Islay Natural History Trust
Minutes of the 26th Annual General Meeting
at
Natural History Centre, Port Charlotte
on
2nd November 2016 at 7 pm

1. **Attending**: 20 members plus visitors. On the sederunt sheet were the following: Fiona MacGillivray (Chair), David Webster, Alistair Hutchison, Ian Brooke, Margaret Brooke, Jenni Minto, Scott Currie, George Jackson, Megan Jackson, Andrew Kent, Robert Davison, Gordon Yates, Bernard Hannett, David & Carol Andrew, Jane & Steve Wrightson, Mike Bell, Sarah & James Roy, Peter Evans, C&G Walker, M Routledge, Julia Curtis, S Earnshaw, Scott Drinker, Geoff Mills, Mandy Hodgkinson, Samantha Taylor, Gary Turnbull, Jane & Steve Wrightson, Fran Davies?

2. **Apologies**: Malcolm Ogilvie, Isobel Freeman, Sholto Douglas, Jim & Mary McCall, Danielle Vessey, Les Wilson, Bronwen Currie, Martin Armstrong

3. **Minutes of previous AGM**:
   The minutes of the 25th AGM held on 16th February 2016 were taken as read. The missing seconder of the minutes (A Hutchison) was added. Adoption: proposed by A Kent. Seconded by A. Hutchison.

4. **Matters Arising**:
   There were no matters arising.

5. **Chairperson’s Report**:
   Fiona MacGillivray gave an account of the year from April 2015 to April 2016
   This was the second year of a significant funding sponsorship by Bruichladdich Distillery to help cover the building rent and some overheads (£1500). We also had an equally generous donation of £1750 from the Ian Mactaggart Trust. The centre opened during Feis Week and throughout the summer with an extension of our opening period through October when we have previously been shut for recent years. This experiment was not been repeated this current year due to the smaller numbers of visitors it generated weighted against the added expense of wages and the need to heat the building to at least make it comfortable.
   The centre was managed superbly by Mandy Hodkinson throughout the season, helped out by myself initially and then we were joined by Gary Turnbull and later by Lorna Archer who had come with the Glasgow University students on their annual visit and we persuaded her to stay on as holiday cover for us hard workers and benefited from her extra enthusiasm. We also had Beth Clark assisting during her school holidays when the family activities were on. We benefited greatly from Mandy’s dual role as a volunteer with the RSPB as she was able to sell the virtues and benefits of a visit to the natural history centre to the many visitors at the Loch Gruinart visitor centre.

2015 was busier than the previous year with 1659 visitors and sales income of £1740.

- **Total number of visitors to centre** was 1659, up 473 on 2014
- **Proceeds from Admissions** was £2109, up £683.50 on 2014
- **Proceeds from Sales** was £1335.76, up £553.73 on 2014
- Numbers attending **Sunday afternoon rAmbles** was 114 (£372)
- Numbers attending **Monday evening talk** was 76 (£97)
• Numbers attending **Thursday afternoon family activities** was 150 (free)
• Proceeds from **Islay Show and Kilchoman Gala** was £218.45
• Number of **new members** joining was 10 (£125)

A visitor survey showed us that 43% of our custom was generated by people just passing by. 20% came by by word of mouth, 20% by various adverts and 5% were members. The sea tanks were the most interesting part of their experience. We had our usual lobster tank inhabited, and various fish and crabs in the other tanks and our most interesting resident was a Topknot flatfish. We are very grateful for Paul Rennie for providing many of the larger deeper-water creatures from his fishing bycatch and for the Port Charlotte fire crew for filling the tanks each season.

We ran the usual summer programme of events: Sunday nature rAmbles from June through to end of October, which were much better attended than the previous summer, the strategy this year was to pick sites that I fancied walking to, so if no one came along I’d be walking where I wanted to explore! So along with some of the usual ‘must visit’ destinations we went to Dun Nosebridge; Gartbreck seashore, the Ard in Port Ellen plus two geology walks at Kilcharian and Kilnaughton with Dave Webster and a fungal exploration with Alistair Hutchison.

A plea for help! If there are any of you who have ecological expertise or know someone who has it would be very helpful to encourage them to come and give us a hand occasionally, it would be nice to get the occasional Sunday off or I could go along as an interested participant with someone else taking the lead. Please do consider coming on one of our walks next year, they are not guided walks as such but a chance for some sociable learning and exploration of Islay's amazing nature.

Our Monday evening 'Islay Wildlife Wonders' talk ran through July and August once again small but regular numbers attending.

For our family activities this year we teamed up with the I&J Toy Library who secured funding through Foundation Scotland to cover the cost of the activities which meant we had a nice glossy promotions leaflet and advertising and promotion through the circle of local families as well as visitors and were able to provide the events free to the public; we also did two on Jura. This was a huge success drawing in more local families enthusing the younger generation on the islands natural wonders: seashore safari's; minibeast hunts; dragons and scorpions in George’s pond, magic moorlands of Jura, and floral wonders of dunes.

We held a very successful collaboration with Stockholm University’s Bolin Centre for Climate Change and hosted their climate change summer school. Professor Ray Pierrehumbert gave a public lecture on ‘Snowball Earth’ and members of the trust joined in with their excursions to the north coast of Islay and Port Askaig to view the stromatolites and tillites – all evidence of past extreme climate changes

Our regular monthly talks covered a wide range of topics and places: Wildlife in the Seychelles by Michal Sur, investigating wildlife crime in Glasgow by Gary Turnbull, Chris Abell and Sandy Taylor recalling their long distance ‘Coast to Coast’ walk across England; Pete Roberts described the ecological disasters of human influence on New Zealand, as well as the aforementioned climate change talk.

Finally, a big thank you to all our members for their continuing support.

6. **Adoption of Accounts:**

Draft accounts to 1st April 2016 were circulated and Alistair Hutchison gave a brief summary. Operational surplus for the year totalled £1,623. Two significant donations were received (Bruichladdich £1,500 and Ian MacTaggart Trust £1,750) – without these the trust would have run at a loss. Total funds in all accounts totals £52,405. A question was raised regarding whether the grant (£669) from Argyll & Bute Council
was restricted. Fiona noted that it had been fully committed for the purposes for which it had been granted – namely the purchase of a new laptop and touch screen and development of display material.

Fiona requested that Members do their on-line shopping via the Easy Fundraising portal.

Fiona noted that a Gift-Aid claim was still outstanding and this would be submitted in this financial year.

Alistair noted that the accounts still have to be finally audited, once this has been done a final report for OSCR will be prepared.

The adoption of the draft accounts as presented were proposed by Jenni Minto and seconded by Fiona MacGillivray.

7. **Elections to the Committee:**

   The Trustees and management committee hold joint meetings. Trustees currently are Fiona MacGillivray, Alistair Hutchison, Martin Armstrong, Bernard Hannet, David Webster, Isobel Freeman and John French (the latter three off island). The following non-trustees currently sit on the management committee and have intimated their willingness to continue as members: Andrew Kent, Danielle Vessey.

   The re-election of the committee was proposed by Scott Currie and seconded by Robert Davison.

8. **Election of Office Bearers:**

   Chairperson: Fiona MacGillivray, proposed by A Hutchison, seconded by D Webster; Vice Chair: currently vacant; Treasurer: Alistair Hutchison, proposed by F MacGillivray, seconded by S Currie; Secretary: David Webster, proposed by F MacGillivray, seconded by A Kent.

9. **Membership Subscription:**

   Current subscription is £12 and has been at this level for the last 10 years or so and includes all family members at the same address. The Committee proposed increasing this to £18 and there was a seconded counterproposal from the floor that £15 would be more appropriate. Members voted 15 for the £18 amount and 5 for the £15 amount. After some further debate it was agreed to set the subscription at £15 for an individual and £20 for a family/joint membership. This revised proposal was then carried unanimously.

10. **Future development options**

   Fiona gave a brief update. The application for funding to fund a consultant to fundraise and to pursue the planning aspects of proposed ‘pod’ development at ICCI had been rejected. Some in-house work on the project had commenced but progress was very slow due to lack of resources. The Committee would be addressing the issue at their next meetings over the winter and reassess options. The short term option remained to stay at the current centre on a year-by-year basis. It was understood that the SYHA had no immediate plans for the premises.

11. **AOCB**

   There was no other competent business.

   The AGM was followed by a film show from Gordon Yates entitled ‘Birdlife through 40 Pennine years’ with the usual refreshments afterwards.