



Gargunnock Community Trust Ltd.

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AGM 2022 Minutes 27 October 2022 Held at Gargunnock Community Centre

Present

Directors:

Douglas Johnston, Mairi Christie, Jill Patrick, Geoff Peart, Stuart Ogg, Steve Barnet, Gavin Fleming, Jonathan Park, Crawford Gordon.

Trust members

Jane Arneil, David King, Edmond Mansion, Dave Penman, Jackie Campbell, Barabra Linklater, Martin Linklater, Ian Young, Alan MacMillan, Alison Younger, Fiona Johnstone, Harry Burt,

Apologies

Gill Bell, Iain Gulland

Introduction

As the Trust does not presently have a chair SO welcomed all those attending the AGM and explained that the trustees had agreed that the Chair's report would be divided up amongst those with responsibility for specific areas of the Trust's business.

Minutes of Previous AGM 21 October 2021

As meetings secretary, SO invited the meeting to confirm that the minutes were an accurate record of the AGM held on 21 October 2021. SB proposed adoption of the minutes and this was seconded by GF so they were duly approved by the meeting and formerly adopted as an accurate record of the 2012 AGM.

Matters Arising

There were no further matters arising from the previous AGM minutes.

Report on Trust's activities

Community Centre

DJ provided an update on the Trust's aim of achieving a carbon neutral Community Centre. Progress had already been made with the installation of a new heating controller allowing the system to be controlled remotely, the hot water system had been pressurised and linked to the biomass boiler, and the insulation in the roof had been increased. Additional actions will see the introduction of LED lighting throughout the building and the installation of 28 solar panels for which full planning permission has been approved thanks to the intervention and support of local councilors. In addition, given the recent increases in energy prices it is proposed to install a battery at the same time as the solar panels. All this has been supported by a CARES grant of £20,725 plus a further £5,181 from the Gargunnock Windfarm Fund.

Village Shop

DJ explained he had been the Trust's representative on the Shop sub group along with Community Council representatives and others from the community. Currently there is no knowledge as to whether there is a buyer for the shop premises. However, whoever takes the shop building on will have to invest to make it fit for purpose as the insurance reinstatement after the fire was very basic. The roof requires insulation and upgrading. The business plan presentation to the community in May 2022 was used to bid for grants with the grant application still in progress. Funding is being sought from the UK Ownership fund and the Inspiring Scotland – Rural & Islands Communities ideas Fund with other possible sources being considered including the Scottish Land Fund and CARES Net Zero Scotland.

Glebe Park

Pond Group

Dave Penman explained that the pond project is currently about two thirds complete. The ponds and dipping platform are in-situ and these have been 'road tested' by the Brownies. The dead hedge and related works will be completed soon. Dave thanked the Windfarm Fund panel for helping to finance the project and for the extra support given to ensure its completion.

Bee Group

The Bee group, having secured additional funding from the Windfarm Fund panel and Stirling Council, increased the number of hives with some now located up near the water tank above the village. They have had a very successful year and expect to reach around 500 jars of honey. These will be sold and the money reinvested in maintaining the hives. It was noted that new members of the group were very welcome and there were two opportunities for Duke of Edinburgh students to get involved.

Paths Group

Gargunnoch to Stirling Active Travel Route.

GP explained that the work set out at last year's AGM had continued with progress having been made with the Gargunnoch to Stirling travel route. Sustrans methodology for planning, designing and developing a path is being followed. Work on Stage 2 of the project – the Concept Design – undertaken by Sweco continued through the second half of 2021 up to May 2022. Agreement to proceed to this level had been obtained from Touch and Gargunnoch Estates. The Concept Design shows the line of the route in detail, land take, location of key structures [bridges, culverts, etc.] and field access arrangements.

Community engagement is a key element of the Sustrans approach. An exhibition was held in the Community Centre in March 2022 and a village survey carried out in April 2022. Both indicated a high level of support for the project. Regular updates are also provided in the Bugle. Given this progress, the Trust applied to Sustrans in May for further grant aid for the next 2 stages of the project – Detailed Design and Technical Design. The application was successful with £500k being allocated to the next phase, although there has been a delay in the programme due to ongoing discussions with Stirling Council regarding the practical support required to progress landowner agreements. There has also been changes in Sustrans personnel which held up some outstanding funding approvals. The hope is that recent developments have freed up the blockages to get the project back on track.

Kings Highway

Part of the justification for the Gargunnoch –Stirling route is that it would be the first stage of a larger project to link the western communities of the Carse. This idea – known as the Kings Highway – has origins in work by NatureScot and Stirling Council a decade ago, however, no action was taken. Following interest from communities along the Carse who were developing their own cycle paths, a Kings Highway Development Group has been set up and plans to raise the profile of the project put in motion. This involved contact with the local MP, MSPs and Councillors and strong expressions of support were received. Despite this, little progress has been made to date, although at a recent meeting with Stirling

Council we understand that TACTRAN [Tayside and Central Scotland Transport Partnership] are undertaking some feasibility work on the route.

Beeches Path

An unsuccessful application was made to the Scottish Government's Improving Public Access IPA] scheme in 2021 for a grant to reconstruct the Beeches Path. A further application for a more limited improvement was submitted in 2022 but required renewed landowner consent which was not forthcoming in time. It is now proposed to pursue improvements through the Paths for All - Ian Findlay Fund.

Hill Paths Study

Concern about the condition of the hill paths has been expressed for several years and the Paths Group had done some gorse removal and had plans for improved signposting. Against this background, Windfarm funding was obtained to enable ACT Heritage to be commissioned to assess the feasibility of route and gateway improvements. The final report was received in September 2022 and will be assessed by the Paths Group once volunteer resources allow.

Charlie's Loan

Following funding of materials from the Windfarm Fund, work started, under the management of Pete Rowell, on the upgrading and re-routing of Charlie's Loan, a core path linking Main Street to Leckie Road. A new 51 metre section has been added, avoiding the old steps which had significantly deteriorated and constituted a potential safety hazard. The remainder of the original path has also been resurfaced. In total there were 13 work parties held amounting to 140 hours of voluntary effort. Some minor repair work is necessary due to heavy rainfall damage and the seat has yet to be installed. The support of Stirling Council was noted as it provided a digger and driver to clear the path and provide some of the materials.

Other Paths

Problems of serious deterioration have been identified with parts of Ladies Walk and the path past Watson House. The Paths Group intend to carry out repair work to these paths using village volunteer labour and Windfarm funded materials when weather conditions in Spring 2023 permit.

Paths strategy

The Windfarm Panel invited the Trust to produce a paths strategy so that each application for path funding could be seen within a context. A strategy was produced with the following priorities - to ensure existing paths are fit for purpose and then to extend other paths as resources allow. The aim being to improve activity levels and wherever possible ensure paths are, as far as possible, accessible to all abilities.

All these path developments are managed by a sub group of the Trust. Recently Gordon Webber of Cycling Scotland has joined this group and is keen to promote activity cycling which will be a new project for the group. The group has also been joined by Julie Cole from the Community Council following Dave King's departure. Dave was thanked for his substantial contribution to the group especially in helping secure political support for projects.

Finally, GP noted the work of the Carse of Stirling Partnership which had run two workshops for all Carse communities to help share path plans and connect these up.

During the discussion, Alison Younger noted that any further development of the Kings Highway project must involve close consultation with landowners and farmers along the route. She had appreciated the feedback from the Trust following her earlier comments about the possible impact the route could have on their farming operations.

Windfarm Fund

An outline of the various projects which had received Windfarm funds was outlined.

The Gargunnoch Community Trust receives around £25k every year from Falck which runs the windfarm and this will continue for a further 20 years as we are currently in year 5. There is an independent Panel, which has 2 representatives from the Trust and 2 from the Community Council and a number of independent community members. Alison Younger acts as chair of the Panel and agreed to serve for a further two years from the beginning of 2022.

Alison Younger suggested that with the changes in the Trust representatives on the Panel and the fact that more community representatives normally come forward each time a vacancy is advertised, the Trust may want to consider changing the structure to include just one representative from the Trust and one from the Community Council. This would require a change to the procedures and agreement with Foundation Scotland.

Further, Alison explained there had been fewer applications this year, however the Panel had been very responsive to requests especially from the Village Shop group when a decision was required between scheduled meetings of the Panel. With fewer applications the Panel and Foundation Scotland's policy of not releasing annual funding unless existing allocations had been committed beyond a certain level, consideration had been given to the establishment of a legacy fund. This requires further consideration, then consultation with the Trust and the local community before any action is taken.

Alison explained that a review of previous funding had been carried out and there was an under-representation of the 12 to 35 age group. It was acknowledged however that this age group can and does benefit from the funding in other projects. A sub group of the Panel will be looking at this issue to see how this age group might be better reflected in strategic plans.

Bite and Blether

Bite and Blether had been successfully reinstated.

Bugle

JP explained that the Bugle, as the main communication to everyone in the village about what's happening, continued to be published. He explained that the role of editor was now being taken on by a young person with support from their parent. It was a great opportunity for a young person to develop new skills and gain experience. Altogether 410 copies are distributed for each edition with a slightly expanded number of households being covered.

The only major issue is the cost of printing. Each edition costs the Trust £200 more than is achieved through advertising. Costs will be kept under review including consideration to publishing in B&W and possibly looking at gaining Windfarm Fund support to ensure this important communication channel is sustained.

Company Secretary Report

JP provided the Company Secretary's report prepared by GB who was unable to attend the AGM.

All the relevant paperwork for the new directors appointed at the last AGM had been completed and registered with Companies House and after the resignation of Chris Blacklock his name was removed from the Trust's records at Companies House.

During the year the Trust held 6 meetings since the last AGM with all meetings being quorate.

It was reported that the directors believe that there is no significant person or legal entity with significant control in relation to Gargunnoch Community Trust.

The Annual Report and Financial Statements were filed with Companies House and OSCR and the 2021 Confirmation Statement had been accepted by Companies House.

The Trust is registered with the Information Commission. As a registered charity no fee is due to be paid.

Confirmation has been received from Stirling Council Assessors that the rateable valuation of the community centre has not changed.

The Trust has a valid Lottery Licence which will expire on 31 December 2022 but will be renewed.

Treasurer's Report for July 2021 to June 2022

GF explained that the Trust had moved its accounts from RBS to Barclays to facilitate internet banking with dual authorization. The Trust will no longer accept cash or cheques in payment. Moves are also being made to submit tax digitally as a VAT registered company, using Xero accounting software to submit quarterly returns.

GF and Jackie Campbell have updated the Windfarm Fund tracker which is jointly managed between the Trust and the Panel.

JP and Debbie Mason have updated and simplified the pricing policy for the community centre which will be implemented as soon as the review has been completed.

Looking ahead there will be on-line payments linked to the Hall Master booking system for community centre bookings and further efforts need to be made to maximise lets to increase the return from the underutilised space in the Drop-In centre and community centre while the Trust will need to consider whether it needs professional support for the annual accounts.

GF provided the Treasurer's report noting a fairly positive financial position overall setting out the position of each individual account.

He highlighted the following points:

1. The importance of the office rentals to the financial viability of the community centre.
2. The deficit for the community centre was similar to the previous year although direct comparison was problematic due to impact of Covid.
3. The balance available at year end was very similar to that at the end of the previous financial year.

Appointment of Directors

SO explained that at this point all existing trustees/directors who have expressed their willingness to remain as trustees/directors stand down. They were then subsequently reappointed by the meeting. He noted that with the resignation of Jon Park there were now three vacancies for trustees/directors. Without a full complement on the Board the Trust would have to curtail its activities to those which were a fit with the interests, skills and experience of the volunteer trustees.

Jon Park was thanked for his contribution during his tenure as a trustee. All the trustees were thanked for their contributions to the work of the Trust during the year.

The trustees/directors for the following year are therefore:

Douglas Johnston
Gavin Fleming
Geoff Peart
Gill Bell
Jill Patrick
Mairi Jackson
Crawford Gordon
Steve Barnet
Stuart Ogg

In accordance with its Articles of Association the Trust appoints the office bearers at its meeting following the AGM and this will take place at its next formal meeting after the AGM.

AOB

The issue of attracting new trustees was discussed further with various suggestions being made which will be considered at the next Trust meeting.

Dave King noted that from his experience the community should be very proud of what the Trust had achieved; it had also received positive feedback from the external organisations it had been working with.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 9.10pm

Date of next AGM

The date of the next AGM will be confirmed nearer the time.