

JOHN MUIR TRUST: TRUSTEES' MEETING

Minutes of Meeting held on Saturday 24th September 2016 at Tower House, Pitlochry

Present:

Peter Pearson (Chair), David Broom, John Finney, Peter Foulkes, John Fox-Davies, Jim Gibson, Steve Green, Patricia Jordan, David MacLehose, Duncan Macniven, Jo Moulin, Hugh Salvesen, Deirdre Wilson and Douglas Wynn.

Apologies: Chris Townsend.

In attendance:

Stuart Brooks (Chief Executive), Fiona Kindness (Director of Resources), Mike Daniels (Head of Land Management) and Helen McDade (Head of Policy).

Item 1 – Introductory items

Peter Pearson welcomed all to the meeting and noted the apology. He requested declaration of any conflicts of interests: none was reported.

Item 2 – Minutes of last meetings

The draft minutes of the two meetings on 17th June 2016, and the meeting on 27th July 2016, which had been circulated with amendments previously proposed by Trustees, were **approved** as so amended.

Item 3 – Matters Arising

None was raised.

Item 4 – Action Points from Previous Meetings (Paper A)

Progress on the Action Points from previous meetings was noted.

Item 5 – Meeting Dates 2017 (Paper B)

Stuart Brooks reported that it was intended to hold the 2017 AGM in Fort William on 26th and 27th May and the September trustees meeting in Assynt . The proposed meeting dates were **approved**.

Item 6 – Land Acquisition (Paper C)

Discussion is recorded in a separate confidential minute.

Item 7 – Schiehallion Hydro (Paper D)

Trustees, having earlier visited the site, discussed a proposal from Green Highland that the intake for an existing hydro scheme adjacent to the Trust's land should be moved to two locations on Trust property, involving the construction of a dam on the Allt Mor and a secondary intake on a tributary, together with associated pipework and an access track to the dam.

Trustees noted that this was an adjustment to an existing hydro scheme, that neighbouring landowners' income from the project might be increased and that the Trust might expect £11k-£13k annual rent, and that it might be possible to negotiate better restitution of the existing access track (which was very visible from the slopes of Schiehallion). Approval would also underline the Trust's general policy of favouring sensitively-sited, community-scale renewable energy projects. But the new 3 metre high dam would be sited

in an attractive gorge. Whereas the existing intake was inconspicuous and created only a small lagoon, the proposed new dam, and the access track and pipe run, would seriously damage the wild character of the gorge, which would be flooded upstream of the dam for at least 100 metres. Trust members, many of whom would be conscious of the severe landscape impact of other run-of-the-river hydro schemes in wild areas, were likely to criticise Trust co-operation with a scheme on its own land with such an impact.

Trustees **concluded** that, while the Trust may not have objected to the scheme if it had been located off Trust property, Green Highland should be informed that the proposal was unacceptable as it currently stood. **[Action Point 1]**

Item 8 – Strathaird Farm (Paper E) moved to confidential minute.
Discussion is recorded in a separate confidential minute.

Item 9 – Fundraising Initiatives (Paper F)

Trustees generally **welcomed** the proposals in the paper, noting however that the “Adopt an Acre” initiative did not involve **buying** a share in a property. One trustee expressed concern that the Donor Club idea implied the ability to ‘buy privilege’ which he thought was inconsistent with the ethos of JMT.

Item 10 – Operational Update (Paper G)

Trustees **noted** the paper, particularly welcoming the rise in membership and congratulating Kevin Lelland on his Communications Strategy presentation the previous day. Peter Pearson recorded thanks to Kevin and the Communications & Membership team for their efforts in a period of change.

Item 11 – Financial Update (Paper H)

Fiona Kindness reported that the financial outlook for the current year was now positive, though slightly less than set out in the paper because of the likely costs of the repair of the Steall Gorge path after the recent landslip. Trustees **noted** the position.

Item 12 – Chair’s Update (Paper I)

Trustees **noted** the report.

Summary of Action Points

AP1 Inform Green Highland that the proposed new intakes for the existing hydro scheme was unacceptable as the proposal currently stood.