



Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on

11th March 2023

A virtual meeting held via Zoom

Present:

- Anne Hislop (Chair), Fran Hall, David Howell, Iain MacKay, Chris Robinson (Company Secretary), Kayt Howell (Manager), Kirsty Murray (Admin Officer)
- 21 FDT members

I. Apologies

- Iain Frazer (Treasurer), Gordon Cowtan (Consultant), Jackie Smith

II. Welcome and report by Chair

- AH welcomed everyone to the meeting, introduced herself and asked the rest of the Board to do the same. She noted that this was the first face-to-face Annual General Meeting (AGM) since February 2020.
- It has been sixteen years since the FDT was set up. There have been challenging times but the mortgage for the turbine is about to be paid off and there are exciting times ahead. This is a big moment for the FDT but in particular for the original Board members. A large windfall was received last year due to the increase in fuel prices and the FDT is about to have a large regular income from which the community can really benefit. The Board take their responsibilities very seriously and are committed to managing the income in an appropriate way. When the windfall was received, the Board were determined to help people through a difficult winter. Legal advice was sought as the existing Articles of Association (AofA) do not allow for the FDT to help with fuel bills. Three grants were established:
 - i. Log grants – a reimbursement grant for log purchases.
 - ii. Fuel payment (FP) grants – funded by the FDT but managed by Energy Action Scotland (EAS). This is an organisation who is experienced in managing and administering these kinds of grants. 25 applications have been made and 21 have been funded.
 - iii. Energy Efficiency (EE) grants – assistance for householders to install measures which will cut energy use. Approximately £12k has been distributed so far.
- The Board have undertaken training with Development Trusts Association Scotland (DTAS) to help them think more strategically and plan for the longer term. They have also been working with Graham Finegold of Locality to develop long term financial planning.
- A new member of staff has been employed. Kirsty Murray is an Admin Officer who helps with administration and with the grants.
- A new website has been commissioned which is more appropriate to 2023.
- Consultation with the community is ongoing - last summer at the Jubilee celebrations, at the energy workshop in October and there are more events planned including today's repair café and a transport workshop on April 22nd which has developed from a suggestion from the community. The larger income means that

ideas from the community are invaluable in making decisions on how to use the money.

III. Financial report by Treasurer

- IF had sent his apologies but a financial report had been included in the leaflet given out at the meeting and all accounts can be viewed on the FDT website.
- DH read out the following report from IF:
 - Windfarm Income – the income from the wind farm in Autumn 2021 was sufficient to cover the cost of the mortgage therefore we didn't have to dip into reserves. The Spring income was considerably higher due to the increase in the price of electricity. This provided a bonus, which, after deductions for the windmill mortgage, gave a welcome boost to our finances. In October 2021 the income was £6,052 but in May 2022 we received £515,316. This has enabled FDT to resume EE grants and explore other ways of helping households through the current energy issues. While this is being put in place money has been put in an interest-bearing account to offset the effects of inflation. The current electricity price is not guaranteed therefore we need to proceed with a degree of caution. However we are approaching the day when the windmill has been fully paid off and we see a regular boost to our income.
 - Fintry Community Energy (FCE) – as can be seen on the summary, there are still problems with the district heating system at Balgair. The operating loss was slightly lower in 2021/22 but still too high for it to be feasible. The Board are currently taking steps to resolve this issue.
- Any questions regarding the financial report can be emailed to info@fintrydt.org.uk

IV. Project report by Manager

- KH had provided a brief summary of 2021/22 in the leaflet distributed to all attending the meeting.
- KH expressed her delight at being able to hold the AGM in person again.
- 26 cops for COP 26 had been very successful with the primary school children. They had joined in with activities measuring carbon usage amongst other things.
- Two history nights had been held as a reminder of FDT's beginnings and to get ideas for planning for the future. This was just one part of wider consultation with the community including being present at the Jubilee events and holding an energy workshop alongside HES (Home Energy Scotland)
- Staff and Directors participated in training with DTAS and have attended online events and conferences. They have also been working closely with the Scottish Government (SG) and Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs) to work towards a solution for the issues with the Balgair heating system.
- Work is ongoing for a new website.
- Connections have been maintained and established with other local communities, renewable companies and students.
- As well as today's repair café, a transport event is planned for April 22nd. This will include information about electric vehicles (EVs), charging points and relevant grants as well as information about a scheme called Hiyacar (a little like Airbnb for cars).
- Future events may include an event on food, food waste and growing in the early Summer and an event in Autumn on pickling and preserving. Nearer Christmas there may be an event looking at ways to be carbon-saving and cost-cutting. This may include workshops and markets. Any ideas and thoughts for events will be warmly welcomed.
- The Board have been looking at the bigger picture in addition to the smaller projects.
- KH thanked everyone for attending.

V. Consultant's report

- GC had sent his apologies. His report about Balgair was included in the leaflet distributed at the meeting.
- Most notably, the SG (Scottish Government) had offered to write-off the loan taken out by the FDT for the installation of the heating system at Balgair. This has now been approved. A solution to resolve the issues with the system are ongoing.
- DH noted that the fact that the SG is willing to write-off the loan is recognition that the FDT are a community group trying to do their best for the community. Bad advice was given to them prior to the installation of the system and it is good that the SG has recognised the difficulties and is helping. Hopefully, there will be a resolution in the near future.
- Any questions can be emailed to info@fintrydt.org.uk
- An FDT member congratulated the Board for all their hard work regarding Balgair and for continuing to work towards a fair resolution.

VI. Approval of resolution

- As mentioned in the Chair's report, legal advice had been sought by the FDT with regard to giving help to Fintry residents for their energy bills. The current AofA does not allow this. The Board were able to change the AofA for Fintry Renewable Energy Enterprise (FREE) to enable the FP grants to get up and running but need approval from the members to make a similar change to the AofA for FDT. The solicitors have drafted the proposed amendment, it has been approved by the Board and consent has been given by the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR).
 - Current wording – "To prevent and/or relieve poverty, and to relieve those in need by reason of age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage, through providing them (either free of cost, or at reduced cost) with a range of energy conservation measures".
 - Proposed wording - "To prevent and/or relieve poverty, and to relieve those in need by reason of age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage, through the provision of fuel poverty grants and/or the provision of (either free of cost, or at reduced cost) with a range of energy conservation measures". Also, "To provide financial and practical assistance to householders within the Operating Area, including by way of making grants, to those experiencing fuel poverty".
- A second amendment was also proposed regarding Directors being entitled to apply for grants in the same way as any other FDT member.
 - Current wording – "No benefit (whether in money or in kind) shall be given by the company to any director except repayment of out of pocket expenses; or reasonable payment in return for particular services (not being of a management nature) actually rendered to the company". All of this to be replaced with:
 - "Articles 7 and 8 do not prevent the company making any payment which is permitted under articles 88 to 90 (remuneration and expenses)".
- Both amendments were approved unanimously.
- The full AofA can be seen on the FDT website.

VII. Election of Directors

- 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, DH and IM were required to stand down and both expressed a wish to stand for re-election. There was also a vacancy for another Director. Isla Kinnear had indicated her intention to stand. DH, IM and IK all provided a brief summary of why they would like to be on the FDT Board.
- All three candidates were unanimously voted onto the Board.
- AH welcomed IK to the Board and welcomed back DH and IM.

VIII. AOCB

- An FDT member commented that it was nice to see a good gender balance on the Board.
- A member referred to the future significant income and said that they would strongly support a strategy to invest in another turbine. He noted that even half of the future income will be significant so half could be allocated to projects and half could be invested in a turbine. If not, the income will dry up completely when the wind farm reaches the end of its life. DH agreed that this would be a good strategy but pointed out that it would be an investment in a percentage of the wind farm as it is now rather than one particular turbine as this mitigates the risk. CR has worked in the renewable industry for many years and noted that until about two years ago, no other community had managed to do what Fintry did. He noted that there are a number of planning applications in at the moment about wind farms in the local area including one for an extension to Earlsburn. The developers have indicated that they are looking for 10% community investment. It is also likely that they will move to a life extension and a repowering of the current turbines. FH noted that it was clear that the FDT members present at the meeting were in agreement with this suggestion.
- KH thanked the Board for all the work they do for the FDT on a voluntary basis.

IX. Thank you and close

- AH thanked her fellow Directors for giving up their time.
- AH thanked KH and KM for all their hard work.
- AH thanked JS for taking the minutes.
- AH thanked GC for continuing to work hard with the issues at Balgair.
- AH thanked the FDT members for their support.