

**Annual General Meeting
Tuesday 5th July 2016
The Gordon Arms Hotel, Yarrow at 2pm**

Agenda

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the last General Meeting (July 1st 2015 see below) and matters arising
3. Directors Report
4. Approval of accounts
5. Election of Directors
 - Mr Andy McNab. Individual Direct standing for a second term
 - Ms Liz Brooks. Standing as Individual Director
 - Cllr John Mitchell. Standing as Group Director for Scottish Borders Council
6. Fixing of subscription rates for 2016
 - It is proposed that membership rates remain as they are.
7. Appointment of auditors
 - It is proposed that the current arrangements are continued.
8. Announcement of election of Directors (if necessary)

The meeting will be followed by a talk by Sally Thomas of the Scottish Government on the Scottish Land Use Strategy.

**The Southern Uplands Partnership
Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on
Wednesday 1st July 2015 at 2.00 pm
The Buccleuch Arms Hotel, Moffat**

Present:

Alan Crichton	Director
Tony Fitzpatrick	Director
Ann Fraser MBE	Director
Mike Fraser	Director
Andy McNab	Director
Joan Mitchell	Member
Karen Morley	Dumfries and Galloway Council
Peter Pitkin	Member
Charles Strang	Director
John Thomson	Director (Convenor)

In Attendance:

Southern Uplands Partnership - Pip Tabor, Ed Forrest, Nic Coombey, Sheila Adams
Observer - Fergus Watson

The Convenor welcomed and thanked those present for attending the Annual General Meeting.

1. Apologies

Norman Burns	Sanquhar CC
Barry Dunne	Scottish Natural Heritage
Alistair Geddes	Director
John Mitchell	Director
Keith Robeson	Scottish Borders Council
John Thomas	Director
Vyv Wood-Gee	Director

2. Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting of 23 June 2014 and Matters Arising

It was noted that Mr McNab had not been present at the last Annual General Meeting so could not have seconded the approval of the Minutes and this should have read Chris Ballance. With this amendment, the Minutes were agreed as a true record and were moved for approval by Mr Charles Strang and seconded by Mr Andy McNab.

3. Directors Report

Pip Tabor, Project Manager, summarised the Annual Report, which will be made available on the SUP website. He acknowledged the funding received from Scottish Natural Heritage, which is no longer 'core' funding in the traditional sense but is now based on the delivery of targets and outputs which must be achieved to claim funds.

The main projects delivered during the financial year to March 2015 were summarised as: Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere, North Solway Coastal Trail, Dumfries and Galloway Environmental Resources Centre, Peatland Action project and Wild Seasons. The organisation also employed and part hosted a Project Officer for the Ettrick and Yarrow Community Development Company.

Sourcing funding, both for core costs and projects, continues to be challenging and can take a significant amount of time. Mr Tabor explained the categories of membership – individual, group, patrons and corporate and thanked all members for their support. In particular, the support of Dumfries and Galloway Council as a Corporate member and the Patron members – BCCF Environmental, Douglas and Angus Estates, Element Power, SSE Renewables, and Torwoodlee and Buckholm Estates was acknowledged and appreciated. The organisation is also grateful for all donations received, large or small, and it is of further benefit when donations are eligible for gift aid.

Consultancy work is now playing a larger part in the search for funding and the Company has been fortunate to win some tenders and secure work in this way.

Looking ahead, it is hoped that the forthcoming year will see the reopening of the European LEADER fund. The organisation will continue to deliver the Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere project, as well as Dumfries and Galloway Environmental Resources Centre and the Peatland Action project. Wild Seasons will be further developed, together with projects such as Wild Land, Broadband for communities, Energy Mapping Opportunities and supporting and facilitating communities with project ideas.

The Convenor thanked Mr Tabor and the Staff Team for their efforts in what had been a challenging year financially and considered that the modest surplus achieved in the year was a credit to the whole team.

4. Approval of Accounts

Mr Thomson thanked Mr Adair Anderson, former Director, for his continued advice and oversight of financial matters. He also thanked Dumfries and Galloway Council and Scottish Natural Heritage for their continued financial support.

The Accounts for 2014-15 were formally approved by Directors and proposed as such by Mr Charles Strang and seconded by Mr Tony Fitzpatrick.

5. Election of Directors

The following Directors, representing Group Members, were nominated for a second term:

Mr Alan Crichton (representing the National Farmers Union Scotland)
Mr Tony Fitzpatrick (representing the Crichton Institute)
Mr John Thomas (representing The John Muir Trust)

No objections were received to the nominations and the appointments were confirmed.

6. Fixing of Subscription Rates for 2015

Following the increase in subscription rates in 2014, it was proposed that the current membership rates remain as they are. It was suggested that these should perhaps be reduced to encourage more members. A significant amount of work had gone into recruiting new members and retaining existing members and it was agreed that current membership rates should be retained and an ongoing membership drive be pursued.

Mr Fitzpatrick suggested that higher profile projects would attract more publicity and this could be a way to attract new members.

7. Appointment of Auditors

The proposal to maintain the current arrangement with Accountants, JRW Group, was agreed. This was moved for approval by Mr Tony Fitzpatrick and seconded by Mrs Ann Fraser, MBE. Mr Tabor pointed out that the organisation has been getting closer in the last couple of years to reaching a turnover level of £500k, which would result in the requirement to have a full, independent audit of the accounts, which would have time and cost implications for the organisation.

8. Announcement of Election of Directors (if necessary)

No election was necessary.

9. Any Other Business

The Convenor gave thanks to Mrs Vyv Wood-Gee who was standing down as a Director, due to other commitments. The valuable contribution to the organisation made by Mrs Wood-Gee was appreciated and her input would be missed.

Mr Thomson also thanked Mrs Chimwemwe Chagunda, Business Development Officer with the Biosphere Team, who was leaving to undertake a Masters in Sustainable Tourism. Mr Thomson acknowledged the tremendous job done by Mrs Chagunda and wished her well in her studies.

The formal business of the AGM concluded at 2.25 pm and was followed by a presentation on the Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere by Mr Nic Coombey, Community and Learning Officer, and Mr Ed Forrest. This generated much discussion, including communication, branding, boundaries, designations and networks with other Biospheres.

The Convenor thanked Mr Coombey and Mr Forrest for the informative presentation and stimulating discussion.

A vote of thanks was proposed for the Chair.

The Convenor thanked everyone for attending the Annual General Meeting and closed the meeting at 3.25 pm.

