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***Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on***  
2<sup>nd</sup> March 2024

**Present:**

- Iain Frazer (Treasurer), Fran Hall (Acting Vice-chair), Anne Hislop (Chair), David Howell, Isla Kinnear, Iain MacKay, Sharon McMurtrie, Chris Robinson (Company Secretary), Kayt Howell (Manager), Kirsty Murray (Admin Officer), Gordon Cowtan (Consultant), Steve Luker (Consultant), Janine Rennie (Financial Consultant)
- 26 FDT members

**I. Apologies**

- Jo Skabara

**II. Welcome and report by Chair**

- AH welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted that it was good to see such a good turnout.
- At last year's AGM, it was mentioned that the mortgage on the wind turbine would soon be paid off. The Board was pleased and relieved when this happened and the FDT is now mortgage-free.
- The Board have undertaken training with Development Trusts Association Scotland (DTAS) called Sort-It. This has helped the Board to start planning for the future and identified the need for more financial expertise. The Board worked with Graham Finegold from Locality to identify their next steps. It was clear from this, from the consultation events and from the last AGM that there was a mandate from the FDT members to invest some of the income ethically and wisely for the future to ensure the longer-term legacy of the FDT as well as using some of the money for ongoing projects. It was also apparent that the Board did not enough financial knowledge, so they have engaged Janine Rennie as a financial consultant. JR has only just started and is still getting her head around the accounts, but her role will be to guide the Board to ensure that financial governance is spot on, to advise on investing responsibly and ethically and to ensure that the FDT moves on successfully in the future. The Board are looking forward to working with JR.
- The Directors have also undertaken training on cyber-security to raise awareness levels and to ensure that all data is stored securely.
- There have been ongoing issues with the district heating system at Balgair and an expert consultant (Steve Luker) has been appointed. He has been tasked with finding workable and cost-effective solutions for the FDT and the residents.
- The FDT now has a new strapline: Empowering an environmentally sustainable future for our community. The Board have been giving serious thought to potential projects but as a small group, they cannot do everything. The idea is to enable groups, organisations, and businesses in the village to become more sustainable. More information about this will be available when the idea is finalised.
- A new bike repair unit is to be installed at the Sports Centre. The groundworks have been done. This is aimed at cyclists for minor repairs and to pump up tyres but is also

suitable for prams and wheelchairs. It is for visitors to the village as well as for use by the community.

- The next task is to start planning other projects with the budgets and resources available and the next Board meeting will focus on this. Ideas from the community would be very welcome and useful.

### **III. Introduction of Financial Consultant**

- This was covered during the Chair's report.

### **IV. Financial report by Treasurer**

- As previously mentioned, the mortgage has been paid off so there is a significant amount of income coming in. For the financial year 2022/23, the income was over £600K. The bulk of this was put into the FDT fund. Some has been used for grants and various other projects – full details were in the hand-out given to all attendees. There is now around £990K in an interest bearing account.
- The Balgair loan from the Scottish Government was written off but the heating system is still being financed by the FDT. The deficit at the end of 2023 was around £35K. It has been higher in previous years but is still not good enough.
- IF asked if there were any questions and AH noted that a printed copy of the accounts was available if anybody wished to look at them.

### **V. Project report by Manager**

- KH reminded AH that the minutes from last year's AGM needed to be approved and this was done by a show of hands.
- KH noted that she has been employed by the FDT almost from the beginning and that it has been great to work with the trustees and staff past and present. There has been a lot to deal with over the last few years including the ongoing situation at Balgair, Covid and the fuel price crisis but the Board have stepped up to the mark. The Articles of Association were adapted to allow the FDT to give financial aid to members of the community where needed. This was done through the fuel payment scheme through Energy Action Scotland to maintain a degree of separation and privacy.
- KH was pleased that the FDT had employed KM who manages the FDT grant schemes, project plans, social media work and much more. She has been with the FDT for a year now and is a great asset.
- As mentioned by AH the Board and staff have been undertaking training and KH acknowledged that this was a lot to ask of the volunteer trustees.
- Workshops have been held related to areas of carbon reduction and sustainability starting with the repair café after last year's AGM and which was a great success. There have been transport and energy workshops with partners Home Energy Scotland as well as a sustainable food fair at the Fintry Fun Day with the support of Zero Waste Scotland, Neighbourhood G63 and Forth Environment Link. The preserve making competition and the surplus food initiative was very well supported by the community.
- As mentioned by AH, a new bike repair unit is being installed at the SC.
- Thermal imaging surveys have recently been completed and were free of charge to anyone who wanted to take part. They took longer than expected but were very useful and several people have applied for Energy Efficiency grants using the information provided in the surveys.
- The new FDT website will soon be up and running and some of the images which will be used were on the display board in the hall.
- IT has been outsourced to a company to manage.
- There have been some issues with getting FDT news out to all members – newsletters are emailed out every quarter, posts are put on Fintry Buddies on Facebook and posters and information are available at the SC. Drop-in sessions are also now being held at the SC on the first Tuesday of every month with KH and KM. KH asked

members to ensure that they have provided the FDT with up-to-date contact information.

- As mentioned previously, the next Board meeting will be focussed on future plans and the Board would welcome new ideas from members. The FDT continues to evolve with new Directors, new staff, new ideas, new projects and now, increased funds. The story continues and KH encouraged members to participate as much as possible in that.
- KH had a few copies of the FDT's potted history available.
- KH requested that members leave their handouts if they did not want to keep them as they can be reused with a group of students who are visiting this month.
- KH asked if there were any questions and encouraged members to get in touch if there was anything they wanted to know.

## **VI. Consultant's report**

- GC noted that he does not live in Fintry anymore and that it was nice to be here and see everyone.
- GC continues to look after Balgair and work towards a solution. As mentioned by AF, the system continues to require financial support from the FDT to operate but it does supply heat and hot water to 26 households at the site. It is fairly reliable and carbon friendly.

## **VII. Introduction and report by Balgair consultant**

- Over the years, several reports have been done on the system which were good at pointing out the problems but not good at identifying solutions. At the last AGM it was mentioned that the FDT were looking to employ someone who could look at the system and who had experience and knowledge of these types of systems and could recommend practical solutions. Steve Luker won the tender and has been working on the site since last summer.
- SL explained that his first step had been to examine the system that was there and figure out if there was a sustainable, long-term solution for keeping the current system or if it would be better to look at another way of providing heating and hot water for the site. SL carried out a detailed analysis of what was happening, and the conclusion was discussed with residents as well as the Board. It was decided that the system could remain but there would need to be some changes to make it work more efficiently. This would ensure that residents had the cheapest heat possible as well as maintaining a carbon friendly option.
- Since November, SL has been working on implementing changes. This is an ongoing process.
- SL felt that it was interesting to note that in December, the SG started a consultation around introducing new policies on heating buildings. When a property is sold in Scotland, the new owner will be legally obliged to put in 'clean' heating. It is not definite that this will become law but at this point it would not have been useful to change back to a fossil fuel system that would potentially have to be changed back if the properties are sold. This reinforces the fact that fossil fuel heating will be prohibited from 2045.
- Next steps – a complicated, sophisticated remote monitoring system has been installed so that it is possible to see what the system is doing in each of the properties and in the plant room. Water temperatures and flow pressures can be monitored, and observations can be made about what is happening in the network as the water is distributed around. This has enabled SL to identify several changes required. The first step is around controls, so a management company has been contracted. They have installed a control panel and are coming back soon to look at options such as reducing the temperature of the water. This will be a more effective way of running the network. The boiler needs repairing, and some changes will be made to it. SL is also looking at the Heat Interface Units (HIU's) at each property.

They all need to be either refurbished or upgraded and it may be possible to get a government grant to cover this.

- After the technical changes have been done, SL will look at other things such as the commercial arrangements around fuel and maintenance.
- A member asked about the timeline for the changes. SL replied that all the technical changes will be completed over the summer and re-tendering for the commercial changes will begin soon.
- A member asked what the current system is running on. SL explained that the bio-mass boiler runs on woodchips and is backed up by an LPG boiler.

**VIII. 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, IF was required to stand down and expressed a wish to stand for re-election. SM had been co-opted onto the Board last year and now indicated her intention to stand as a Board member. There had been no other applications to join the Board. IM had expressed his intention to stand down from the Board. IF and SM provided a brief summary of why they would like to be on the FDT Board.
- Both candidates were voted onto the Board by a show of hands.
- KH thanked IM for his work as a director. This was seconded by DH and confirmed by a round of applause.

**IX. Questions from the floor**

- There were no questions.

**X. Any Other Competent Business**

- None

**XI. Thank yous**

- AH noted that the Board now has a full complement of elected members, and that Office Bearers would be agreed at the next Board meeting.
- AH acknowledged the hard work of the FDT staff (KH and KM) and noted that although they are only employed part-time, they do way more than their hours and the FDT could not do without them.
- AH recognised IM and hoped that he would consider returning to the Board at some time in the future.
- AH thanked her fellow Directors for the effort and commitment they put into their role.
- AH thanked the FDT members for coming to the AGM and for their continued support.

**XII. Café opens for refreshments and at 12 noon, the 'New to You' event begins**