

# **The Scottish Wild Land Group**

A Registered Scottish Charity SC004014

## **Report and Accounts for the year to 31 March 2017**

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## **Campaigning for Scotland's Wild Land**

# **The Scottish Wild Land Group**

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**The Scottish Wild Land Group is a Scottish Registered Charity, number SC004014. It is a membership body, which welcomes new members who support Scotland's wild land.**

### **Charity Trustees**

General control and management of the Scottish Wild Land Group resides with the Steering Committee, the members of which are therefore the "Charity Trustees" for the purposes of The Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005. They are elected annually by the members in general meeting.

During the year to 31 March 2017, the Steering Committee comprised:

Beryl Leatherland – Co-ordinator

Tim Ambrose – Treasurer

Dr Calum Brown – resigned 27 November 2016

Grant Cornwallis – Membership Secretary

Dr Ken Brown – resigned 27 November 2016

George Charles – Editor, Wild Land News to Spring 2017

Dr Pete Ewing

Dr James Fenton – Editor Wild Land News from Spring 2017

Bill Stephens – elected 27 November 2016

Chrissie Valuri – resigned 27 November 2016

Peter Willimott – elected 27 November 2016

### **Constitution**

The Scottish Wild Land Group is an independent unincorporated association. Its purpose and constitution are set out in a written document, a copy of which may be obtained from the Treasurer. The Group is a member of Scottish Environment LINK, an umbrella organisation for Scottish environmental and conservation charities.

### **Recruitment of Charity Trustees**

The trustees of the Scottish Wild Land Group comprise the Steering Committee which manages the activities of the Group. The Committee welcomes communication from members and the public. The Steering Committee is elected by members at the Annual General Meeting, to which all members are invited, and welcomes nominations to join the Committee.

### **The purposes of the Scottish Wild Land Group**

As set out in the Group's constitution, the Group is a campaigning body, which aims to protect and preserve Scotland's wild land. It publishes Wild Land News, a magazine sent free to members and to

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politicians and other decision makers to highlight issues threatening Scotland's wild land, and to generate discussion and educate the public on land conservation matters. The Group encourages sound effective planning policies to protect and enhance wild land, and supports those local communities that nurture good land management. Its activities carry a clear public benefit, aiming to preserve Scotland's wild land for future generations to enjoy and appreciate.

### **Main activities and achievements during the year to 31 March 2017**

We are in a situation in Scotland where many changes that have the potential to impact on wild land, hopefully positively, are pending. These include the implementation of the Land Use Strategy, the creation of a Land Commission, a forthcoming Planning Bill later this year, an updated National Performance Framework, a possible new Vision for the Uplands, a possible Moorland Forum, and new powers for communities to shape their local areas via Community Empowerment. We will participate as fully as we can in all discussions and consultations, either as SWLG or in association with our partners in the Scottish Environment LINK network.

One thing has changed - the Scottish Government now speaks of "inclusive growth", instead of "sustainable economic growth", although this as yet hasn't been officially defined so the implications of this aren't clear.

The protection of wild land interests has been as resource demanding as ever. Several proposed hill-tracks and other developments have been commented on or objected to where this is, in our opinion, justified. Correspondence on these can be seen on our website. One disappointment this year was that our letter of objection to The Highland Council on the development proposal to construct a permanent track at the ski facility in Glencoe was ineffective. Despite receiving many letters of objection on various grounds, the Council granted permission for the track, albeit with several conditions attached. We will have to monitor delivery on these, and I would urge keen walkers among the membership who could help by doing a site visit occasionally and taking photos, to get in touch with us.

Although we now receive Section 36 energy proposals and scoping opinion requests for comments, disappointingly we have not as yet managed to engage with the work involved in submitting detailed responses, due principally to lack of capacity. We did, however, give support to the John Muir Trust in their valiant endeavours to oppose the granting of permission for the Stronelairg wind farm. Members of the Steering Group also wrote to the Scottish and Southern Energy Board members and Chief Executive advising them of the reputational risk to themselves of pursuing the Trust for inflated legal costs.

Through our role with the LINK Hill-tracks campaign we have been alerted to many inappropriate hill roads, tracks, hydro scheme tracks and other development proposals by the growing and dedicated team of volunteers involved in the weekly scrutiny of local authority online planning portals. The campaign's activities have been widely advertised and as a result even more members of the public than in previous years - and some SWLG members - have contributed sightings, photos and other

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details. All of these are investigated and the relevant local authorities are contacted where there is concern about a particular track and its construction.

Earlier this year we raised funding from the Scottish Mountaineering Trust, the British Mountaineering Council Access and Conservation Trust, LINK and the member charities of the campaign and this enabled us to employ a part time consultant to assist with collation and the next phase of the campaign.

Mel Nicoll, who also works part time for the John Muir Trust, was selected from a gratifyingly strong field of applicants. Mel's campaign update is displayed on our website.

We continue to work with other NGOs via the Groups and sub-groups in the LINK network, on planning, landscape issues, wildlife matters and wild life crime. Our Treasurer is also the LINK treasurer and our Convenor is the co-convenor and depute convenor of LINK sub-groups. Such participation is invaluable to a small voluntary charity like ours in keeping up to date, engaging in advocacy and being involved in the issues of the day that may affect our core interests.

The 2016 AGM was held in Bridge of Allan, in the parish church hall, which was an excellent venue and cost effective. Our main speaker was Nick Kempe, who runs the Parkswatch website, who spoke about his concerns over inappropriate developments in the National Parks, including badly constructed hydro tracks. Earlier in the year, Nick had accompanied the Steering Group members on a very useful site visit to upper Glen Falloch to view the damage caused on the ground and inadequate restoration associated with the many schemes there.

There have been two editions of Wild Land News, in the Spring and very recently this Autumn. The first was edited by George Charles, who has since had to resign from the role due to other commitments. James Fenton very gallantly took on the task, and produced the Autumn edition.

The Steering Group had a healthy membership and two new members were recruited at the 2016 AGM, Peter Willimott and Bill Stephens. With the resignation of Chrissie Valluri due to the increased demands of a growing family we would be appreciative of additional members considering whether they could join us.

Membership has remained stable over the year, and lapsed members have been chased up by our Membership Secretary Grant Cornwallis. Plans are afoot to advertise our work more widely to achieve a modest increase in recruitment and this is in the capable hands of Pete Ewing.

### **Wild Land News**

Issues were published Autumn 2016 and Spring 2017, just after the end of the financial year.

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### **Scottish Environment LINK**

SWLG is an active member of Scottish Environment LINK which is the forum for Scotland's voluntary environment organisations, with over 35 member bodies representing a range of environmental interests with the common goal of contributing to a more environmentally sustainable society. Both the SWLG Coordinator and Treasurer are Trustees of LINK.

### **Policy on Reserves**

The Group aims to retain reserves around the level of one year's gross income, to ensure adequate funds to meet day to day expenses, and a sufficient level of continuity. At present, funds exceed this level, which is welcome as it would enable the Group to embark upon a larger project or objection. All funds are available for the general purposes of the Group. During the year the Group's income exceeded its expenditure by £3,675, (2016, deficit £2,657), leaving unrestricted reserves at 31 March 2017 of £13,029 (2016, £9,354).

Beryl Leatherland – Co-ordinator

25 October 2017

# **The Scottish Wild Land Group**

## **Accounts and Report for the year ended 31 March 2017**

### **Report of the Independent Examiner to the Trustees of the Scottish Wild Land Group**

I report on the Accounts of the Scottish Wild Land Group for the year ended 31 March 2017 in accordance with the terms of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005, “the Act”, and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 – “the Regulations”. The Trustees consider that the audit requirement of Regulation 10(1)(d) does not apply.

### **Respective responsibilities of Trustees and Independent Examiner**

As the trustees of the Charity, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. It is my responsibility under S 44(1)(c) of the Act to examine these accounts, and to report whether particular matters have come to my attention.

### **Basis of Independent Examiner’s Report**

My examination is carried out in accordance with Regulation 11, and includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity, and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeks explanations from the trustees concerning such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

### **Independent Examiner’s statement**

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:-

- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements to keep accounting records in accordance with Section 44 of the Act and Regulation 4; and to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records; and to comply with the accounting requirements of the Act and Regulation 9, have not been met; or,
- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Martin RW George, ACA  
c/o One Kingsway, Cardiff, CF10 3PW

25 October 2017

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<b>INCOME</b>	<b>Year ended 31 March 2017</b>	<b>Year ended 31 March 2016</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Membership subscriptions and donations	6,101	3,478
Advertising in Wild Land News	-	182
<b>Total Income</b>	<u>6,101</u>	<u>3,660</u>
 <b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
<b>Expenditure on charitable activities</b>		
Printing Wild Land News - 1 (2) issues	1,376	3,129
Postage - WLN and general	356	1,543
Stationery and Website costs	125	151
SCENES	182	204
Posters	-	36
 <b>Donations relating to charitable activities</b>		
Scottish Environment LINK sub.	100	100
Contribution to JMT Stronelairg Judicial Review	-	750
LINK Hilltracks research	200	
 <b>Governance and administration expenses</b>		
AGM and meeting expenses	73	296
PayPal and Bank charges	14	19
Administrative assistance	-	89
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<u>2,426</u>	<u>6,317</u>
<b>Surplus/(Deficit) of income less expenditure</b>	<u><b>3,675</b></u>	<u><b>(2,657)</b></u>

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**STATEMENT OF BALANCES AT 31 MARCH 2017 and 2016**

	<b>31 March 2017</b>	<b>31 March 2016</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Opening Unrestricted Group Funds	9,354	12,011
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	3,675	(2,657)
<b>Unrestricted Group funds at the year end</b>	<b><u>13,029</u></b>	<b><u>9,354</u></b>

**Represented by balances at the year end**

RBS Current Account	13,177	11,012
PayPal account	138	262
Receivables	-	457
Liabilities and Accruals	(286)	(2,377)
	<b><u>13,029</u></b>	<b><u>9,354</u></b>

Approved by the trustees and signed on their behalf by  
JMT Ambrose MA FCA CTA(Fellow) - Treasurer SWLG

25 October 2017

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### **Notes to the Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2017**

#### **Basis of preparation of the Accounts**

The accounts comprise an Income and Expenditure Account, recording receipts and payments including receivables and accruals, and a Statement of Balances at the year end, in accordance with the requirements of The Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006, “the Regulations”.

#### **Accounts – Independent Examination**

As the Group has gross income less than £100,000 pa, it has prepared this statement of account in accordance with the provisions of Regulation 9. As required by Regulation 11, the trustees have appointed an independent examiner to examine the accounts, and to report to them. His report is attached.

#### **Unrestricted General Funds**

The Group’s funds are held without restriction, to be applied for the general purposes of the Group.

#### **Charity Trustees**

No remuneration or other benefit was paid or provided to any of the trustees. Direct out of pocket expenses, such as postage costs incurred on the Group’s activities, were reimbursed, but no reimbursement of travel costs to Steering committee meetings was made. There were no transactions between the Group and the trustees or any persons connected with them.

The Independent Examiner received no remuneration for his services to the Group. The Group is extremely grateful to the Independent Examiner for his work and report.