WHS logo: Julia and Viv attended two meetings regarding WHS communications/campaign on 22 October and 10 November with other members of the farming community. We all expressed our misgivings about their plan to use the Herdy Company to develop the WHS logo. These were not heeded and they launched the logo. We (and others) have challenged this decision and this is currently under investigation by Steve Ratcliffe.
In summary, FCC is tiring of the way LDNP needs the farming community to deliver its ambitions but gives it gives little back. FCC is reviewing and challenging the way it works with LDNP. .
- 4) **Finance and Admin:** Currently £31,973.15 in the bank. Most subs have been paid now; H & H Land have agreed to pay the postage for the next newsletter.
Action: Viv to chase up the unpaid subscriptions
- 5) **Updates.**
 - a) **Commons Council:** The report was submitted to Defra on 2nd November, Viv has a phone call scheduled with Grant McPhee on Thursday 10th December and will report back to the committee via e-mail. Grant McPhee is leaving Defra at the end of the year. Agreed Viv to write a letter to Rory Stewart asking him ensure that resources are made available for Defra to maintain expertise on common land.
 - b) **FOI request to NE on consents to graze on SSSI commons** – some progress has been made and we have now requested information on all the common land managed by FCC members.
 - c) **LDNP Ecosystems accounting:** Viv attended a meeting to review the initial findings of a pilot Ecosystems accounting exercise for the Lake District (one of four pilot areas). The study using national datasets estimated the total money flows of ecosystems services in the Lake District is £179,265,507, but noted there are big gaps in the data and a need for local refinement of this data to increase accuracy. This is the first time this type of accounting has been done. It is a useful first step, but caution is needed when interpreting the results. The full document is not available to the public yet.
 - d) **National Trust GIS mapping;** Alice Richards of NFU is attending steering group meetings representing the farming community. Alice is circulating agendas and minutes of these meetings and asking for input/comments. This arrangement is working well and we are kept up-to-date with the work.
 - e) **Planning Enquiry White Moss Common:** Viv sent in an objection and we have been asked to speak at the enquiry. Agreed that we should do so. Who will take this on will be decided nearer the time as no date for the enquiry has been set yet.
 - f) **Implementation Part 1 commons Act 2006:** Defra have given Cumbria County Council a grant of £250,000 to support implementation. Julia talked to John McCreesh, Cabinet Member for Environment to make him aware of this arrangement.

- 6) **Date and planning for next AGM** – date **4th March** 2016 at Newton Rigg; theme Commons Councils. Joe is willing to stand again as Chair but we need to consult the constitution to see if this is possible. As usual the AGM notice letter will invite nominations for committee members. Ernest Coulthard will ask if Mark Jenkinson of Hartley and Crosby Ravensworth is interested in coming on the committee. It was agreed at last January's Committee meeting to put resolution to the members at the 2016 AGM to increase the subscription to £20.
- 7) **Delayed BPS payments:** Although it is clear that farmers will not receive BPS payments for farms with common land until next February at the earliest. It was agreed that FCC will write to Minister George Eustice to complain about the delay in payments and to request that RPA looks for mechanisms to pay farmers with commons land earlier next year so they are not at the back of the queue.
Action: Viv to write the letter
- 8) **Dartmoor Commoners HL15** – Carl was recently in Dartmoor meeting Dartmoor commoners. They raised their concerns about how HL 15 Seasonal Livestock exclusion supplement has been implemented on Dartmoor. The situation is unfortunate as it is creating divisions between commoners in Dartmoor but we understand that a resolution is being found. This is unlikely to affect Cumbria as the interpretation of HL15 has been stricter.
- 9) **Our Common Cause: Our Upland Commons:** Julia provided a brief update on the progress of the Heritage Lottery Fund bid. The development phase bid will be submitted in February 2016. The project will cover a number of Cumbria commons along with commons in other parts of England.
- 10) **RSPB Haweswater Management Plan:** copies of the plan were handed out. RSPB plan to have a meeting to launch the plan on 25th February, 2016 at Bampton Memorial Hall. Committee members are invited.

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 2nd February 2016, 7.00 pm at Threlked Village Hall to be confirmed