

Scottish Wild Land Group
2023 Annual General Meeting
Saturday 2nd December 1.30-3.0pm
Honeyman Hall, Keir Street, Bridge of Allan

MINUTES

Present:

David Roper, Grant Cornwallis, Tim Ambrose, James Fenton, Alistair Cant, Owen Edwards, Norman McNab, Liz Bibby, Scott Peddie, Andy Cloquet, Shona Collister, Sooz Scot Glen

1. Convenor's opening remarks

David Roper welcomed the attendees, and said he was chairing the meeting on behalf of Pete Ewing who is currently overseas.

2. Apologies

Charles Wallis, Pete Ewing, Mark Aitken, Doris Dietrich, Anne Macintyre, Mr & Mrs Shaw, Bill Stephens.

3. Minutes of the AGM 3rd December 2022

The minutes of the 2023 AGM were agreed without amendment.

4. Matters arising from the 2022 AGM

James Fenton mentioned that at the end of the last AGM there was discussion of the group's draft policy statement on Wild Land Areas. He would now incorporate the comments received and publish the statement on SWLG's website.

5. Trustees Annual Report and Accounts

Tim Ambrose, Treasurer, summarised the activities of the year, pointing out the year included reports for two different organisations: the first period when the SWLG was the original Scottish charity, and the second period when the organisation had transferred to a SCIO (Scottish Charity Incorporated Organisation).

Tim also summarised the accounts for the year, concluding that the organisation was in a healthy financial state with £20,982 in the bank at the year end.

6. Approval of Annual Report and Accounts

The Annual Report and Accounts were unanimously agreed without amendment.

7. Membership Report

Grant Cornwallis, Membership Secretary, reported that membership remained fairly stable at c. 350, although the number of new members slightly exceeded those lost.

8. Election of trustees

There were no new nominations for trustees and all existing trustees were re-elected unopposed, as listed below.

Pete Ewing, Convenor
Tim Ambrose, Treasurer
Grant Cornwallis, Membership Secretary
James Fenton, editor *Wild Land News*
Mark Aitken
Bill Stephens
David Roper

Beryl Leatherland, while not a trustee, will remain as the Group's representative on Scottish LINK.

9. Any other business

There was a general discussion on how to tackle the current wild land issues, particularly the power of the renewable energy lobby in pushing strongly for new development, and on how the group's money could best be spent. The discussion included:

- There was a need to connect with the public; most people would not read reports, so some way was needed to engage with them
- A conference on wild land was suggested, although it was pointed out that this needed an organiser, could be expensive and it would only be talking to the converted.
- The renewables lobby was well-resourced and provided the public with all the answers, making it difficult for those who support the retention of wild land to challenge them. The wild land lobby has not got the same strength of argument and coordination to take on the renewables lobby.
- Politicians were not interested in wild land and were fully supportive of the renewable energy industry's approach.
- We needed to better develop our arguments for wild land, including coming up with solutions rather than just saying 'No' to renewable projects.
- Snippets on wild land could be fed to the media to catch the public's attention. It was pointed out that at the last AGM the idea of SWLG employing a development office to raise the profile of SWLG and to engage the public was discussed. This could be pursued once Pete Ewing was back.
- Grant suggested that the report into the state of the wild land could be republished (copies were running low), but with an update on current threats to wild land, including the proposed proliferation of telecommunications masts for the Shared Rural Network.
- James updated the meeting with the recent objections by SWLG to the plethora of proposed masts in wild land areas and said that the group had joined in with other conservation NGOs with preparing a Position Statement on the issue and writing a letter to OfCom.

The meeting closed at 3pm. It was followed by an illustrated talk from James on 'The Landscapes of Greenland'.

James Fenton
4 December 2023