



**APRS**

The Association for the  
Protection of Rural Scotland

Annual General Meeting

30 May 2019

Swanston Golf Club, Edinburgh

Draft Minutes

Present: Mike Barnacle, David Batty, Maureen Batty, Jane Bower, Duncan Campbell, Beryl Cowling, Mr Craig, Hugh Crawford, Mike Gascoigne, Catherine Gemmell, Ann Glen, Kenneth Graham (*Treasurer*), Rebecca Hughes, Margaret Hunter, Beryl Leatherland, John Mayhew (*Director*), Andrew McMillan, Charles Millar (*Chairman*), John Peter, Victoria Presly, Walter Simpson (*Vice-President*), Henrietta Simpson, Nina Sobecka (*Administrator*), Charles Strang (*Vice-President*), John Thomson (*Vice-Chairman*), Brian Wood, Ann Wood, Luke Whittle, Eleanor Young, Bridget Wilcox.

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chairman welcomed all APRS members and guests to the meeting and introduced Sam Lockhart, Marketing Manager at Swanston Farm, who proceeded to give members a fascinating illustrated talk on the history of the farm and golf club which was enjoyed by all.

2. Apologies

Apologies had been received from: Mary Armstrong, Sonia Cameron-Jacks, Derek Carter, Judith Crabb, Kathleen Dalyell, Althea Dundas-Bekker, Patrick Ford, John Gerrard, Alison Grant, Graham Lang, Marion Lang, Alastair Macbeth, Judith Mylne, Laurie Naumann, Colin Prior (*President*) and Karol Swanson.

3. Minutes of 2018 AGM

The Minutes were proposed by John Thomson, seconded by Ann Glen and approved.

4. Report and Financial Statements 2018

The Treasurer introduced the Report and Financial Statements for 2018. He explained that the finances of APRS were broadly in good shape. The total income for 2018 was £254k and total expenditure £204k, resulting in a satisfactory surplus of £50k. However over 85% of expenditure was on projects with restricted funds, so it was important also to look more closely at the status of the core unrestricted funds, which are crucial to APRS continuing to operate effectively into the future. Fortunately as the Treasurer explained the picture here is positive too, with unrestricted income of £29k and expenditure of £23k, resulting in an increase of unrestricted funds over the year from £32k to £38k.

The Treasurer also explained that these are the second set of financial statements prepared by our independent examiners Whitelaw Wells for which many thanks to them were due. Brian Wood asked for a breakdown of the

£17,000 allocated to *Travel and Subsistence* on page 16 as this seemed quite high. The Director explained that the Deposit Return System Project had paid for site visits to both Estonia and Norway to enable retailers, journalists, MSPs and NGO representatives to see deposit return systems in action. The associated flights and hotel expenses comprised much of this sum, which had all been funded by the grant from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. The Report and Financial Statements were proposed by Kenneth Graham, seconded by Catherine Gemmell and approved.

5. Annual Review 2018

The Director then gave an illustrated presentation of the key achievements and events of 2018 covering policy development and advocacy, town and country planning, communications, partnership working, fundraising, membership, governance and management issues. He was particularly pleased to report further success of the *Have You Got The Bottle?* campaign for a deposit return system for drinks containers, leading up to the recent announcement by the Environment Secretary on the detailed design of the system, including the proposed setting of the deposit level at 20 pence. This project continues to be one of the biggest success stories for APRS and its partner organisations in the campaign. The campaign for more National Parks in Scotland is also progressing with significant activity by local groups, particularly in Galloway and the Borders. Overall 2018 had been 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 Calderbank, Gatehouse of Fleet, Glencoe and Dirleton, 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 2019, 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 thanked Charles Millar for his time as Chairman of APRS, which had resulted in APRS growing significantly in stature and influence. Not only had he used his considerable abilities in fundraising to secure substantial funds for APRS, but he had also taken an active role in APRS projects, particularly the Deposit Return System campaign. The Director presented him with farewell gifts from APRS staff and Trustees.

The Annual Review was proposed by Kenneth Graham, seconded by Charles Strang and approved.

6. Appointment of independent examiner

The Treasurer proposed that Whitelaw Wells be appointed as independent examiner. This was seconded by Charles Strang and approved.

7. Election of Office-Bearers

The Chairman reported that Colin Prior would continue as President, as he had completed two years of his second three-year term. Charles Strang and Walter Simpson would continue as Vice-Presidents, as Charles had completed two years of his second three-year term and Walter had completed one year of his first three-year term. The Chairman reported that he was stepping down as Chairman, and that the Executive Committee proposed the election of current Vice-Chairman John Thomson to succeed him as Chairman for a first three-year term. The Executive Committee also proposed the election of current

Trustee Rebecca Hughes to succeed John Thomson as Vice-Chair for a first three-year term. Craig Clarke had resigned as honorary Treasurer in August 2018, and after a seven-month gap the Executive Committee had appointed Kenny Graham as honorary Treasurer in March 2019. The election of these Office-Bearers was proposed by Charles Strang, seconded by Jane Bower and approved. At this point John Thomson took over from Charles Millar to chair the rest of the meeting.

8. Election of Council

Individual Members: The following ten Members of Council wished to be re-elected: Mary Armstrong; Mike Barnacle; Duncan Campbell; Judith Crabb; Michael Gascoigne; Catherine Gemmell; Graham Lang; Karol Swanson; Bridget Wilcox; Bill Wright. Two additional people had also been nominated as Members of Council: Charles Millar and Victoria Presly. The election of these Members was proposed by Walter Simpson, seconded by David Batty and approved.

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

9. Election of Executive Committee.

The Chairman reported that the current Members of the Executive Committee were listed on page 9 of the Report and Financial Statements. Michael Gascoigne and Karol Swanson would continue as Trustees, as they had each completed two years of their second three-year terms of office. Duncan Campbell and Catherine Gemmell would continue as Trustees, as they had each completed one year of their first three-year term of office. Victoria Presly had been co-opted as a Trustee in March 2019 and was now standing for election for her first three-year term of office. The election of Victoria Presly was proposed by Jane Bower, seconded by Kenneth Graham and approved.

10. Any Other Competent Business

Mike Barnacle raised the issue of small communities losing so many of their facilities. Perth and Kinross has recently lost two schools, small shops and other services are being adversely affected and not enough is being done by local authorities to protect rural communities; mechanisms should be in place to support these areas. He also asked whether APRS would have time to lend support to calls for a Regional Park in the Ochil Hills and finally he commented on the complexities of the Planning Bill currently working its way through the Scottish Parliament.

The Director supported this view, reporting that the Scottish Parliament is having to process hundreds of amendments, taking up far more time than expected. In relation to Regional Parks the Director thought that Mike Barnacle should contact Graham Barrow, Scottish Campaign for National Parks (SCNP) Vice-Chairman, who had done a lot of research on Regional Parks and had recently compiled a report on this subject. He offered to send Mike Barnacle this report and Graham Barrow's contact details. Duncan Campbell supported the call for more Regional Parks and hoped that APRS and SCNP could give more priority to this issue. Jane Bower commented that tourism flourishes on designations, and that the loss of schools and other facilities only reinforces the arguments for more National and Regional Parks. The Chairman replied that he felt the arguments for both National and Regional Parks are broadly similar, and so perhaps a broader pitch might help to overcome the Scottish Government's funding resistance. Charles Strang commented that the retention of schools and other facilities is not given

sufficient emphasis in local authority development plans, which are often based on short-term planning.

Finally, Charles Strang raised the issue of the need to plan for the centenary of APRS in 2026, which will need good forward thinking.

The Chairman thanked all for coming and the meeting was closed.

21 June 2019