

JOHN MUIR TRUST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2017

JOHN
MUIR
TRUST

Members are cordially invited to attend the Thirty-fourth Annual General Meeting at 11.30am on Saturday 27 May at Nevis Centre, An Aird, Fort William PH33 6AN

Agenda

1. Welcome and apologies
2. Minute of the Thirty-third Annual General Meeting
3. Matters arising from the Minute
4. Chair's report
5. Financial report and annual accounts for the year ended 31 December 2016
6. Reappointment of auditors Messrs Scott-Moncrieff
7. Election of trustees
8. Special Resolution: To amend the Articles of Association of the John Muir Trust by revising Article 23 to read as follows: "23. The limit on eligibility for re-election as a Trustee in article 22 shall not apply to the Trustee appointed as Chairman. Where the Chairman has been a Trustee for six years or more he/she shall be eligible for election as a Trustee until the end of his/her term of office as Chairman but shall not then be eligible for re-election as a Trustee until an Annual General Meeting held at least one year after the end of his/her term as Chairman."
9. Other relevant business

2017 AGM Special Resolution:

To amend the Articles of Association of the John Muir Trust by revising Article 23 to read as follows: "23. The limit on eligibility for re-election as a Trustee in article 22 shall not apply to the Trustee appointed as Chairman. Where the Chairman has been a Trustee for six years or more he/she shall be eligible for election as a Trustee until the end of his/her term of office as Chairman but shall not then be eligible for re-election as a Trustee until an Annual General Meeting held at least one year after the end of his/her term as Chairman."

Background: Article 22 of the Trust allows a Trustee to serve for up to two consecutive three-year terms. Similarly, Article 31 allows the Chair to serve up to two consecutive three-year terms as Chair. As a three-year term of the chair may not coincide with his/her three-year term as a Trustee, Article 23 enables a chair to exceed his/her limit of two consecutive terms as a Trustee in order to complete his/her term as chair. However, the wording of the article allows the chair to complete two successive three-year terms as chair only in the case of being first elected to the chair in his/her first term as a Trustee: it does not allow a chair elected during his/her second term as a Trustee to fulfil two three-year terms as chair. In order to remove this anomaly, the Trustees recommend Article 23 be revised to read as above.

Draft Minute 2016

Thirty-third Annual General Meeting of the John Muir Trust, held at Ironworks, Inverness on Saturday 4 June 2016.

1. Welcome and apologies

Peter Pearson (Chair) welcomed 110 guests, members and staff to the meeting and thanked them for their attendance.

Apologies had been received from Anne Reece, Dr David Bell, Elizabeth & Peter Hansen, Geoffrey Williams, Hamish Trench, Heather Alexander, Ian Ross, Jamie Whittle, Jen Ross, Jenny and John Briggs, John and Margery Naylor, John Foster, JR Bennett, Beryl Leatherland, Kate Ashbrook, Kate Forbes (MSP), Mary Jane Prentice, Robert Watt, Sir John Kerr

The chair noted the untimely death in Glencoe of Robin Garton a long term supporter of the Trust, who had often attended the AGM.

2. Minute of Previous Meeting

The minute of the Thirty-second Annual General Meeting, held on Saturday 16 May 2015, was approved.

3. Matters Arising from the Minute

There were none.

4. Chair's Report

Peter Pearson said that his report was an update on progress on the objectives set out in the 2015-19 Corporate Strategy. The Strategy was prefaced by a statement of the Trust's values, drawn up by staff and approved by Trustees, the first of which was "we are bold in our defence of wild places". He drew attention to the successful legal action against the Scottish Government as an example of that boldness: the Trust was a relatively small body but he was proud that it made a disproportionately-large impact.

The first strategic objective was "to protect the wildest places across the United Kingdom". The Trust was conscious of its UK-wide remit and Trustees had been disappointed when a proposed land purchase in Wales had fallen through. The Trust was however currently investigating the possible acquisition of a high-profile property south of the border which would greatly improve the Trust's visibility in England and Wales. The work to defend wild land from intrusive windfarms had included the Stronelairg judicial review and the campaign to protect Wild Land Area 34, including resisting the Sallachy and Glencassley applications. The Trust had been active in influencing policy, especially on deer management with the passage and forthcoming implementation of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2016.

The second objective was “to enhance wild places for people and nature”. The Trust played an active role in partnerships in Assynt and at Ben Nevis (Patricia Jordan from the Nevis Partnership having been elected a Trustee in 2015) and had co-operated with a neighbouring community based landowner in the very successful appeal for footpath work on Sulven, to which the Trust had brought expertise in fundraising and path maintenance. For the second year running, the Trust had been voted Campaigner of the Year by the UK-wide readers of *The Great Outdoors* magazine. The condition of the Trust’s properties had been improved, highlights being the presentation by the Scottish Environment Minister of the Scotland’s Finest Woods award for work at Knoydart and the work to repair footpaths in Skye, especially on Blaven. The Trust had played a part in enhancing wild places especially in urban areas through the John Muir Award and its active support of the London National Park City proposal.

The third objective was “to encourage people to value and care for wild places”. To that, the John Muir Award was the key, generating much positive coverage in local media and benefiting a wide range of participants including Dochgarroch Primary School (who had given a presentation to the members’ gathering the previous evening) and a group with dementia in Falkirk, walking in Forestry Commission woodlands. During the year, important milestones had included the 250,000th Award, the 50,000th Award in Wales and the 25,000th Award in collaboration with the Cairngorms National Park. Other highlights in raising awareness included the Spirit of John Muir lecture in London by Chris Packham. The Wild Space visitor centre and exhibition space in Pitlochry continued to attract attention, with over 27,000 visitors in 2015.

The final objective was “to be an efficient, effective, creative and sustainable organisation”. It had been a challenging year, with fundraising for charities becoming more difficult and with reduced legacy income. To keep costs at a sustainable level, it had been necessary to reduce staff numbers and Peter Pearson paid tribute to the way in which staff had reacted to the changes. An upturn in legacy income in recent months had however allowed an increase in fundraising staff. Membership had increased in the first quarter of 2016 and the new website had raised the profile of the Trust. Members’ groups, and volunteers, made a valuable contribution.

More remained to be done, with fundraising the priority. But, 18 months into the period of the Corporate Strategy, a great impact had been made on all objectives. Peter Pearson thanked staff, Trustees, volunteers, members’ groups and the wider membership for their contribution to that achievement.

The Chair’s Annual Report was approved.

5. Financial Report and Annual Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2015

Jim Gibson, Trustee and Convener of the Finance Committee, thanked Fiona Kindness, Director of Resources, and her colleagues for their work on the Accounts, which had been particularly complex because of changes in accounting regulations.

Fiona Kindness presented the Accounts, highlighting that income had been £1.9 million and expenditure £2.4 million, giving a deficit of £0.5 million which was slightly lower than had been budgeted. Income had come from legacies (24% - uncomfortably high), individual subscriptions and donations (32%), grants (26%, including particularly generous support from the Reece Foundation), with other sources including merchandising (5%) contributing the balance. The majority of the Trust’s expenditure had been on staff salaries and related costs (£1.5 million in 2015). The deficit had been met from reserves. The Trust’s free reserves remain within the stated policy 4-6 months’ budgeted expenditure but which would desirably be greater. The restructuring exercise at the end of 2015 has reduced the cost base from £2.4 million to a budgeted £2.1 million for 2016.

Jim Gibson spoke about the budget for 2016. The original budget had envisaged income of £1.7 million and expenditure of £2.2 million but enhanced legacy income, which could not have been foreseen, meant that the target was now to break even. The Trust was over-dependant on legacies and it was desirable to increase income from other sources, especially by more members making a larger contribution, although that was easier said than done. Denis Mollison, a former Trustee, noted that more members would tend to lead to an increase in legacies: it was important to learn to manage volatile income.

The Accounts, having been approved by Trustees, were noted.

6. Reappointment of Auditors

Messrs Scott-Moncrieff were reappointed as auditors.

7. Election of Trustees

Stuart Brooks, Chief Executive and Returning Officer, reported that there had been 6 candidates for 5 Trustee vacancies. Votes cast totalled 1,259 (compared to 1,306 in 2015) and Jo Moulin, Peter Foulkes, Hugh Salvesen, David Broom and Douglas Wynn had been elected – in Jo Moulin’s case for a second term.

Peter Pearson thanked the 4 Trustees who were standing down – Gill Bond, Rob McMorran, Will Williams (after a total of 15 years as a Trustee) and Bill Wright.

8. Special presentation to Keith and Jane Anderson

A presentation was made to Keith and Jane Anderson, who each had 25 years’ association with the Trust, working on membership and information technology, in token of their contribution to the development of the organisation.

9. Other relevant business

There was none.

Peter Pearson thanked everyone who had attended the meeting, Jim Gibson and Fiona Kindness for their presentation of the Accounts, the Chief Executive and staff, and particularly Emma Cessford who had organised the AGM and the associated members’ gathering.

[To be approved at the Annual General Meeting in 2017]