

Minutes of the meeting of Trustees of Bailies of Bennachie held in person at the meeting room, Booth Scotland on 8<sup>th</sup> August, 2023 at 7pm.

In Attendance, Trustees: David Bale (DB), Lorna Bell (LB), Fiona Cormack (FC) Alex Doig (AD), Margaret Garden (MG), Alan Henderson (AH), Willie Linklater (WL), Peter Stock (PS), Allan Will (AW) in person.

Absent – Jim Herbert

In Attendance, non-Trustee: Karen Noble

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	RESP/ ACTIONER
1 Apologies	No apologies were received.	
2. Minutes	<p>Previous minutes were accepted as correct.</p> <p><b>Items arising</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actions from meetings are now showing within the Pre-Read section of Teams, which may include actions raised via info@ emails. Closing out actions need to be recorded there.</li> </ul>	
3. Finance	<p><b>Treasurer's Report</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accounts to end July, more costs with 50th, the dividend has come in</li> <li>• Town hall invoice came in 2 days ago, now paid.</li> <li>• Audit complete with no significant or detrimental findings</li> <li>• Alan has accounts finalised they were approved in Apr with a few amendments P&amp;L and Balance Sheet are as previous. Request to sign off tonight. AH read a statement for everyone to agree. PS, AH to sign accounts PS AH and WL to sign the statement. (complete) Unanimous agreement given to the wording of the statement.</li> <li>• Accounts to go to OSCR, AH to keep paper copy of accounts at his home (as per previous treasurers). A/Cs to go on to Teams but not the copy invoices. If anyone wants to see accounts, they can be referred to OSCR.</li> </ul>	
	<p><b>Membership fee review – see proposal in pre-read</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AH Membership fee: costs more to process new members than the lifetime membership. AH proposing increasing to £25. Could do different rates but to keep up with the times and not costing the organisation money. All agreed to update to new rate from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024.</li> </ul>	

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	RESP/ ACTIONER
	<p><b>How can we spend money on the hill, what was result of feasibility study on paths last year?</b></p> <p><b>Paths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey done last year, how are we moving forward with it? PS advised that we are in discussion with FLS on their strategies, but they have not finalised them yet and we cannot act without their agreement.</li> <li>• MG &amp; PS visited Forvie Nature Reserve to get ideas and a path contractor's name. Governance very close to ours, though they only have 8 volunteers. Could he do 50yds on Millstone to see how that might go?</li> <li>• DB costs of path repair and maintenance are high; have forestry sidestepped responsibility? There are key routes e.g. Mither Tap, that we could 'contribute' to. We could go 50/50 to gain commitment from both parties. We need to justify what we are doing to the membership, rather than paying for something that is a Govt body's responsibility. Another way might be a partnership where we could apply for funding; money is available which covers paths for example. Could we take on Chris York perhaps to take on responsibility? Work parties cover some of this already. Paths don't tend to be maintained after they are created.</li> </ul>	

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	RESP/ ACTIONER
	<p><b>Environmental Projects</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DB – Strategic plan, sets out what the Bailies want to see on the hill and to discuss with land owners. Nearly all feedback has been received, trustees can be shown this very soon. Once we have buy-in we can go further with plans to get quotes for work and quantify it to move forward. Not a quick process but we need to get it right and it could be beneficial to the hill. Might have to persuade people to go along with it.</li> <li>• Examples: fens, natural regeneration on pre-felled sites, commercial plantations, loch of Afforsk. Each habit has an assessment of threats and opportunities. Scots pine has regenerated but don't want other species such as Sitka Spruce, Larch necessarily. Grazing could be reintroduced, costs may be incurred through fencing, troughs etc. Could recontour bog areas, may not be feasible. Fens could be grazed with rotational plantation. Beech and roe deer control also extend natives to felled areas. We don't want regeneration to go into archaeological areas. Felling areas mash up certain plants. Rhoddies look at these, grassy and shrub margins are good for butterflies and mammals. Protect feeder burns, how to maintain open water which is valuable for otters and birds. Nicky Penford has been consulted (SRUC etc. ) join up farming plans with what is already there, what has been lost, try to regenerate that. Possibly use farming grants.</li> <li>• PS can you see any opportunities to progress now? DB Work on Millstone may be something but we need to discuss further. Farmland may be possible. Landowners won't read all the info but it needs to be presented in a creditable form.</li> <li>• AW when they met RTS (commissioned by Foresight) she mentioned they want to do well by the hill. There is a walk on 18<sup>th</sup> August so please try to attend to chat with RTS to influence what to plant, they want to get a feel for the hill. Time 10am from Rowantree. Option for coffee / scones somewhere to discuss things with them after the walk.</li> <li>• DB hopes to present at next Trustee meeting / pre-read</li> </ul>	<p>All</p> <p>DB</p>

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	RESP/ ACTIONER
	<p><b>Trustee complement; Kim replacement, Walks Trustee</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KM has had to resign because of family and work commitments but gallantly turned up to lead the August WP.</li> <li>• WL &amp; PS will cover the role of work parties trustee. WL and PS will not be taking on 'team leader' role. Two weeks ago KM was contacted by Hugh Fraser. Hugh was met and has relevant skills. The number of hours he may have available could suit. Hugh enjoyed being with the WP and both parties are reviewing situation.</li> <li>• Team leader – with work parties once or at times twice a month on the hill equates to a day a week, or four days per month. Team leader would be a paid post to give more stability to the role. Is four days excessive? Is there potential to make this 2 a month? WL thinks we have been flying with this for quite a while. Hugh has plans to streamline things and organise work parties better, we are playing catch up. AW there is so much work to catch up at colony for safety, recording things, photography, they all take time. WL Things we need to discuss with FLS re using battery operated tools etc, there is a lot of required to implement these things over the winter. Hugh can be flexible whether two days one week, none the next. We need a modern way of dealing with things as experienced volunteers are declining in number. To some around the table it is a lot but to play catch up this seems to others very necessary. It was asked if he could help to deal with contractors. The work plan needs to be clear so the expenditure is best utilised. WL say the work parties have too much work to ever get caught up and contractors may have to be used. Hugh could cover things hopefully with volunteers. Planning with fresh pair of eyes to review where we are. There is a lot of work involved, they need to be a self-starter, most likely on a probationary basis. KM suggested when she left to get someone part time to take this on.</li> <li>• Review work parties and the work involved by the new person. A scope of work would be developed to address the important issues.</li> <li>• Vote - 4 days / month for Hugh to be progressed? An estimate (from AH) of £3000 potentially as a probationary period. Agreed by majority.</li> <li>• Do we still want a full time trustee? Yes, and one for IT.</li> </ul>	<p>PS/WL</p>

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	RESP/ ACTIONER
	<p><b>Walks planning next year</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PS suggested that walks could be put on a much stronger footing and engage more with the public</li> <li>• Things are being put on Eventbrite, team leader could be involved here/</li> <li>• Lorna’s 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary walks are the only ones members of the public know about</li> <li>• Wildlife groups host walks that are advertised to wildlife members only. They are open to anyone but better not to be too large to lose the dynamics of the small group.</li> <li>• Could the Bailies start offering regular walks for the public? Could we create new walks with new speakers? Ideas, what type of walk, e.g. archaeology and so on. Could many walks be organised and run to engage with the general public. Something to think about for budget cycle</li> </ul>	All
	<p><b>Letter to all members, costs (2.5k members, 700 emails only meantime)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some members don’t hear from the Bailies so they assume that we are not communicating with our members.</li> <li>• Recent postal invites to a limited number of the original members had 11 returned, no longer at that address etc.</li> <li>• 700 emails plus a limited number of postal are on our regular communications list. Though some of these are more than one member at same address.</li> <li>• Proposal is to contact all members to get a refresh on data held on them. Costs may be £1500 - £5000. QR code could be used for an online form to be completed. This is a cost of business.</li> <li>• The letter needs to be explicit in the information it gives, e.g. if you don’t reply by a particular date, please know we will remove you from the database.</li> <li>• We could add a member page to the website so members can update their own information. Options would available for older members not on modern technology. WL says it could be the same idea as volunteer online joining form.</li> <li>• Agreed that WL and SG investigate and make a proposal</li> </ul>	WL/SG

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	RESP/ ACTIONER
	<p><b>Calendars, publication, invoicing, distribution</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AD proposed calendars are A3, A4 is probably more practical and a pound cheaper.</li> <li>Go round shops to peddle the wares! Retail price £5, cost to retailer was £? Put up prices this year perhaps to £6 and £4 to retailers to buy. (PMN – see Teams discussion)</li> <li>Will people pay more, do they buy them because it is the Bailies?</li> <li>2022 Sales were down but costs went up, Alan H shared page from the accounts. Had several hundred left over.</li> <li>SG to contact shops to ask if they would retail them. Don't sell to retailers who returned the unsold copies, they must commit to buying the lot and not returning them.</li> <li>AD to get a test print done.</li> <li>Approximately 80-100 were posted out previously. Could Hugh post them out? (PMN tes)</li> <li>AW to get back with info from Strachans on calendar prices (PMN £7.00 is the going rate)</li> </ul>	AD
	<p><b>Colony App</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opinions received from people including Alison Sutherland, rangers etc Is anyone using the app? David says yes.</li> <li>There is an issue with new tech, screen brightness was an issue.</li> <li>BLPG AW will feedback there, he knows there are some glitches. More info to be gathered before going to the trustees.</li> </ul>	
<b>AOCB</b>		
	Meeting finished 21.00	
	Next meeting 21 <sup>st</sup> September, Garioch Heritage Centre	

Signed – Chair – Peter Stock  
Date 21st September, 2023



Signed – Secretary – Willie Linklater  
Date 21st September, 2023

