

BIRSE COMMUNITY TRUST

Minutes of Fifteenth Annual General Meeting

22nd May 2013

Finzean Hall

Ordinary Members Present: Aiden Bell, Alan Bennett, Mark Bilsby, Doug Boyle, Robin Callander, Jacqui Chapman, Paul Chapman, George Christie, Maree Christie, Louise Counsell, Bill Davidson, Nancy Davidson, Dorothy Dinnie (Birsebeg), Robert Dinnie, Dorothy Dinnie (Marywell), Jenni Eke, Michael Eke, Alison Farquharson, Andrew Farquharson, Angus Farquharson, Ellie Flather, Ann Fletcher, John Forster, Sandra Forster, Dawn Gibbs, Brian Goodall, Doug Gray, May Harrison, Trevor Harrison, Jean Haslam, David Hector, Ian Hector, John Hector, Wendy Hector, Helen Jackson, Jonathan Kitching, Pat Lawson, Sian Loftus, Liz McConnach, Jean McLeod, Anne Paul, Rick Paul, Alastair Rose, Allan Shand, Mel Shand, Donald Silcock, Anne Silcock, Paul Tanner, Anita van der Wal, David Winton, Jane Winton, David Younie (52)

Associate Members Present: Barbara Walker, Marion Laing (2)

Apologies from Ordinary Members: Janie Belchamber, Alison Bell, Margaret Chapman, Rex Chapman, Deborah Dinnie, Robert F Dinnie, Catriona Farquharson, Donald Farquharson, Esther Gooch, Dan Gooch, Guy Haslam, Diana Hogarth, Charles Insch, Ean McLeod, Catherine Paul, Elspeth Prestige, James Reid, Simon Robson, Gareth Wright, Richard Wright, Samantha Wright (21)

Apologies from Associate Members: Audrey Litterick, Malcolm Nicol, Andrew Walker (3)

1. Welcome and Apologies

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, BCT's Chair, Jean McLeod, welcomed everyone to BCT's 15th Annual General Meeting and noted the apologies received.

2. Minutes of Last Annual General Meeting

Trustee John Forster asked for approval of the Minutes of BCT's 14th AGM on 30th May 2012, these having previously been made available. Approval was proposed by Allan Shand and seconded by Louise Council.

3. Matters Arising

John Forster noted that the points in the Minutes by himself and Guy Haslam about BCT's strategic and operating plans, would be dealt with under items 4 and 6. He also reported that the Trustees had followed up Doug Gray's question last year about the relationship between BCT and the Birse Trading Company (BTCO) and that discussion with Doug Gray had revealed his real concern was that BCT had concealed expenditure on the flood damage to the Old School in the 2009 Accounts. John Forster explained that having investigated this fully and having consulted BCT's solicitors, Trustees had concluded that the expenditure had been properly and transparently reported in the Accounts and there was no foundation to Doug Gray's allegation. The Trustees therefore considered that the matter was now closed. It was confirmed that there were no other matters arising.

4. Trustees' Report for the Year to 31st December 2012

Trustee David Younie referred to the Trustees Report in BCT's Annual Report. He noted that the Trustees held nine Board Meetings in 2012 and made six site visits covering all 12 of BCT's properties. He also noted that four Trustees had resigned for various reasons, and that two Trustees had been co-opted, John Forster and himself. He reported that Guy Haslam had expressed concerns over this position, as had the Board. However, Trustees decided after receiving advice from BCT's solicitor that the Board could continue with one elected and two co-opted Trustees, that this would be preferable to calling an EGM. David Younie referred to the wildfire at the Finlets in March and thanked Grampian Fire Brigade and the neighbouring estates for their help in extinguishing it, noting that despite the destruction, the native pinewoods are still expanding overall. He reported that new ten year leases for 2013-22 between BCT and BTCO for Balfour and Slewdrum had been prepared to enable BTCO to implement the Forest Plans. He noted that Trustees attended various other meetings in the year, including those of the Birse Parish Liaison Group. He also reported that, while there had been little progress on the Old Schools Proposal since the last AGM, BCT had heard recently that Aberdeen Council's Education Department has decided that it is 'highly desirable' to implement the Proposal and that they will be discussing ways to fund the Council's part in it.

David Younie asked for any comments or questions. Doug Gray expressed concerns about the running of BCT and was invited to write to BCT's solicitors if he has a new issue. Paul Tanner requested that there should be

more community involvement in decision making and David Younie assured him that there would be opportunities later in 2013, when BCT consults its membership about a new strategic plan to run from 2014.

5. BTCO Directors' Report for the Year to 31st December 2012

The Chair of the Birse Trading Company (BTCO), Paul Chapman, noted that BTCO was formed in 2007 as a subsidiary of BCT with its own Board of Directors, currently himself, Doug Boyle and David Younie. BTCO produces its own accounts, with all its activities related to implementing the long term Forest Plans for Slewdrum and Balfour Forests. He reported that 2012 had been BTCO's busiest year to date as it continued to improve the forests' infrastructure by creating new tracks and paths, as well as carrying out other work to improve the amenity and environment of the Forests. He showed how BTCO's income had varied since it started, with little income in 2012 as no commercial thinning or felling had been carried out. He explained that BTCO's income should increase significantly in 2013 as an area in Slewdrum is due to be clear felled, and that this income should enable BTCO to maintain its pattern of annual donations to BCT. He noted that the area in Slewdrum will be the first clear fell carried out by BTCO and the Directors are concerned it should be carried out to a high standard. Michael Eke asked if a deer leg retrieved by his dog in Balfour would be from the deer cull there. Paul Chapman replied that while he could not be sure, he would raise this with BTCO's stalker.

6. Approval of the Accounts for the Year to 31st December 2012

Trustee John Forster reported that the Annual Accounts for 2012 had been independently examined by Anderson, Anderson and Brown, Chartered Accountants. An extract of the Accounts had been published in the Annual Report sent to all Members with the Notice of the Annual General Meeting. John Forster showed slides explaining BCT's Accounts for 2012, reporting that BCT made a loss of around £10,000 after a donation of £20,000 from BTCO. Michael Eke sought information on the tangible fixed assets of £570,000. Robin Callander explained that this consisted of property values and that part from the two Mills, the values were based on their purchase prices, noting that several of the properties had been purchased at significantly below their open market value. John Forster said that further information was available in the full Accounts on BCT's website. Approval of the Accounts was proposed by Michael Eke and seconded by Paul Tanner.

John Forster also presented a budget for 2013 which forecast that BCT would break-even after a potential contribution of £25k from BTCO. Paul Tanner and Michael Eke asked BCT to examine whether its administration costs could be reduced, so that more of the income could be spent directly on community projects. Robin Callander commented that BCT's intention had always been that income from the Forests would help it meet its core operating costs, as other funding is not usually available for these.

7. Election of Trustees

Chair Jean McLeod explained that there were four vacancies on the Board and that three nominations had been received:- Anita van der Wal, Douglas Boyle and Jonathan Kitching. She confirmed that the nominees were therefore duly elected unopposed as Trustees. She thanked the retiring Trustees for their contribution to BCT.

8. Appointment of Independent Financial Examiner

Trustee David Younie asked members for approval for the Board to appoint a suitable independent financial examiner in due course. Donald Silcock asked that this should be on the condition that the accountants have appropriate experience with OSCR. Approval was proposed by Donald Silcock and seconded by Michael Eke.

9. 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). Approval was proposed by Robin Callander and seconded by Ellie Flather.

There being no further points raised, the DY ended the formal business of the meeting. He thanked all present for attending and those that had contributed to the arrangements for the AGM. Michael Eke proposed a vote of thanks to the Trustees.

Maree Christie and Mel Shand then gave an update about the BCT Archive's forthcoming Programme of Events, followed by a performance by The Jolly Singers and refreshments.