

JOHN MUIR TRUST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2023

JOHN
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TRUST

Members are cordially invited to attend the Fortieth Annual General Meeting of the John Muir Trust at 12 noon on Saturday 4 November 2023 online. (Our online AGM provider will be in touch with you to let you know how to join the meeting.) An Open Forum will take place after the AGM. Apologies and questions in advance can be sent to Membership, John Muir Trust, Tower House, Station Road, Pitlochry PH16 5AN or email: membership@johnmuirtrust.org

Annual General Meeting Agenda

1. Welcome and apologies
2. Minute of the Thirty-ninth Annual General Meeting [vote]
3. Matters arising from the Minute
4. Chair's report
5. Financial report and annual accounts for the year ended 31 December 2022
6. Membership subscriptions
7. Following tendering process for new auditors in October, direct the Board to appoint formally the selected firm as new auditors for the John Muir Trust in time for the next audit cycle (2023). [vote]
8. Election of Trustees
9. Other relevant business

John Muir Trust Annual General Meeting 2022

Draft Minutes

Thirty-ninth Annual General Meeting, held online on Saturday 11 June 2022

1. Welcome and apologies

Jane Smallman, Vice Chair, welcomed nearly 100 Members, Trustees and staff to the meeting.

Apologies had been received from Alison Leaf, Angela Soper, Stella King, Michael Rusbridge, C. G. Dilworth, Patricia Smith and Beryl Leatherland.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the Thirty-eighth Annual General Meeting and Extraordinary General Meeting, held on Saturday 19 June 2021, were approved following a vote.

3. Matters arising from the Minutes

There were none.

4. Chair's Report

The beginning of 2021 saw the pandemic continue to impact some of our charitable work, but by the end of the year we had seen progress in many areas.

With thanks to our Members, supporters and our staff moving out of lockdown we saw:

- A nearly 40 per cent increase of John Muir Award activity in schools. In 2021 we supported 1,696 organisations to engage over 21,000 Award participants with wild places.
- Our volunteering work started to return, albeit slowly. In the second half of 2021 we managed to achieve 13 volunteer work parties totalling 127 volunteer days.

Notably, those volunteer days, work with corporate partners and the hard work of our staff team and local contractors also saw the Trust put another 43,500 native broadleaf trees into the ground across the wild places we support and manage.

- Our wild ways path maintenance work saw major footpath repairs carried out on Nevis, Quinag, Schiehallion, Sandwood Bay and at Glenridding Common, as we continue to manage visitor pressures across these locations. This included 43 days of work on the path into Steall Gorge at Nevis as the Trust responded to an unexpected path collapse.

This year also saw the Board of Trustees make a number of decisions in support of the organisation.

- Throughout 2021, Trustees sought input from the membership through a consultation exercise and worked closely with the organisation's leadership team to debate, consider and ultimately approve the development of a new Strategic Plan for the Trust.
- In preparing for the new strategy, the Trust has moved to run the delivery of its charitable activities through the creation of three Regional Delivery Teams. These are split across the geography of the United Kingdom into Northern, Central and Southern teams.
- During 2021 we continued to see managed growth in the staff team with an increase in headcount to almost 60 people. Trustees also agreed the recruitment of a further 11 new roles towards the end of 2021, the majority of which have now been filled in the first half of this year.
- We will continue to ask our leadership team to run an efficient and effective organisation, while recognising there has never been a more important time to deliver even more activity against our charitable objectives. To do that we have asked and will support the Trust leadership team to further develop and train our existing staff, while making the investment to bring in new skills as required.

During 2021 Trustees agreed to the strategic acquisition of land containing a redundant fish hatchery, residential property and lochan at Kilmarie, itself adjacent to current land in our care at Strathaird near Elgol on Skye. The purchase removed a right of servitude that existed between the areas and has opened up a development opportunity on non-crofted land. The next steps agreed by the Trustees were to explore the feasibility of developing this site to meet our charitable objectives, including our express wish to involve the local community in any discussions.

We were delighted to see that following the Trust's contribution of £100,000 towards the community buy-out of the Langholm Moor during 2020, the community went on to purchase an initial area of land and the Trust has continued to support and promote the initiative throughout 2021.

It is also appropriate that we thank Dave Gibson, our previous Chair for his work at the Trust, which came to an end earlier this year. Dave resigned as Chair following discussions with the Trustees. He had originally intended to stay as a Trustee but subsequently resigned from that role as well. During his time as chair Dave supported the organisation through an unprecedented pandemic, contributed to

the introduction of new Articles of Association, and gave guidance on the development of the new Strategic Plan.

We recently had to correct the results of the Trustee election for 2021, having uncovered a manifest error in the analysis and reporting of the results conducted by Civica Election Services. The voting services provider confirmed, following its own investigation, that a manual error meant it had incorrectly reported the 2021 Trustee election results to the Trust. The Trust was offered an unreserved public apology and immediately took action to notify those affected and to correct the result. The Trust confirmed this was an isolated incident and agreed compensation with Civica Election Services.

During 2021 the Trust developed a new Strategic Plan. With thanks to the almost 200 Members who responded to the consultation on our proposed objectives, and whose input allowed us to further develop the narrative that will position us to be successful in an increasingly competitive landscape.

Our vision continues to be a world where wild places are valued for present and future generation. Our purpose is to enhance, protect and repair wild places for the benefit of people and nature. As Christina Fugueres said last year at COP26 held in Glasgow: 'This is the most challenging decade in human history' Never has there been a better time to put wild places front and centre in tackling global crises. To do this effectively Trustees recognise we need to be ambitious in our plans for the next five years.

We are expressing this through a clear narrative centred on three freedoms; where nature has the freedom to repair itself, people have the freedom to enjoy the benefits and communities have the freedom to thrive.

We will work towards realising these freedoms through three actions. We will demonstrate what the exemplary management of wild places looks like – working with local communities, sharing standards and managing some of the UK's finest wild places. We will inspire people to protect wild places – creating opportunities for people to volunteer and working with educators to link wild places to learning. We will evidence the benefits that wild places bring to society – supporting decision makers to protect and enhance them at all levels of government

Underpinning this is a need to be a relevant and credible organisation. During 2021 Trustees agreed two new areas of work that will help underpin the new strategy.

- A policy called Wild Places for All, and a related action plan that increases our focus on equality, diversity and inclusion across all aspects of our work.
- A plan to make the Trust carbon credible, by minimising the environmental impact of our day-to-day operations. We are looking at carbon in a holistic, conscious, systemic and ecologically responsible way. Our various initiatives have seen us reduce our greenhouse gas emissions as an organisation by 11 per cent in the past year. At a policy level, we are pushing for the adoption of a Carbon Emissions Land Tax, which would see a graduated levy imposed on those areas of land contributing the greatest amount of greenhouse gas emissions.

As you will have seen in our annual report and further outlined by Trustee and Finance Sub-committee Convenor Jim Gibson, the Trust's financial affairs are in a healthy position. While we must not be complacent, and there is a need to raise further income in pursuit of our ambitions, we are well able at this time to make any considered investment in our new Strategy. Some of the ways we are doing this are:

- Solid foundations: 2021 a record year for Trust income with a growing fund-raising team to support it

- Diversifying income: we have a diverse set of income streams and methods of fundraising
- Income Generation Plan: Staff are working to target ambitious projects via improving our commercial offering and developing strong connections with major donors and philanthropists

5. Membership subscriptions

No changes proposed.

6. Financial Report and Annual Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2021.

Jim Gibson, Trustee and Convenor of the Finance Committee, thanked Kerry Ross (Director of Finance and Resources) for her work on the preparation of the Accounts against a very tight deadline and Lisa Branter (Interim Director of Finance and Resources) who joined us a couple of months ago. 2021 has been a very much better year than we expected, however the situation post Covid is still fraught with uncertainties and challenges, nevertheless we are in a strong position to face these challenges.

Jim explained that income, at just short of £3.68 million, comes from a variety of sources. Legacy income has been particularly strong at £1.6 million. Much of our income comes directly or indirectly from our Members - we estimate somewhere between £1.2 and £1.5 million.

In 2021, income from charitable trusts and grants increased after declining the year before. Our investment portfolio recorded a gain of half a million pounds in 2021 but has fallen back since then. Expenditure, at little over £3.1 million, was value for money.

Summarising the 2021 budget, Lisa Branter said that there was a 23% increase in spend from 2020 to 2021. In 2021 salary costs increased by £121,000 as the Trust recruited in preparation for our Strategic Plan. Other staff-related costs increased by £33,000 to provide training and development. In 2022, income has been budgeted at £3.6 million and expenditure at £4.3 million – a significant increase which will be funded from reserves held by the Trust to deliver the ambitious strategic plan targets approved by the Trustees. Overall in 2022, we are spending more on all expenditure headings including land, development and communications as well as bringing in the skills and expertise we need to take the Trust forward in line with our new strategic plan.

Free reserves at the end of the year stood at £2.9 million. This will enable us to respond flexibly to situations and opportunities as they arise.

7. Reappointment of Auditors

Jim Gibson proposed the reappointment as auditors of Johnston Carmichael LLP; the appointment was approved by Members following a vote.

8. Election of Trustees

Returning Officer David Balharry reported on the 2022 Election of Trustees. There were six valid nominations for five vacancies. An election was held and Mark Aitken, John Finney, Jim Sloane, Sheila Wren and Richard Eastmond were elected.

He welcomed the new and returning Trustees and thanked those Trustees who were demitting office – Chris Loynes, Dave Gibson - and paid tribute to Philip Graves who died in early 2022.

9. Other relevant business

None.

Jane Smallman expressed the gratitude of the Trust to its Members, volunteers, donors, partners, fundraisers, friends and supporters – and encouragement to all of those delivering and participating in the John Muir Award. She closed the meeting.