



Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on

31st March 2021

A virtual meeting held via Zoom

Present/apologies for absence:

- **Present:** Luke Emerton (Chair), Iain Frazer (Treasurer), Hugh Edmond, Anne Hislop (Vice chair), David Howell, Iain MacKay, Chris Robinson (Co.Sec.), Kayt Howell (Manager), Gordon Cowtan (Consultant)
- 11 additional FDT members. Total members present = 18
- **Apologies:** None

A power point presentation was shared onto the screen with slides to accompany the agenda points.

Kayt outlined some 'housekeeping' rules for the meeting including the fact that the meeting would be recorded.

I. Welcome and apologies by Chair (Luke Emerton)

- Luke welcomed all present to the meeting and explained that the AGM had been postponed from its usual time of year as it had been hoped to hold an actual meeting. Unfortunately, due to Covid 19 this has not been possible. It is hoped that an event can be held later in the year where people can get together even if it is an outdoors event.
- Luke introduced himself as the Chair of the FDT and thanked David Howell for his hard work and commitment as the previous Chair.
- Luke introduced Anne Hislop (Vice-chair) and Chris Robinson (Company Secretary).

II. Financial report by Treasurer (Iain Frazer)

- Iain presented a slide which showed a condensed set of figures and noted that the full accounts are available to view on the FDT website.
- Iain referred to the fact that the income from the wind turbine in autumn 2019 was not sufficient to cover the mortgage. This had been anticipated and funds had been saved to cover the deficit.
- Overall, there had been a decent income over the year. Most of the funds are in the FDT account but some is being kept in the Fintry Renewable Energy Enterprise (FREE) account in case of future shortfalls.
- The main problem being faced by the FDT is the sizeable deficit in the Fintry Community Energy (FCE) account. Steps are being taken to resolve this but it does mean that the FDT are not in the position to give grants etc. at the moment.

III. General activities report by Manager (Kayt Howell)

- Kayt read through her report which highlighted the major activities and achievements of the FDT during the financial year to 30 June 2020. A copy of this is available on the FDT website.

IV. Consultant's report by Gordon Cowtan

- Gordon explained that his remit when he was appointed as a consultant to the FDT had been to look after the District Heating System at Balgair and to develop the Futures project in conjunction with Kayt which will help to define what the Trust should be doing moving forward.
- The issues at Balgair became the most pressing issues and Gordon has been working on finding a solution that works for both the residents and the Trust.
- Gordon explained that the heating system at Balgair is a biomass system fuelled by woodchip that provides heat and hot water for 26 homes, the clubhouse and some showers. The system was installed in 2015 and as well as the initial teething problems, has never generated the income that had been predicted. The heat demand from the residents has been lower than anticipated and there are high heat losses throughout the system. As much as 40% of the heat produced is lost. Maintenance costs have also been much higher than predicted.
- The FDT has had to subsidise the system constantly. This year this has been for around £40K. As a result of all this, Gordon was tasked with trying to find a solution. He approached the Scottish Government for help and they commissioned independent engineers to produce a report about the system. This was published in November and highlights several issues with the system including problems caused by poor initial installation. Two main options were suggested as solutions:
 - Replace the system completely.
 - Invest money into improving the system.Both options have drawbacks. There is no guarantee that investing money in the current system would result in sufficient improvement to make it sustainable. Replacing the system may cost more than the Trust can afford, would be disruptive to householders and may result in the re-carbonisation of properties that are currently carbon neutral. This is obviously at odds with the aims of the FDT.
- Replacing the system is the most likely option at this stage and Gordon has been working closely with Home Energy Scotland (HES) to look at alternative options. Unfortunately this has been delayed by the current lockdown restrictions.

V. Election of Directors (by Zoom poll)

- Luke gave a huge thank you to Hugh for his service as a Board member for over 8 years. Hugh's calm presence will be missed and the Board were grateful for Hugh's offer of continued support and assistance.
- Every year, the two longest serving members of the Board are required to stand down. They can then stand for re-election if they wish to. This year, David and Hugh were required to stand down. David wished to stand for re-election.
- Iain M had been co-opted onto the Board but wished to stand for election as a full Board member.
- Josh Thornhill also wished to stand for election to the Board.
- The three candidates gave short statements to introduce themselves and explain why they want to be on the FDT Board.
- A poll was conducted asking those present at the meeting if they were happy to accept the three candidates onto the Board. The results were 16 for, 1 against.

VI. Questions from the floor

- A member asked what the total cost of Balgair to date is. Gordon said costs were around £540K. The initial installation was funded by a combination of grant funding, a loan from EST and a small amount from FDT. Around £100K has been spent on subsidising the system and there is still £200K to repay on the loan.
- A member asked how many houses were benefitting from the scheme. Answer: 26
- A member noted that many people have been unhappy with biomass installations. Gordon pointed out that the issues have not been with the biomass boiler but with the district heating system and felt that there had been a lack of knowledge and

expertise during the installation. A member asked if the original installers were still operating and Gordon affirmed that they are.

- A member asked if it was possible to default on the HSE loan. Gordon said this would not be a good solution.
- A member asked if the Trust had been approached by Force 9 developers. Gordon replied that the Trust had been approached several years ago regarding the original development but not about the Shelloch Wind Farm. Kayt confirmed that this was the case but added that the FDT had had conversations with Fintry Community Council (FCC) and had offered their thoughts and advice.
- A member asked about any future plans for extra charging points for electric vehicles as the ChargeYourCar network is changing ownership in the summer and the current card scheme will be removed. Kayt replied that the FDT had received that information today but had not had opportunity to discuss it yet. The amount of use of the charging point is costing the FDT a considerable amount per year and it is likely that a charge will be introduced.
- A member mentioned discussions with the owner of the anaerobic digestive plant near the village. The process produces gas for heating and power and the owner is keen to make use of this. Suggestions have included a community hot house and rapid charger for electric vehicles. Luke said it was good to hear about ideas such as this and asked the member to pass on any relevant information.

VII. Thanks

- Luke thanked Pete for hosting the meeting and Jo for taking the minutes.
- Luke thanked everyone present for giving up their time to attend the meeting.