

SCOTTISH WILD LAND GROUP

Draft Minutes of 2016 AGM

Held at the Parish Church Hall, 12 Keir Street, Bridge of Allan at 2.00pm

The Convenor welcomed everyone to the 2016 AGM.

1. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Dr Ken Brown, George Charles, Chris Creswick, Kevin Lelland, Helen McDade, Peter Pearson, Keith Pennyfather and Hugh Tooby.

2. Minutes of the 2015 AGM held at the Stirling Court Hotel, Stirling University Campus on 6th December

James Fenton had been omitted from the apologies notifications as well as from the list of Steering Group members. These corrections would be made. Apart from those two changes, the minutes were proposed as an accurate record by Tim Ambrose and seconded by Pete Ewing.

3. Matters arising from the above minutes: there were none that were not covered elsewhere on the agenda

4. Convenor's Report; The report had been circulated as hard copy just before the meeting as well as having been posted on the website. The main points included concerns over the continued attrition of wild land, despite the sustained efforts of the NGO sector, possible implications for the environment and biodiversity of the Brexit vote, the concern over the decision over the Creag Rhiabach wind farm where 6 of the turbines were to be sited in a Wild Land Area, satisfaction over the Stronelaig decision although this had been on a legal technicality rather than the merits of the arguments and its proposed siting in a Wild Land Area, our support of the JMT in their work and legal cases relating to this, the continuing work on Hilltracks, and the support we receive from membership of the LINK network as well as our contributions to the organisation. During the year we held a site visit to view the proposed site of Stronelaig with the campaign group Keep Rannoch Wild, a very successful event organised by Hugh Tooby. Despite the dreadful weather which thwarted one of our speakers, James Fenton, in his valiant effort to reach us, the 2015 AGM had been well attended. The AGM was held on the Stirling University campus, followed by an interesting talk by Helen Anderson which generated a lot of discussion. The Convenor thanked the members of the committee for their work, commitment and support over the year. A special mention in this context was for George Charles who had volunteered to edit the magazine when Calum Brown, our excellent long standing editor and social media and website expert had had to stand down from the Steering Group due to pressure of work.

5.

6. Treasurer's Report: The accounts were presented by the Treasurer Tim Ambrose. It was emphasised that the overall deficit is up due to subscriptions and donations being down. Ongoing annual deficits would not be sustainable. Tim stated that there was a need to chase up lapsed members and recruit new ones. There was some discussion, including a doubling of the membership fee, but it was suggested by the Convenor that we would need to give the members more service to justify this although the £5 membership level was not cost effective given current postage and printing rates. In addition Tim pointed out that there would be time and expense implications for getting all the direct debits changed [and those not dealt with chased up] and this might outweigh the subscription increase if that were to be modest. A further suggestion was to advertise in magazines whose readership would be interested in our aims and Pete Ewing offered to contact the editors of Mountaineering Scotland and the TGO with a view to presenting articles that might increase our profile but would incur little cost. Pete agreed to explore his ideas. The Special edition "Windfarms Gone Wild" had been very successful in bringing in donations but had been a huge effort to produce. Exposure at the Mountain Film Festivals was also suggested as a possible route to increased recruitment, although Tim usually has a stand at the Dundee Mountain Film Festival [but not in 2016] and felt that the effort involved did not justify the outcome, but with a different approach and with more support this could be considered. The accounts had been audited byand Tim explained the background to this as our usual Auditor had sadly passed away during the year. Tom Leatherland proposed the accounts should be accepted and this was seconded by James Fenton.
7. Membership Secretary's Report: Grant Cornwallis described the work done in chasing up lapsed memberships, [many of whom renewed when reminded], changes of address and so on and the time this took. He also described what he did to ensure the magazine was hand distributed widely especially to retail outlets such as outdoor shops, accommodation providers and elsewhere. Grant emphasised that the frequency of new editions is important; as it is only with new editions that we get useful access and visits to the shops. He suggested that it might be better to produce thinner magazines in order to produce them more frequently. The Glenmore Lodge cafe is a particularly good outlet, and 3 shops in Aviemore take them. The MBA takes them to put into bothies. He urged the AGM attendees to take a few copies and ask local establishments such as libraries and doctors' and dentists' surgeries to put them on display.
8. Election of Steering Group: all the current members as listed below were prepared to continue in their roles
 - Convenor: Beryl Leatherland
 - Treasurer: Tim Ambrose
 - Membership Secretary: Grant Cornwallis
 - Wild Land News Editor: George Charles
 - Members: Chrissie Valluri, Pete Ewing, James Fenton

Tom Leatherland proposed that the office bearers should continue in their roles and this was seconded by Pete Ewing. In addition, there was a request that members volunteer to be on the Steering Committee, or, if they preferred, to attend a couple of Steering Group meetings before being co-opted. Additional members of the Steering Group were needed to help with

IT tasks and social media, and scrutinising renewable energy planning applications. SWLG is now registered as a non-statutory consultee with the Energy Consents Unit of Scottish Government and we receive scoping opinion requests and other papers for Section 36 energy proposals, but as yet we have not had the capacity to engage.

Peter Willimot offered to become involved as he had more time now that his terms as Chair of the Munro Society had been fulfilled. In addition, a member who was a retired environmental planning consultant,....., from the Lake District offered to join the group

9. AOCB: There was none.

After a brief break for further refreshments, Nick Kempe gave an excellent and well illustrated presentation on the impacts of renewable energy developments in Scotland with an emphasis on run of the river hydro plants, especially in the National Parks. This prompted a good discussion. The meeting finished around 5pm and everyone rallied round to help clear up the hall.