

Newtonmore Community Woodland & Development Trust

A registered company limited by guarantee No. 182213 • Registered in Scotland: Charity No. 27576

Chair Paul Woolrich • **Tel** 01540673131 • **Email** wildcatnewtonmore@yahoo.com

The Wildcat Centre, Main Street, Newtonmore, Inverness-shire, PH20 1DD

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting, 10th April 2018

The meeting was preceded by a presentation reporting on the current state of the Wildcat Action Project.

Present

Douglas Macintyre (Chairman), Jim Hall (Secretary), Mark Thomas, Sue Thomas, Will Carey, Marielle Barclay, Lesley Allan, Paul Allan, John Russell, Ian Gibson, Colin Macphail, Mary Stewart, Bruce Stewart, Graham Grant.

1. Apologies

Janet Davidson, Paul Woolrich, Jean Slimon, Sheila Paisley, Yvonne Richmond, Eric Dodd.

2. Minutes of the AGM of 18th April 2017

Minutes were distributed at the meeting as well as to Trustees in advance. They were approved on a motion proposed by Will Carey, seconded by Mark Thomas.

3. Chairman's Report

The Chairman reported that the fragility of our finances and the continuing challenges of managing the Wildcat Experience and Trail. With significant income coming from sales at the Wildcat Centre, we hope that the improvements to the Centre will enhance footfall and sales. We have a growing digital presence with an improved website and Facebook page. Thanks are due to our Centre Manager, Lesley Allan, and the Centre volunteers, for enthusiastic and energetic inputs. The Wildcat Experience continues to be popular but regrettably maintenance of the cats presents a growing workload and we are grateful to the volunteers that gather, repair, refurbish and repaint and reinstall them.

The Wildcat Trail was largely available and much used, though it continues to require attention due to weather erosion damage, principally around the stepping stones and at the mouth of the Calder. Regrettably, our Calder terrace flooding concern is still ongoing as completion of promised drainage works by Highland Council is outstanding. We are also involved in a joint project with the CNPA and NBA, currently in the design phase, to replace all the footpath signs around the village.

The Trust has supported events through the year, eg the Wildcat Trail Race (a fundraiser for the Trust), and has carried out woodland maintenance activities, eg thinning of trees in the Jack Richmond Memorial Park. It is currently preparing a Woodland Management Plan to formally review all the compartments which we manage.

A full copy of the Chairman's report is lodged at the Wildcat Centre.

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There was some discussion from the floor concerning indications that the CNPA may be more supportive of visitor centres in the future.

4. Financial Report

A summary of the trading account was distributed at the meeting. The treasurer could not be present but had tabled the examined accounts, which had been approved by the Board. This year, our trading deficit was £2,216, despite having benefited from, and continuing to benefit from, an annual community fund donation of £2,500 from the Isobel Parker Memorial Fund.

We are continuing to examine our costs so as to reduce our outgoings and have made significant savings recently. There are sufficient cash funds (£8,309) to enable Company viability for the forthcoming year providing current levels of income can be maintained.

The meeting approved a proposal to investigate moving the Trust to a Scottish Charitable Incorporate Organisation (SCIO), which should reduce our financial reporting costs.

5. Membership Fee

It was agreed that the subscription should be maintained at £5.00 pa for 2018/19.

6. Questions from the floor

John Russell asked if any income could be sourced from the woodlands that we manage. The Chairman replied that he understood that we do not own the woodlands and therefore cannot sell the crop.

7. Election of Trustees

The Chairman announced that he would be resigning as Chair at the conclusion of the meeting.

Three formal nominations for new Trustees had been received, namely from Paul Woolrich, Will Carey and Eric Dodd, which were accepted with no dissensions.

8. Volunteers, Tasks and Ideas

Paul Allan introduced an open discussion around ideas to address issues facing the Trust.

Topics tabled included:

- Volunteer sign-up for the new season
- Cat sponsorship changes
- Day-to-day tasks at the Centre
- Centre opening hours
- Wildcat Experience options for day-trippers and/or the disabled

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- Wildcat Experience prizes
- Volunteering for path maintenance, eg Trail strimming
- The appointment of an event organiser.

Members were invited to consider these issues in their own time and make comments on flip charts provided at the meeting or respond via the Wildcat Centre.

9. Any Other Business

The names of the new Board of Trustees are Eric Dodd, Paul Woolrich, Douglas Macintyre, Paul Allan, Mark Thomas, Lesley Allan and Will Carey who will convene after the AGM to elect office bearers.

The Chairman thanked the Members for attending and the AGM was concluded with a vote of thanks to the departing Chairman, proposed by Will Carey.

Post meeting note

At the Trustees meeting immediately following the AGM, Jim Hall resigned as trustee and company secretary. The Board thanked Jim for his work with the Trust.