



**APRS**

The Association for the  
Protection of Rural Scotland

Annual General Meeting

24 May 2018

Liberton Golf Club, Edinburgh

Draft Minutes

Present: David Batty, Duncan Campbell, Derek Carter, Jim Clark, Craig Clarke, Catherine Gemmell, Ann Glen, Rebecca Hughes, Alastair Macbeth, John Mayhew (*Director*), Charles Millar (*Chairman*), Eleanor Morris, Roger Oakes, Graham Simpson MSP, Walter Simpson, Nina Sobecka (*Administrator*), Karol Swanson, John Thomson (*Vice-Chairman*), Roger Taylor, Brian Wood, Ann Wood, Eleanor Young, Kathleen Weetman, Bridget Wilcox

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chairman welcomed all APRS members and guests to the meeting then introduced Eleanor Young who has been volunteering for APRS for 13 years and has been an Honorary Member for the last three. It was her suggestion that APRS hold its Annual General Meeting (AGM) at Liberton Golf Club where she is a member. Eleanor Young then gave members a short potted history of the historic Robert Adam clubhouse and its beautiful setting in the heart of Edinburgh which was enjoyed by all.

2. Apologies

Apologies had been received from: Oliver Barratt, Mike Barnacle, Jane Bower, Kathleen Dalyell, Mike Gascoigne, John Gerrard, Isobel Glasgow, Alison Grant, Margaret Hunter, Alistair Irwin, Graham Lang, Marion Lang, Beryl Leatherland, Andrew McMillan, Alec Muir, Margaret Richards, George Service, Geoffrey Stevenson, Elspeth Stirling, Roy Storie, Colin Prior (*President*), Flora Selwyn, Charles Strang (*Vice-President*), Bill Wright (*Vice-President*).

3. Minutes of 2017 AGM

The Minutes were proposed by Alastair Macbeth, seconded by Karol Swanson and approved.

4. Report and Financial Statements 2017

The Treasurer introduced the Report and Financial Statements for 2017. He explained that the finances of APRS were broadly in good shape. The total income for 2017 was £214k and total expenditure £178k, resulting in a satisfactory surplus of £36k. However, 80% of expenditure was on projects with restricted funds, so it is important to look at core funds which are crucial to APRS continuing in to the future. Here too unrestricted income has increased from £26k to £32k, so the picture is improving but only slowly and must be kept under close supervision. The Treasurer also explained that these are the first set of financial statements prepared by our recently-appointed independent examiners

Whitelaw Wells. The Treasurer finished by thanking his predecessor Walter Simpson for all of his work for APRS over many years. The Annual Report and Financial Statements were proposed by Craig Clarke, seconded by Walter Simpson and approved.

5. Annual Review 2017

Before the Director gave his main presentation, the Chairman was particularly pleased to introduce Shadow Housing and Communities Minister and Central Scotland MSP Graham Simpson, who proceeded to address members for a short while on the issue of Green Belts. Mr Simpson outlined his passion for the outdoors and green spaces and his concerns for the loss of these areas in the central belt of Scotland. He urged APRS and its members to engage with the current Planning Bill going through the Scottish Parliament as a means to try to secure green spaces for the future. In particular he would be happy to propose any amendments to the Bill drafted by APRS. He explained his current support for APRS members based in Calderbank who are currently fighting the proposed EuroPark development on Green Belt land in North Lanarkshire and expressed his willingness to help others trying to save Green Belt land where he can. Members thanked Mr Simpson for his support and the Chairman agreed there was much that could be collaborated on in future.

The Director then gave an illustrated presentation of the key achievements and events of 2017 covering policy development and advocacy, town and country planning, communications, partnership working, fundraising, membership, governance and management issues. He was particularly pleased to report the success of the *Have You Got The Bottle?* campaign for a deposit return system for drinks containers and cans in Scotland following the announcement by Scotland's First Minister that such a system would be introduced in Scotland under its Programme for Government. This has been one of the biggest success stories for APRS and its partner organisations in the campaign. The campaign for more National Parks in Scotland has also received a significant boost with the development of local groups in the Scottish Borders and Galloway which are campaigning for a National Park in their respective areas. Overall 2017 was yet another very busy year for APRS with numerous meetings with Scottish Ministers, Parliamentary briefings and significant media coverage for APRS projects.

The Director outlined APRS involvement in planning cases in Glencoe, Dirleton, Machrahanish and Loch Leven and highlighted the valuable service given by volunteers Karol Swanson and Duncan Campbell, Executive Committee members and Joan Geddes, former APRS Director. The Director outlined plans for the rest of 2018, including continued focus on the hunt for funds for the APRS Green Belts Alliance to promote the value of Scotland's Green Belts and support local groups in their work.

Finally, the Director stated his sadness at the death of Peter Bickmore Dundas in the summer of 2017. Not only had Peter served APRS for many years as Council Member, Trustee and Vice-Chairman but he had also been a good friend to staff who brought much good cheer and a listening ear into the office. He will be much missed by all.

The Annual Review was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by the Vice-Chairman and approved.

6. Appointment of independent examiner

The Treasurer proposed that Whitelaw Wells be appointed as independent examiner. This was seconded by the Vice-Chairman and approved.

7. Election of Office-Bearers

The Chairman reported that Colin Prior continues as President, as he has completed one year of his second three-year term. Vice-Presidents John Foster, Patrick Playfair-Hannay and Bill Wright have now completed their second three-year terms so are standing down as Vice-Presidents. Charles Strang continues as Vice-President as he has completed one year of his second three-year term. The Executive Committee proposed the appointment of Walter Simpson as a Vice-President for a first three-year term, in recognition of his long and greatly-appreciated service to APRS as Council Member, Administrator, Treasurer and Trustee. Charles Millar continues as Chairman, as he has completed one year of his second three-year term. John Thomson continues as Vice-Chairman, as he has completed one year of his first three-year term. The post of Honorary Treasurer was taken up by Craig Clarke in March 2018 when he was appointed by the Executive Committee. The election of the Office-Bearers was proposed by David Batty, seconded by Alastair Macbeth and approved.

8. Election of Council

Individual Members: The following eight Members of Council wished to be re-elected: Mary Armstrong; Mike Barnacle; Duncan Campbell; Michael Gascoigne; Rebecca Hughes; Graham Lang; Karol Swanson and Bridget Wilcox. Three additional people had been nominated as Members of Council: Judith Crabb; Catherine Gemmell and Bill Wright. The election of these Members was proposed by Karol Swanson, seconded by John Thomson and approved.

Constituent and Affiliated Societies: The Camping and Caravanning Club wished to be re-elected to Council. This was proposed by Brian Wood, seconded by Duncan Campbell and approved.

9. Election of Executive Committee.

The Chairman reported that Michael Gascoigne and Karol Swanson continue as Trustees, as they have each completed the first year of their second three-year terms of office. Rebecca Hughes continues as a Trustee, as she has completed the first year of her first three-year term of office. Duncan Campbell was co-opted as a Trustee in September 2017 and is now standing for election for his first three-year term of office. Catherine Gemmell was co-opted as a Trustee in March 2018 and is now standing for election for her first three-year term of office. The election of Duncan and Catherine was proposed by Walter Simpson, seconded by David Batty and approved.

10. Any Other Competent Business

Eleanor Morris raised the issue of proposed housing development near Culloden Battlefield in the Highlands. This was a long-running issue which should have been dealt with by the National Trust for Scotland many years ago when it had the chance to buy the land in question. It would appear that the development is to now go ahead, so she would like to know if APRS has a view on this or can take any action. The Director replied that he knew about this from his time at NTS, so would talk to his former colleagues there and look into the issue.

Alistair Macbeth wished to bring members' attention to clause 170 in the current Scottish Planning Policy, which states that "Areas identified for wind farms should be suitable for use in perpetuity". He felt that this worrying precedent should be

abolished under the new Planning Bill. The Director replied that this would not be dealt with in the Bill, as it is in the SPP which is planned to be reviewed after the Planning Bill passes through the Scottish Parliament. That would be the appropriate time to campaign on this clause.

Rebecca Hughes added that the forthcoming Review of the National Energy Strategy would also impact on the SPP and is one APRS should keep an eye on, as developments here will influence the parameters of wind-farm developments.

Hugh Crawford raised the issue of the nature of current Local Review Bodies in the planning system. He felt that many do not act in a democratic fashion and vote along party lines. Guidelines such as the code of conduct for chairmen are not followed. Mr Crawford wondered whether APRS could raise this as an issue to be addressed through the Planning Bill. The Director replied that APRS had not had the resources to respond to the Bill in full but has signed up to Scottish Environment LINK's response which is being led by Planning Democracy and the RSPB. The inadequacies of Local Review Bodies are part of this response.

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