

Huntly & District Development Trust

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Huntly & District Development Trust (HDDT) Approved Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on 20th September 2016 at 19:00, OAP Hall, Church Street, Huntly

Present:

Members (based on signed attendance):

Winnie Adam, Fiona Alderson, Sandra Brantingham, Eileen Cosgrove, Mike Cowie, David Easton, Phil Gaiter, Tony Gill, Rita Haefner, Jane Lockyer, Alison McPherson, Uschi Mitchell, Claire Newman, Peter Rawlings, Karin de Rijick, Lynn Rutter, Pat Scott, Dave Simpson, Jamie Wilkinson, George Wordie, Margo Wordie, Ingrid Wylie

Non-Members (Now members)

Katya Chitova, Andrea Geile, Noura Khasawneh

Stakeholders

Bryan Begg (Marr Area Partnership), Cllr Margo Stewart, Cllr Moira Ingleby

Researcher from James Hutton Institute

Annabel Pinker

Apologies:

Members

Herbert & Sue Eppel, Steven Hutcheon, Katy Scott

Stakeholders

Cllr Katrina Farquhar, Morna Harper (Aberdeenshire Council), Reid Hutchison (Aberdeenshire Council), Cllr John Latham, Hazel McLaren (Aberdeenshire Council), Cllr Jill Webster

Present

HDDT Board

Richard Hammock (RH Chair), Les Allan (LA, Vice-chair), Neil Angus (NA), Bruce Murray (BM), Iain Ralston (IR), Sharon Scapens (SS), Mary Scott (MS), Claudia Zeiske (CZ)

Apologies: Ronald Pittendrigh (RP), Stuart Thomson (ST Finance)

In attendance:

HDDT Staff

Donald Boyd (DB), Development Manager, Naomi Mason (NM), Room to Roam Green Travel Project Manager, Debbie Haefner (DH, Minutes), Administration Manager

Apologies:

Jill Andrews (JA), Greenmyres Project Manager

Scottish Land Fund
Ionmhas Fearainn Na H-Alba



PART 1: AGM

1. Welcome, Apologies and Introduction

HDDT Chair Richard Hammock opened the Trust's seventh AGM, welcoming all those attending and noting that a list of apologies had been received.

2. Approval of Draft Minutes AGM 2015

The Draft Minutes of the previous AGM (17th June 2015) were approved by all in attendance. Proposed – Sandra Brantingham, seconded – Mary Scott

3. Chair's Report / Annual Review

RH gave a review of the past year where significant goals had been achieved. We have;

- Continued work to develop Greenmyres farm. A key milestone was gaining planning permission in December 2015 for a base building on the site. We have also secured funding to undertake surveys to establish a path from Greenmyres into the Forestry Commission managed Gartly Moor.
- Continued work on our community wind turbine at Greenmyres. Key achievements have been securing a grid connection and planning consent. We went through a complex due diligence process, and achieved financial closure in June. Preparatory work is due to start on site in July 2016, with erection of the turbine in October 2016.
- Partnered with a Community Interest Company to help them develop a second wind turbine at Wheedlemont Farm, Rhynie thereby securing extra investment for both the Trust and the area immediately around the turbine.
- Completed the Climate Challenge Fund-supported Room to Roam Green Travel Hub project to promote green and active Travel in Huntly and District. Highlights included establishment of the Community Car Club, acquisition of e-bikes, supporting the Huntly Cycling Community group, running the initial Winter Cycling and Walking Challenge and organisation of a series of inspiring Tales from the Tyre evenings. The project was successful and led to 3.44 tonnes of CO2 being saved.
- Completed phase 1 of our two-year Commonwealth Games Legacy 2014 project to review and develop local sporting facilities. Phase 2 is now ongoing. In January 2016, the Huntly Sports Hub group ran a 'Taster Day' to encourage ladies (back) into sport.
- Partnered with the James Hutton Institute to host a visit to Huntly of 40 delegates of an international conference in August 2015.
- Continued to administer the AB54 Health and Wellbeing Fund on behalf of the AB54 Health and Wellbeing Group;
- Continued running the Huntly community website, Huntly Facebook page and Twitter feed to help organisations and individuals promote activities and events;
- Maintained a healthy level of Board/Trustee membership and undertook a Board Away Day;
- Produced 2 newsletters and continued our monthly column in the Huntly Express;
- Increased our membership by 29 (7.5%) to 416.
- The Trust was evaluated in February 2015 by Education Scotland as part of a pilot review project. We were graded very highly, and received a lot of positive feedback.

RH thanked the Directors, staff and volunteers for all their hard work over the past year.

Naomi Mason, Project Manager Room to Roam Green Travel Hub introduced herself and gave an update on the project. The Car Club is now up and running with 2 low emission vehicles available at convenient locations around the town. Huntly's second Audax took place with 97 cyclists taking part in the event. E-bikes are available to hire from the office. Cycle guides have been produced. A successful winter walking and cycling challenge saw 49 people walk, run or cycle 7,060 miles instead of taking the car. Tales from the Tyre and a Big Fit Walk was supported by the community. Next stage is to seek a physical travel hub in the town centre. More information on this project can be found in the project final report available in hard copy in the HDDT office.

In the absence of Jill Andrews, Project Manager Greenmyres, Donald Boyd explained the current situation with Greenmyres. Consultation stages 1 & 2 are complete. We have secured funding to undertake surveys to establish a path from Greenmyres into the Forestry Commission managed Gartly Moor. The Working Group has been busy mulching around the pond and on the island, as well as setting up a community angling club.

Bruce Murray gave an update on the Sports Hub project. Phase 2 of the physical sports hub feasibility is now underway and is being carried out by AJ Consultants. A ladies taster day was held back in January and once again proved extremely popular. A very successful Room to Run, organised with partners NoW and Huntly Rinnin' Quines and Loons, had full capacity of entrants completing a 5k, 10k and kids race. This event was ran on the Hairst Saturday and had approx 1,000 extra folk shopping in the town centre during the course of the morning.

4. Financial Report:

DB presented the financial report and draft accounts in the absence of Stuart Thomson, finance director. The full accounts can be found on the HDDT website.

5. Election of Directors

DB explained the election process.

- Standing down under the 5 year rule and not seeking re-election were Richard Hammock (Chair) and Directors Stuart Thomson (Finance) and Claudia Zeiske
- Les Allan was elected as Chair
- Standing down under Article 62(b) and re-elected were Directors Bruce Murray (proposed Dave Simpson, seconded Claire Newman), Sharon Scapens (proposed Sandra

Brantingham, seconded Pat Scott), Mary Scott (proposed Jane Lockyer, seconded Claudia Zeiske)

New Directors are to be sought and appointed, someone with a finance background in particular, however at the AGM Jamie Wilkinson put himself forward, this was proposed by Margo Wordie and seconded by Dave Simpson. Dave Simpson is going to have a think about becoming a Director, this was proposed by Pat Scott and seconded by David Easton.

Les Allan, Chair introduced himself and looked to the year ahead:

2015/16 has been a challenging year in many respects however much has been achieved. This month has seen the delivery of our turbine at Greenmyres Farm. When the turbine is operational (hopefully In November) we will produce renewable energy for the first time and should keep generating electricity for at least 20 years. This will be a great achievement and contributes to HDDT's eco-friendly objectives. More importantly however the turbine will generate income over those 20 plus years enabling the Trust to be self-sustaining and over time to be developing surpluses which will be invested in local projects and local communities.

Over the next five years or so income generated by the turbine will be very limited as we pay off our loans. We will therefore have to continue to be very careful with our costs and seek to fund our involvement in future projects with grant funding. We have a number of ongoing projects where we will continue to make progress.

We will continue to seek to progress the development of the path between Huntly and the farm. This requires the agreement of a number of landowners amongst other things. We will tidy and make safer the public areas of the farm by demolishing old outbuildings, clearing building debris etc. We will create all ability paths within the farm and particularly around the pond. We will create a smaller, shallow pond to create opportunities for children and families to pond dip, and to encourage more biodiversity. This action and the development of paths will require to be funded by grants. We will create shelter belts of native trees to improve the site and create wildlife habitats. Subject to agreeing a lease with Forest Enterprise Scotland and the availability of SRDP funding we will build a path connecting the farm with the path network in Gartly Moor.

The results of the feasibility study looking at the creation of a sports centre in Huntly will be used to move the project on to the next stage and ultimately to the creation of new facilities. Although HDDT are leading this project it will only happen if all interested groups work in partnership, demonstrating the need, the business planning that shows it will be financially sustainable, getting all necessary permissions, and fundraising to pay for the development. This is a major project that will require considerable effort and commitment.

We will continue to promote cycling, walking, and carbon reduction activities including promoting and running cycle races that bring people to the area and show off our magnificent countryside. We will continue to run a car club and electric bike hire actively promoting and marketing the use of more sustainable transport options.

We have been awarded a grant to carry out a feasibility study into the development of a transport hub project. This may lead to the funding and development of a long term project. Aberdeenshire Council has also been awarded grant to carry out a feasibility study looking

across Aberdeenshire at transport hub options. We are working with its officers to determine if there can be mutually beneficial opportunities.

Currently the Council and government agencies together with the private and community sectors are investing large sums for town regeneration in Peterhead, Fraserburgh, Banff and Macduff. This investment will continue for several years and will mean there is less opportunity for investment in Huntly town centre. That doesn't mean we should do nothing until investment is freed up. On the contrary the Council's Area Manager and representatives from Huntly community and business organisations including HDDT have already met to begin the process of planning for future investment. Any work we can do to get community and business buy in and to create a deliverable plan will lead to earlier delivery of improvements.

As HDDT becomes more financially sustainable we will seek to do more work outwith Huntly in smaller settlements in partnership with more local groups. We are currently seen as being Huntly-centric and we need to change that. The last few years have required us to devote considerable energy to becoming financially self-sufficient to the detriment of our mission. As resources are freed up opportunities to assist in the wider Huntly area will be assessed and, if appropriate, progressed.

We are a membership organisation and we will do our best to make you proud to be a member. We have magnificent volunteers and I thank you for your efforts and commitment. I hope you will continue to support what we do. The next five years will not be easy but the board and staff are committed to do their best for Huntly and District. Thank you.

6. Members Questions

None

7. AOCB

Donald Boyd thanked the board and staff for their support during personal circumstances this year. He also led thanks to Richard Hammock for his hard work and commitment to the Trust over the years and presented him with a gift.

8. Close of meeting

There being no further business, LA closed the AGM at 20.30

Break for cakes by Omar Afif and refreshments served by Aileen & Annie of Huntly OAP Social Club

Part 2: Table Talk

The assembled company then looked around the display material and chatted with HDDT staff/directors.

9. Close of Meeting

The meeting closed at 21.15.