



## ***Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on***

2nd February 2022

A virtual meeting held via Zoom

### **Present/apologies for absence:**

- **Present:** Luke Emerton (Chair), Iain Frazer (Treasurer), Anne Hislop (Vice Chair), David Howell, Iain MacKay, Chris Robinson (Company Secretary), Josh Thornhill, Kayt Howell (Manager), Gordon Cowtan (Consultant)
- 11 FDT members (18 including Trustees)
- **Apologies:** None

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

Luke informed all present that the meeting would be recorded for FDT's records only.

### **I. Welcome and apologies by Chair (Luke Emerton)**

- Luke noted a few 'housekeeping' points for the meeting:
  - Everyone was asked to sign in by sending their names to Kayt and Luke asked that everyone keep their microphone muted unless they were speaking.
  - Luke informed everyone that after each agenda item there would be an opportunity to ask questions as well as at the end of the meeting.
  - Anyone wishing to stand for election will be asked to give a short speech about why they wish to stand.
  - No proxy votes had been requested prior to the meeting.
- Luke introduced himself as the Chair of the FDT and welcomed all present to the meeting. It had been hoped that this meeting could have been held in person but unfortunately the spread of the Omicron variant of Covid-19 led to the meeting being held online. Luke hoped that there would be opportunities to meet in person later in the year and that the next AGM would not be online again.
- No apologies had been received.
- Luke read through the agenda.
- Luke thanked Jo for taking the minutes today and thanked Pete for handling the technical side of tonight's meeting.

### **II. Approval of last year's AGM minutes**

- Luke noted that the minutes of last year's AGM were available on the FDT website and that a link had been sent out to members if they wished to access that.
- Luke asked if there were any objections. None were raised.
- Luke then asked for a show of hands to indicate that people were happy to approve the minutes. The majority of those present raised their hands.

### **III. 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 noted that the past year was financially better off than the year before. There had been more income from the wind farm. This meant that it had not been necessary to use the money that had been set aside in case the autumn income had been insufficient to cover the mortgage. Unfortunately, this has been needed to deal with the ongoing difficulties at Balgair.
- Iain pointed out the discrepancy between the incoming funds and the outgoing funds in the FCE (Fintry Community Energy) account. The FDT are well aware of this issue and steps are being taken to counter this.
- Overall, the FDT were in a better financial state than they were a few years ago and are moving closer to the point where they will receive a sizeable income.
- Iain asked if there were any questions, but none were asked.

### **IV. 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 2021 and also mentioned activities from the end of June until the end of 2021. A copy of this report is available on the FDT website.
- Like the rest of the world, the FDT have been greatly restricted by the pandemic and were unable to run any events or hold any workshops under the lockdown restrictions. Instead, they became more familiar with holding meetings online and developing aspects of their IT and digital world and digitising all their records and processes. This proved educational on many levels and brought about changes in how the FDT work and operate. When the conversion of all the documentation has been completed, that will be a considerable undertaking done and will improve security, functionality, and efficiency.
- Another big occupier of the FDT's time has been the Balgair Castle District Heating System. The trust has devoted a lot of time in working with the Scottish Government (SG), the residents of the estate, contractors, Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs) and is seeking a solution for the heating system troubles. Gordon Cowtan will expand in his report.
- The trust has been part of a podcast series by Chris Smith called 'Community Pioneers'. Kayt and Gordon were invited to tell their stories of Fintry, working with the trust and being part of a greater collection of experiences from other community-based individuals. The podcast can be found on Spotify.
- The staff and directors of the trust took part in relevant online events such as, the Scottish Renewables online conference and the Development Trust Association webinars.
- The trust has been able to offer support to other communities seeking advice including Dollar Development Trust and Cardross Community Group. They have also presented webinars held by Foundation Scotland and Garve and District Development Company.
- FDT are regularly asked to participate in and contribute to surveys and studies involving community energy, renewables, and fuel poverty and have participated when time allowed. They also support student enquiries for dissertation information and give guidance when they have the time to do so.
- The trust continues to support Fintry Primary School through the solar fund which provides funding for environmental and sustainable projects. The feed-in tariff generated through the school's solar panels is the source of the funds. They have been used in a variety of ways including development and repairs of the outdoor classroom and storage for outdoor play materials. FDT also worked with the school to have a carbon cutting police force of 26 cops at the same time as COP26 was being held in Glasgow. Fintry's carbon cutters carried out many projects including saving energy, protecting wildlife, improving transport use and recycling. The project

positively raised awareness of climate change and the children seemed to get a lot out of it.

- An outdoor Doctor Bike event was held with Recyke-a-bike engineers repairing residents' bikes and collecting unwanted bikes to recycle and pass on.
- The FDT has organised an IT recycling project and equipment is being collected at the Sports Club. The items will be cleared and either reused if possible or broken down into component parts with the 'nothing to landfill' policy of the recycling company that has been engaged.
- A solution has to be found for Balgair, but the FDT is looking forward to expanding its' events and workshops along with developing FDT's future plans.
- The trust is in early discussions with another development trust to work on an accreditation scheme similar to a Fairtrade accreditation but for net zero/zero waste communities. Early days yet but an exciting prospect.
- The FDT is looking forward to engaging with others in the community for the celebrations of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.
- Luke agreed that it had been a challenging year but that it was great to see some that some activities had been going on. He thanked Kayt for her report.

#### **V. Consultant's report by Gordon Cowtan**

- Gordon has again spent much of his time this year dealing with the District Heating System at Balgair as well as managing the FDT's relationship with Falck at the Earlsburn Wind Farm.
- The wood chip fuelled district heating system at Balgair provides heat for 26 homes and the club house. It was installed in 2015 and has never really worked as advertised. As a result, it has continually had to be subsidised. The subsidy level has reached £40,000. It has also occupied a huge amount of time and effort of the trust and the trust Board and has hamstrung other activities for the past few years. A couple of years ago, the Board came to the decision that this was no longer sustainable and that a solution needed to be found. Gordon was appointed to try and find that solution.
- Gordon has also been looking after the day-to-day operation of the heating system. Over the last twelve months, the system has operated fairly consistently and has supplied heating and hot water to the residences most of the time. The biggest issue was in November when some residents were left without heat and hot water. This issue was mostly resolved by the beginning of December. There are still a few issues that resulted from it that are outstanding.
- This time last year, the FDT had looked to work with Home Energy Scotland (HES) to find a solution. Unfortunately, the process was held up because of Covid restrictions but once the restrictions were lifted, a trial run was done with a small number of homes. It became apparent that HES were not going to be able to help with finding a solution.
- Following this, it was decided to look at the whole installation, the needs of the householders and the restrictions that exist on that site and get some expertise in to advise the FDT on the best way forward. A firm of consultants called Harley Haddow have been appointed in the last few weeks and work should be completed by the end of March.
- Gordon has also been keeping in touch with the householders, the Scottish Government (SG) and the Energy Savings Trust (EST). Some of the initial funding for the project was provided by SG. The new MSP, Evelyn Tweed has been very supportive and helpful. There is still an outstanding loan on the project with EST but they have agreed to a rolling 'loan holiday' until the future of the project has been decided.
- Luke thanked Gordon for his summary and asked if there were any questions. None were asked.

## **VI. Election of Directors (by Zoom poll)**

- 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, Chris and Anne were required to stand down.
- Luke had advised the Board in October that he would be standing down at this AGM.
- This means that there are three positions to confirm. Chris and Anne both wished to stand for re-election and the Board were very pleased to have received an application from Frances Hall.
- 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 to vote for the three candidates.
- Luke announced that all three candidates had been voted onto the Board.

## **VII. Questions from the floor**

- Luke asked if anybody had any questions.
- Holly O'Donnell expressed her thanks to the staff and directors of the Board. She noted that it had been another difficult Covid year, and she recognised how much time and effort everyone had put into the FDT.
- Pete asked about the usage of the Electric Vehicle charging points since a tariff was introduced. Kayt said that no data had been received from Charge Place Scotland yet. Pete thought that residents had perhaps been charging up at the Sports Centre for free prior to there being a charge even though they had charging facilities at home. He thought that usage would probably have dropped considerably now that there is a charge. Pete suggested that it would be worth considering putting a rapid charger there as well. Although this would entail a large expense to install, he felt that more people would be likely to use a rapid charger than a normal charger. The next nearest rapid charger is in Balfron. Pete felt that a rate could be charged which would recoup the cost of the installation and then have money available for maintenance and repairs. He felt it would be economically viable and something for the FDT to think about as we move towards an increase in the number of electric vehicles. Pete noted that the chargers at Balfron are very busy and can't cater for Fintry as well. Pete also noted that most people who have a charger at home set a timer for their car to charge up during the night when the electricity tariff is cheaper. The timers are not always reliable and there could be instances where the car has not charged up and is needed first thing in the morning. If there was a rapid charger available, people would be likely to use it in this situation and be happy to pay the tariff. Kayt agreed and said that it was something that the FDT had thought about once they had some decent funds in and could consider these kinds of projects. She also noted that there was an issue for some residents of Fintry who don't have driveways so can't have their own charger installed. Kayt has looked to see what councils and other supporting bodies can suggest. It would be impractical to put charging points all along Main Street although there have been some suggestions of attaching them to lampposts. Kayt also noted that technology is changing, and the government proposals are to move towards electric/hybrid vehicles very soon. More support should be available soon to provide support for this. Hugh commented that he used the charger at the Sports Centre quite often because it's a lot quicker than the charger he has at home. He can charge his hybrid car in half an hour at the Sports Centre, but it takes four hours at home. He often finds that there is no space as it is still busy. Luke also agreed and thought that the change to electric cars would happen surprisingly quickly.
- Luke encouraged anyone with further questions to email the FDT and they would be happy to answer.

## **VIII. Thanks**

- Luke thanked Kayt and Gordon for all their hard work over the last year. He said they had shown real dedication against all the challenges, and he appreciated all they had done to take the work of the trust forward.
- Luke thanked the Directors who have given up many hours of their time attending meetings and reading through reports etc. It's much appreciated.
- Luke thanked Pete for his technical assistance and Jo for taking the minutes.
- Luke thanked everyone present for attending the meeting and for their ongoing support. He hoped that there would be an opportunity for everyone to meet up in person soon and that the next AGM would not be online again.
- Kayt thanked Luke for all his efforts for all the time that he has been on the Board and for standing in to be Chair which has meant taking on a lot. Between the pandemic and Balgair Luke has had a difficult time being Chair. Kayt thanked him for persevering through that and Luke responded by saying he has really appreciated the opportunity to be involved.