BIRSE COMMUNITY TRUST

Minutes of 26th Annual General Meeting
held on 12th September 2024 in The Old School

Ordinary Members Present: *Alison Bell, Doug Boyle, Paul Chapman, Kevin Christie, Robert Dinnie, Ellie Flather, Davie Hector, John Hector, Wendy Hector, Dave Latham, Simon Lindsey, Sian Loftus, Toby Rider, Anne Silcock, Donald Silcock, Richard Wright, David Younie (17)*

Proxies received: Judy Baxter, Aidan Bell, *Graham Davidson, Nancy Davidson, Richard Davidson, Dorothy Dinnie, Robert Dinnie, Lorraine Lindsey, Lewis MacLeod-Slater, Samantha MacLeod-Slater, April Montgomery, Paul Montgomery, John Threlfall, Gareth Wright, (14)*

Associate Members Present: *Rick Paul (1)*

Others Present: *Toni Watt (1)*

Apologies from Ordinary Members: *Liz Bracegirdle, Aiden Bell, Roy Cowie, Graham Davidson, Nancy Davidson, Richard Davidson, Debarah Dinnie, Dorothy Dinnie, Robert Dinnie, Guy Haslam, Helen Jackson, Peter Jackson, Lorraine Lindsey, Lewis MacLeod-Slater, Samantha MacLeod-Slater, Lucy Rider, David Winton, Jane Winton, Benjamin Wright, Gareth Wright, Malcolm Wright, Sarah Wright, (22)*

1. Welcome and Apologies.
On behalf of the Board, current Chair Toby Rider, welcomed everyone to BCT's 26th Annual General Meeting, and noted the twenty two apologies, and the fourteen proxy voting forms received the requisite 48 hours before the meeting. He noted that the role of chair is rotated monthly about the 6 Trustees as no one Trustee has the time to commit to being full time Chair.

2. Minutes of 25th Annual General Meeting held on the 25th June 2023.
Toby asked for approval of the Minutes of BCT's 25th AGM held on 25th June 2023. They were proposed by Sian Loftus, seconded by Paul Chapman, and approved by the members unopposed.

3. Matters Arising.
There were no matters arising.

4. Trustees' Report for the Year to 31st December 2023.
Toby introduced the Trustees' Report as printed in BCT's Annual Report. This report covers BCT's main activities during 2023. He noted that last year was BCT's 25th anniversary, and a chance to look back at the achievements realized in those 25 years. BCT still has healthy assets in forests and buildings, due in no small part to the efforts of Davie Hector for the maintenance of the mills and liaison with SPAB, and to both Jane Winton and Sian Loftus for their input over the years.
The key project that started in 2023 was the Souter's Shop. Alison explained that in order to preserve this unique building and return it to the condition it was in at the end on the 19th century, the external fabric needs to be repaired and the contents need to be temporarily removed, preserved and then returned. The local heritage group is key in achieving this aim.
Other noteworthy events in 2023 were BCT's participation in Doors Open at the mills and the various events and courses at the Old School.
Toby then went on to explain that funding has become a problem for BCT. The forests can no longer be relied upon to produce enough income to cover the core costs, and therefore commitment is required from the community associations to help with such tasks as grass cutting and path maintenance. BCT does have assets which could be candidates for selling off, but this would only be an interim solution and in the past there has been for instance, strong support for retaining the Old School as a field centre. BCT therefore has to ask direct questions of the community to promote conversations.
Toby asked for approval of the Trustees' Report, and it was proposed by Richard Wright, seconded by Ellie Flather, and approved by the members unopposed.

5. Approval of the Accounts for the Year to 31st December 2023.
An overview of the Annual Accounts was printed in the published Annual Report covering the main items of income and expenditure in 2023. The Accounts were proposed by Kevin Christie, seconded by Donald Silcock, and approved by the members unopposed.

6. Election of Trustees.
Alison informed the meeting that she was stepping down as a Trustee at this AGM having completed her 5 year term, but had put in a nomination to stand again for a second term. As there were no other nominations, she was duly elected unopposed.

7. Appointment of Independent Financial Examiner.
Toby confirmed that the Trustees are very satisfied with the way our current financial examiners handle BCT's accounts and proposed that they be re-appointed for this coming year. This was proposed by Doug Boyle, seconded by Anne Silcock, and approved by the members unopposed.

8. Fixing of Annual Subscription for Associate Members.
Toby explained that the Trustees recommend that the Annual Subscription for Associate Members should remain at £20 (UK) and £25 (Overseas). This was proposed by Donald Silcock, seconded by Richard Wright, and approved by the members unopposed.

There being no further business, Toby concluded the AGM, thanking all those who attended.