

PRESENT: Bob Shand (Chair), Mary Sweetland (Treasurer), Andy Sinnott (Minutes secretary), Andrew Curry (Trustee), John Struthers (Trustee), James Macrae, Jean Shand, Gavin McLellan, Rob Vincent, Alan Crawford, Alan McMullen, Janet Beveridge, Colin & Margaret Stead and Audrey Baird.

APOLOGIES: Steve Macken, Elaine & Chris Ellen, Francis Hall, Gavin Dewar and Sally & Peter Page.

WELCOME

Bob Shand thanked everyone for attendance and confirmed that the meeting was quorate.

MINUTES OF LAST AGM

The adoption of the minutes of the last AGM was agreed, proposed by Bob Shand and seconded by Andrew Curry. There were no matters arising from the minutes.

REPORT AND ACCOUNTS TO 31st AUGUST 2024

Bob Shand gave an overview of the activities throughout the last year.

Highlights being :

- Completion of the Local Place Plan – Bob thanked Rob Vincent for chairing the LPP Group and those that participated. It provides ambitious projects for the next 10 years. The Plan was validated by LLTNPA and registered with them and WDC.
Note – Alan McMullen disagrees that the process was valid and is concerned by some of the content concerning him and his neighbours.
- Renewable Energy Sources – an informational event was held in the hall and two thermal imaging cameras purchased for community use.
- Footpaths – there has not been so much progress recently for a variety of reasons. Work is still needed on the Aber bridge where access is still an issue. A path to the Old Kirk is also under discussion but faces landowner reluctance.
- Collaboration with neighbouring communities has been pursued to see where we can share resources on common interests including the potential to share the costs of a development worker.

Mary Sweetland gave an overview of the accounts. In the year to 31 August 2024 KCT had 32 full members. The annual accounts are publicly available on the Gartocharn.org website. Through the financial year we ran a deficit of £145.58 due to a temporary payment to KMHA which was then returned in the following financial year.

The reserve at year end was £6180.01

Gavin McLellan asked what was meant by *restricted funds* : MS explained that due to the cancellation of the original Aber bridge repair project, we hold £941.38 of restricted funds belonging to LLTNPA which cannot be used for any other KCT business. LLTNPA do not have a mechanism for repayment of unused funds so if the Aber bridge was to be repaired it will be put towards that.

The full accounts were inspected by independent examiner David S. Taylor and approved by the trustees. KCT thanks David for his services.

ELECTION OF TRUSTEES

At the start of the year, the Trust had six Trustees, two of whom stand down each year in rotation to allow new Trustees to be elected. This year Sam Morrison stood down permanently mid-term and Bob Shand was planning to stand down permanently at this AGM. As there were no candidates to be new trustees, Bob was prepared to be re-elected as a trustee but will give up his office of chairman.

It was moved and unanimously approved to re-elect Bob Shand as trustee. Thus there are now only five elected Trustees.

Office bearers will be appointed at the next trustees meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS THAT HAS BEEN NOTIFIED TO BOARD PRIOR TO MEETING-

It is proposed that the Trustees investigate and discuss the possibility of amalgamation with (or otherwise restructuring the roles of) The Gartocharn Trust and KCT in order to ensure appropriate Governance of the Millennium Hall property and the oversight of the activities of Kilmarnock Millennium Association.

In common with other community bodies, there is a lack of people willing to participate as volunteers, members or trustees. As GT & KCT have similar remits for the same community, the proposal is to look at how best resources could be shared.

After discussion the proposal was amended as follows :

It is proposed that the Trustees investigate and discuss the possibility of amalgamation with (or otherwise restructuring the roles of) The Gartocharn Trust and KCT.

This was discussed and accepted unanimously.

Note – representatives of GT and KMA were present.

Should it prove feasible to proceed, an EGM will be called or presented to membership at the next AGM of the respective organisations.

The business of the AGM closed at 8.00pm

Audrey Baird from the Balloch Castle Country Park Regeneration Group gave an informative presentation on their work at the park.

Highlights:

- The group formed 4 years ago over a common interest with the love of the park and the potential for improvement of both built and natural assets within. There was a common concern over the proliferation of invasive non-native species.
- There are only 40 country parks in the whole of Scotland and this is the only one in LLTNP. There are fantastic public transport links and an annual footfall of over 1.2 million people (and 300,000 dogs).
- Audrey described the financial situation versus the costs of restoration and noted the speed of deterioration of the built assets e.g. the castle makes restoration even more challenging.
- BCCPRG want to make the park a financially sustainable concern, realise the community value and outdoor education opportunities by working with WDC.
- Scottish Government nature policies are favouring such projects with their planning framework and biodiversity ambitions.

Information on their work can be found here :

<https://ballochparkregen.co.uk/>