

BIRSE COMMUNITY TRUST
Minutes of BCT's Thirteenth Annual General Meeting
15th June 2011
Finzean Hall

Members Present: James Begg, Rosaleen Begg, Aiden Bell, Jane Bennett, Doug Boyle, Margaret Chapman, Paul Chapman, Rex Chapman, Louise Counsell, Robert Dinnie, Dorothy Dinnie(M'well), Aileen Ellis, Sir Angus Farquharson, Ellie Flather, John Forster, Sandra Forster, Esther Gooch, Gary Grant, Doug Gray, Betty Gray, Ian Hector, Wendy Hector, Diana Hogarth, Peter Hopkins, Charles Insch, Martin Johnson, Audrey Litterick, Malcolm Littlejohn, Sian Loftus, Isobel Macrobbie, Alastair Mather, Jean McLeod, Bryan Miller, Brian Pattinson, Shirley Pattinson, Rick Paul, James Reid, Brian Robertson, Simon Robson, Hazel Ross, Allan Shand, Mel Shand, Donald Silcock, George Smart, Diana Smart, Ken Taylor, Pam Taylor, Andrew Walker, David Younie, Patsy Younie (50)

Apologies from Ordinary Members: Alison Bell, Alan Bennett, Robin Callander, Jaqueline Chapman, Dorothy Dinnie (B'beg), Jenni Eke, Michael Eke, Lady Alison Farquharson, Andrew Farquharson, Catriona Farquharson, Donald Farquharson, Kate Farquharson, Dan Gooch, Ron Harper, Sheila Harper, Guy Haslam, Jean Haslam, Davie Hector, Helen Jackson, Peter Jackson, Ean McLeod, Andrew Nicol, Julie Nicol, Anne Paul, Catherine Paul, Anne Silcock, Craig Thow, Donna Thow, Christine Wright, Gareth Wright, Malcolm Wright, Richard Wright, Samantha Wright, Sarah Wright, (34)

Apologies from Associate Members: Eileen Bailey, William Bailey, Colin Liddell and Duncan Thomson (both of J & H Mitchell WS), Malcolm Nicol (5)

1. Welcome and Apologies

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, BCT's Chairman, Andrew Walker, welcomed everyone to the 13th Annual General Meeting. Members were advised that a new item 9, Election of Patron, had been added to the Agenda. The apologies received were noted.

2. Minutes of Last Annual General Meeting

The Chairman asked for approval of the Minutes of the 12th AGM dated 19th May 2010, these having previously been made available. Acceptance was proposed by Ken Taylor, seconded by Louise Counsell and unanimously approved by the Members present.

3. Outstanding Matters Arising

There were four matters arising from the Minutes of the AGM on 19th May 2010.

1. In item 4, John Forster had queried whether members should opt in to electronic communication rather than opt out. The Chairman explained that the Memorandum and Articles were designed to cover every eventuality, and BCT had no intention of sending Annual Reports by e-mail.

2. In item 5, Doug Gray had queried how BCT intended to maintain its various properties. The Chairman explained that he would cover this later in the meeting.

3. Also in item 5, Alastair Mather had noted lack of detail in the published accounts. The Chairman explained that accounts are produced using a recognised template but agreed that they were not always easy to follow. He suggested that Trustees might consider producing a separate sheet for non-accountants to understand.

4. In item 10, Guy Haslam had requested that a slide be shown demonstrating in which direction BCT is heading. The Chairman explained that his presentation 'The Way Forward', to be shown after the formal business, was a direct consequence of this request.

4. Trustees' Report for the Year to 31st December 2010

Activities

The Chairman reported that the Annual Report 2010, which had been sent to all households, contained far more information than in previous years, so he would only concentrate on the highlights.

Purchase of Balfour Forest. After a great deal of work and being turned down twice by the Big Lottery Fund and with the deadline fast approaching, BCT was fortunate to secure a substantial anonymous donation to enable the purchase to go ahead. BCT has just completed its first thinning which will provide useful income.

Forest of Birse Commonty. The ten year plans to plant 25,000 individually protected native broadleaf trees along the Feugh and its tributaries in the Commonty Pinewoods and to restore the 7½ km of tracks there for management activities, walkers and fire access, had both been completed.

Slewdrum Forest. BCT completed the removal of several stands of non-native conifers from broadleaved woodland near the River Dee and planted several groups of native hazels near the public road, and also reconstruction of the internal track.

Forest Management Plans. These must be produced in order to plan the management of the Forests over the next 20 years and to be eligible for grants from the Forestry Commission and to obtain Forest Stewardship accreditation. The Plan for Balfour has been submitted to FC Scotland and those for Slewdrum and the Commonly Pinewoods should follow soon.

BCT Website. This has been substantially updated. It is now easier to use and has more information than before.

Finances

The Chairman reported that income for 2010 was boosted by the Balfour donation. Without this, BCT only received around £40K. This was mainly due to the lack of time to seek other funding after the collapse of the lottery bid. However, the low income was accompanied by high expenditure, around £85K. This was also related to the Balfour bid, repairs to The Old School and other on-going BCT projects. The Chairman noted that, as this excess of expenditure over income followed the two previous years when income exceeded expenditure and as a net income is anticipated in 2011, the position was manageable. The Chairman also noted that 2010 was a significant milestone when BCT's total income since inauguration passed the £1million mark (excluding capital grants).

Management

The Chairman showed two pie chart slides illustrating the geographic distribution of BCT expenditure. Chart 1 was a breakdown of the average annual expenditure over the last 12 years and showed that, of an average of £85K a year, 78% stayed in the parish and immediate Mid Deeside area. Chart 2 was a breakdown of the number of suppliers over the same period and showed that of an annual average of 61 suppliers, 64% were based in the parish and immediate Mid Deeside area. The Chairman noted that the charts reflected that wherever possible BCT strives to invest locally.

5. Election of Two Trustees

The Chairman reported that two Trustees were standing down at this AGM – himself and Dorothy Dinnie. The Chairman was resigning as he was moving away from the area and was therefore no longer eligible for office. He had been a Trustee for two years and Chairman for one. Dorothy was resigning as she had served a five year term as a Trustee. Dorothy had indicated that she would be willing to stand for another term, but her nomination form was never received by the Trust's solicitors, so she could not be formally re-elected at the meeting. It was therefore the Trustees' intent to co-opt her in accordance with BCT's Memorandum and Articles after the meeting. This was unanimously endorsed by the members present. The Chairman reported that the one nomination received for a new Trustee was Ken Taylor, who had been proposed by Gordon Dinnie and seconded by Sarah Harker. As there was no need for a ballot, Ken Taylor was duly elected as a BCT Trustee.

6. Approval of the Accounts for the Year to 31st December 2010

The Chairman reported that the Annual Accounts for the year to 31st December 2010 had been prepared by Linda Scott and independently examined by Anderson, Anderson and Brown, Chartered Accountants. An extract of the Accounts had been published in the Annual Report sent out to all members with the Notice of the Annual General Meeting. The Chairman asked for approval of the 2010 accounts and they were unanimously approved by the Members present.

7. Appointment of Independent Financial Examiner

The Chairman reported that for the last six years Anderson, Anderson and Brown had been appointed to examine BCT's accounts and that they were familiar with the workings of BCT. The Chairman requested that the Members delegate responsibility for appointing the Examiners along with their remuneration to the Trustees. This was unanimously approved by all Members present.

8. Fixing of Annual Subscription for Associate Members

It was recommended by the Trustees that the Annual Subscription for Associate Members should remain unchanged at £20 (UK) and £25 (Overseas). This was unanimously approved by the Members present.

9. Election of Patron

The Chairman reported that Robert Dinnie had been BCT's Patron for the last three years and had come to the end of his term. The Chairman proposed that the Trustees should re-appoint Robert for a further three year term and this was unanimously endorsed by the Members present.

There being no further points raised, the Chairman thanked all who had helped BCT during 2010, noted the end of the formal business of the meeting and thanked all present for attending.

