

# JOHN MUIR TRUST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2024

JOHN  
MUIR  
TRUST

Members are cordially invited to attend the Forty-first Annual General Meeting at 12 noon on Saturday 14 September 2024 online. Our online AGM provider will be in touch with you to let you know how to join the meeting. (Click the meeting link between 10.45am and 11am to join us for staff presentations beforehand.) An Open Forum will take place after the AGM. Apologies and questions in advance can be sent to Membership, John Muir Trust, Tower House, Station Road, Pitlochry PH16 5AN or email: [membership@johnmuirtrust.org](mailto:membership@johnmuirtrust.org)

## Agenda

1. Welcome and apologies
2. Minute of the Fortieth Annual General Meeting
3. Matters arising from the Minute
4. Chair's report
5. Financial report and annual accounts for the year ended 31 December 2023
6. Membership subscriptions. Special resolution: To change membership subscription rates to the new rates proposed in Figure 1
7. Reappointment of auditors WBG (Audit) Limited
8. Election of Trustees
9. Other relevant business

## 2024 AGM Special Resolution

(i) To change membership subscription rates to the new rates proposed in Figure 1. New rates to apply from 1 January 2025.

Figure 1 - John Muir Trust Membership Subscription Rates (£)

	Rates from 2019 - present (£)	Proposed new rates (£)
Individual	42	46
Joint / family	54	60
Concession	21	23
Joint / family concession	42	46
Life (individual)	825	900
Life (joint/family)	1,150	1,250
Group	60	66
Corporate: Bronze	300	400
Corporate: Silver	600	800
Corporate: Gold	1,200	1,600

## John Muir Trust Annual General Meeting 2023

### Draft Minutes

Fortieth Annual General Meeting,  
held online on Saturday 4 November 2023

### 1. Welcome and apologies

Jane Smallman, Chair, welcomed nearly 150 Members, Trustees and staff to the meeting.

Apologies had been received from Sheila Wren, Alistair Beeley, David Tomley, Carol Colburn Grigor, Beryl Letherland, Andy Buck, Gordon Dilworth, Peter Charlton and Valerie Crookes, David Campbell, Martin Murphy, John Mackay, Sharon Saunders, Monica Patterson, Dr Roger Bray and David A Lyle.

### 2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the Thirty-ninth Annual General Meeting and Extraordinary General Meeting, held on Saturday 11 June 2022, were approved following a vote.

### 3. Matters arising from the Minutes

There were none.

### 4. Chair's Report

We are in the unusual position this year of reporting at this AGM on the Trust's Financial Year ending in December 2022, which is now more than 10 months ago.

The Trust has grown and it has become increasingly challenging to complete the accounts and the audit in time for a June AGM. The Board of Trustees took a decision in December 2022 to delay the AGM to later in the year to reduce pressure on the Finance Team. Early November was identified as a preferred time. We will review the timing for the 2024 AGM at the December 2023 Board Meeting and possibly bring it forward to September 2024.

The AGM went online in 2020 because of Covid. The benefit was greater participation, with Members joining from across the world, and the carbon credibility of an online event. The main disadvantage is the lack of social contact. The Trust recognises the importance of Members meeting in person and will review online/hybrid/ in person for the 2024 AGM at the December 2023 Board Meeting.

Having spoken to considerations of AGM and Members' gatherings, I would now like to report on progress in 2022 and 2023.

The Strategic Plan for 2022-2026 'The leading voice for wild places' was approved by the Board in December 2021; 2022 was the first full year of implementation.

At Strathaird on Skye a community consultation on the development of a 14-acre former fish hatchery site has led to the 'Re-imagining Strathaird' Report. This provided plans to establish Strathaird as a hub for the peninsula and support community led projects in the area.

The Trust supported the Tarras Valley Nature Reserve project, which saw the acquisition in two stages of 10,000 acres of former grouse moor near Langholm in the Borders. We look forward to hearing more in 2024 of the plans for this area.

Deer management took on greater prominence on the Trust's land. There were significantly increased culls on all our properties. This allows woodland to establish and thrive by reducing grazing pressures.

We continued to plant trees on all our properties, particular efforts (with a big thank you to volunteers) were at Glenlude, Schiehallion, and Glenridding Common.

Peatland restoration on Skye is off to a good start and we are now looking at other Trust properties. These are by their nature longer term projects.

2022 saw the 25th Anniversary of the John Muir Award. Over £0.5 million Awards have been delivered across the UK. We are in the process of re-designing the Award so it is fit for purpose for the next 25 years. The Award is part of the implementation of the Awareness to Advocacy Engagement Strategy that aims to increase the number of people taking action for wild places.

The Trust finances are in good shape. We have used some of our reserves to support land management activities, and to put in place improved systems and processes for the more effective and efficient operation of the Trust. A priority for 2023 and beyond is to replenish our reserves and diversify and increase our sources of income.

In 2023 we acquired an 18ha site at Kylesku on the north side of Quinag. The aim is to use the site as part of our engagement strategy for people both living in and visiting the north of Scotland. We will operate the existing holiday lodge business for two years initially (through our Trading Company) to give ourselves time to scope and plan the project whilst also generating income. This is not a long-term proposition, simply prudent short term financial management. As part of the planning we will conduct a 'Kylesku Futures' Project in consultation with the local community to look at ideas for the future.

2023 saw the end to our six-year stewardship of Glenridding Common in the Lake District. The Trust is very proud of our achievements there working with partners. After review, we declined to tender for a new lease because the terms were such that we could not balance the proposed terms with our objectives as a conservation charity. We will retain our involvement in the Lake District through our work with partners on the hill ground above Thirlmere Reservoir.

We have taken on the management of the John Muir Way on a trial basis. This 215km trail from Dunbar to Helensburgh is a great opportunity for urban engagement. By September 2024 we will decide whether to take on the management role permanently. Before we make that decision, we will look at governance, future management models, and funding options.

Thank you to all our Staff, Trustees, Members and Volunteers for your continued support of the Trust.

## 5. Membership subscriptions

No changes proposed.

## 6. Financial Report and Annual Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2022

Jim Gibson, Trustee and Convenor of the Finance Committee, thanks Lisa Branter (Director of Finance and Governance) and her team for preparing the accounts against tight deadlines and in face of circumstances outwith their control.

2022 was a better year than we expected, but was still affected by the difficulties common to many companies and charities as the nation has adapted to the post Covid reality. Due to our prudence in previous years, we are in a strong position as we go forward.

Jim explained that there had been a drop in income in 2022 to £3.5m. This included a fall in membership income. Much of our income comes directly or indirectly from our Members - we estimate somewhere between £1.5 and £2 million or between one third and one half of our total income - and we are immensely grateful for your support.

Legacy income in 2022 was extraordinarily generous at £1.8million and we are extremely grateful when people choose to support us in this way.

Summarising the 2022 budget outturn, Jim said there was a 16% increase in spend from 2021 to 2022. In 2022 salary costs increased to support delivery of our Strategic Plan. In addition to an increase in staff costs, support and governance costs increased as a result of increased insurance costs as well as investment in processes, systems and staff training.

Despite these increases in spending, in 2022 our actual expenditure of £3.6 million was lower than anticipated as a result of project delays due to staff vacancies.

Looking forwards, our reserves are robust. We have £3.0 million in restricted funds and £2.6 million in heritage properties; these are ringfenced, but beyond that we have £2.9 million in designated funds and a further £2.3 million in unrestricted funds, making a total of £10.8 million.

With a resilient income stream and a robust balance sheet we are resolute in our direction of travel into the future.

Thank you for your support.

## 7. Appointment of Auditors

Following an audit tender process in autumn 2023 Jim Gibson proposed the appointment of new auditors WBG (Audit) Limited; the appointment was approved by Members following a vote.

## 8. Election of Trustees

Jane Smallman reported on the 2023 Election of Trustees. There were four valid nominations for five vacancies so no election was held. Mark Held, Hermione Lamond, Carol White and herself have joined the Board of Trustees and a process is underway to appoint two co-opted Trustees.

She welcomed the new and returning Trustees and thanked those Trustees who were demitting office - Alan Dobie, Emily Henderson, Mary-Ann Ochota, Chris Loynes, Raymond Simpson, Jim Sloane, Andrew Whitfield and Sheila Wren.

## 9. Other relevant business

None.

Jane Smallman expressed the gratitude of the Trust to its Members, volunteers, donors, partners, fundraisers, friends and supporters - and encouragement to all of those delivering and participating in the John Muir Award. She closed the meeting.