



**APRS**  
The Association for the  
Protection of Rural Scotland

### Annual General Meeting

Held by Zoom video conference on Wednesday 27 May 2020 at 10.30  
*Draft Minutes*

Present: Jane Bower, Duncan Campbell, Judith Crabb, Andy Dorin, John Esslemont, Catherine Gemmell, Kenny Graham (*Treasurer*), Rebecca Hughes (*Vice-Chair*), Julia Hume, Beryl Leatherland, Andrew McMillan, Charles Millar, Eddie Palmer, Walter Simpson (*Vice-President*), Charles Strang (*Vice-President*), Karol Swanson, John Thomson (*Chairman*), Eleanor Young, Bridget Wilcox. In attendance: John Mayhew (*Director*).

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chairman welcomed all APRS members to the meeting. He commented that, as far as he was aware, this was the first time in the 93-year history of APRS that there had been no physical AGM. As members know this year's physical AGM, due to have taken place at New Lanark, was cancelled because of the global coronavirus pandemic.

2. Apologies

Apologies had been received from: Alastair Macbeth, Colin Prior, Ben Tindall, Fiona Walker and Bill Wright.

3. Minutes of 2019 AGM

The Minutes were proposed by Charles Millar, seconded by Jane Bower and approved.

4. Report and Financial Statements 2019

The Chairman explained that to save postage only a summary of the accounts had been issued along with the AGM notice, but the full document had been on the website for the last few weeks. The Treasurer introduced the Report and Financial Statements for 2019. He explained that the finances of APRS were broadly in good shape. The total income for 2018 was £222k and total expenditure £223k, resulting in a small deficit of just over £1k.

However over 85% of expenditure was on projects with restricted funds, so it was important to look more closely at the status of the core funds, which are crucial to APRS continuing to operate effectively into the future. Fortunately the Treasurer explained the picture here was positive too, with unrestricted income of £32k and expenditure of £29k, resulting in an increase in unrestricted funds over the year of around £2k. This surplus arose from two main sources: contributions towards time and overhead costs from restricted funds; and continued donations, this year including from the Susan H Guy's Charitable Trust, Mrs M H McMillan's Charitable Trust and the third of three years' funding from

the Whitley Animal Protection Trust and the Craignish Trust. Thanks were due to these donors, indeed to all donors large and small.

Core costs comprise largely salaries and office costs. In relation to restricted funds, the largest project is the *Have You Got the Bottle?* campaign for a deposit return system (DRS) in Scotland. APRS had felt it was important to broaden funding for this project, so had secured a two year grant from the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation (EFF). In 2019 this grant was £13k following a grant of £45k in 2018. The Treasurer was pleased to report that it looked as if funding would continue for this project well into 2021. The National Parks project is currently in its third year of funding from an anonymous charitable trust. The Martin Wells Wildlife Maintenance Trust made a grant of £1k to the Green Belts project and the Executive Committee had also decided to designate £3k of the £5k Guy Trust donation to this project.

The Treasurer explained that these were the third set of financial statements prepared by independent examiners Whitelaw Wells for which many thanks to them were due. The Report and Financial Statements were proposed by Kenneth Graham, seconded by Walter Simpson and approved.

The Chairman explained that APRS had not been able to mail printed copies of the Annual Review out to members, but that it had been on the website for the previous few weeks along with the May newsletter. The Director had also posted a video on the APRS YouTube channel, outlining the key achievements and events of 2019, which he hoped that members present had seen.

The Director explained that he was not going to repeat what was in the Annual Review or the video, but to use the present opportunity to thank people who make his job possible. First he wanted to thank Eleanor Young, APRS volunteer, who was present. More thanks were due to another volunteer, Alastair Macbeth, who had done a power of work on Green Belts. Thanks too to staff Jenni Hume and Nina Sobeca, to political consultant James Mackenzie, to Green Belts consultant Nikki Sinclair, and to Joanna McFarlane, our freelance education officer working on resources about DRS and other issues for use in schools. Finally the Director wished to thank outgoing President Colin Prior, and all APRS members, particularly those on Council and Executive Committee. Duncan Campbell responded with thanks to the Director for all his work in 2019.

The Chairman added huge thanks to Charles Millar, his predecessor, who amongst many other contributions had started up the DRS project.

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

5. Appointment of independent examiner

The Treasurer proposed that Whitelaw Wells be re-appointed as independent examiner. This was seconded by Rebecca Hughes and approved.

6. Election of Office-Bearers

The Chairman thanked Colin Prior who was retiring as President, having completed two three-year terms; the Executive Committee was proposing Patricia Macdonald for election for a first three-year term. The Chairman was delighted that she had agreed to stand for election, as he believed that she understood what APRS is about and would make a significant and valued contribution. The Chairman also thanked Charles Strang, who was retiring as a Vice-President, having completed two three-year terms; Walter Simpson was continuing as a Vice-President, having completed two years of his first three-year term. John Thomson was continuing as Chairman, having completed one year of

his first three-year term. Rebecca Hughes was continuing as Vice-Chair, having completed one year of her first three-year term. The Executive Committee was proposing that Kenny Graham should continue as Treasurer for a further year. Duncan Campbell proposed the appointment of Patricia Macdonald as President and Kenny Graham as Treasurer, Catherine Gemmell seconded and these appointments were approved.

7. Election of Council

Individual Members and Constituent or Affiliated Societies: the Chairman thanked Bill Wright, who was retiring from Council after 17 years of service to APRS as Director, Vice-President and Council Member. The following 13 Members of Council wished to be re-elected: Mary Armstrong; Mike Barnacle; Camping and Caravanning Club; Duncan Campbell; Judith Crabb; Michael Gascoigne; Catherine Gemmell; Graham Lang; Charles Millar; Victoria Presly; Charles Strang, Karol Swanson; Bridget Wilcox. Two people had also been nominated as Members of Council: Andy Dorin and John Esslemont. The election of these Members was proposed by Walter Simpson, seconded by Beryl Leatherland and approved.

8. Election of Executive Committee.

The Chairman reported that the current Members of the Executive Committee were listed on page 8 of the Report and Financial Statements. He thanked Michael Gascoigne and Karol Swanson, who were retiring as Trustees, having each completed two three-year terms. Duncan Campbell and Catherine Gemmell were continuing as Trustees, having each completed two years of their first three-year term. Victoria Presly continues as a Trustee, having completed one year of her first three-year term. Two Members of Council were also proposed for election to the Executive Committee for a first three-year term: Judith Crabb and John Esslemont. The election of these members was proposed by Charles Strang, seconded by Rebecca Hughes and approved.

9. Any Other Competent Business

Following interest from members, the Director agreed, with Eleanor Young's help, to publish a more detailed biography of the new President Patricia Macdonald on the APRS website.

Andy Dorin expressed his delight at being elected to Council and reading about the work of APRS. He wondered whether having a sole affiliated organisation on Council appeared somewhat anomalous, and wondered whether it would be good to pursue other organisations to balance this out. The Chairman explained that APRS has many Community Councils as members, demonstrating its reach and credibility, but took Andy Dorin's point entirely. The Director added that it is important to distinguish between Council Members and ordinary members. In the past many organisations had been represented on the governing bodies of other organisations, but this is less common now. Relationships tend to be more on staff to staff level, through for example Scottish Environment Link (LINK), Scotland's Landscape Alliance and individual contacts. Having said that APRS would still welcome new bodies as members or on its Council. He hoped for example that campaign partners from the DRS project and those involved in the APRS Green Belts Alliance may prove fertile ground for recruitment to Council; perhaps APRS could pursue this more in future.

Charles Strang wondered if there was any mileage in promoting the piloting of Reverse Vending Machines (RVMs) by supermarkets. Also were steps being taken towards any publication to celebrate the centenary of APRS in 2026? The

Director commented that RVM pilots were already underway by various manufacturers in for example Tesco and Co-operative supermarkets. He explained that it would be a sensitive issue if we were perceived as promoting any particular company and was therefore reluctant to follow this route. He reported that there had been no work on the APRS centenary yet but felt that this should be an item on an Executive Committee agenda soon. Charles Strang responded that he was not proposing the promotion of any particular RVM, rather trying to encourage supermarkets to make them a feature of their offer. The Director replied that all supermarkets are aware that this is coming. A scheme operator will be set up soon, run by supermarkets and other businesses. They are in no doubt that DRS is coming up and will be pro-active in its delivery. He said he would investigate whether anything else can be done.

Catherine Gemmell observed that many businesses will be on the steering board for the new system operator and that all would need to undertake lots of education work to make sure that their customers were fully on board. She would be surprised if they put money into RVM pilots right now as they are so busy getting their full systems ready. Rather than getting involved in the detail of RVMs, APRS should be ready to promote the fact it was instrumental in setting up DRS in Scotland at every opportunity.

Duncan Campbell raised the issue of active travel as part of ongoing arrangements to deal with the Covid 19 situation. There was a possibility of conflict in relation to the multiple use of paths, so suggested that APRS should promote better behaviour in the form of a code for multi-use paths. The Chairman said that multi-use paths were a perennial issue which should be set in the context of the wider response to Covid-19. Beryl Leatherland mentioned the National Access Forum which had issued various notices concerning the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.

The Vice-Chair raised the issue of the green recovery programme being led by LINK. She was representing APRS on a short-term LINK working group on this issue. The Scottish Government's advisory committee had asked LINK to comment on its green recovery plan. Active travel was part of this as well many other wider issues including landscape and health. The Vice-Chair was trying to get more focus on broader natural capital issues and away from a narrower focus on habitats and species. Members were welcome to feed any points to the Vice-Chair.

Jane Bower commented that the natural capital concept was good but that no-one had yet put any numbers on it. It was crucial to do so in order that people can make comparisons. The Vice-Chair reported that Scottish Natural Heritage was running a pilot project on natural capital accounting so this will be an interesting and developing area to watch. The Chairman stated that APRS would be doing LINK bodies collectively a service if we could shift them to a wider focus that the public and politicians understand better.

The Chairman thanked all for attending and closed the meeting.