



BAILIES OF BENNACHIE 2025 Annual General Meeting – Draft

Date: 20th March 2025

Venue: This meeting was held as a hybrid meeting to allow those further afield to attend.

Attendees - Trustees: David Bale, Lorna Bell, David Caney, Alex Doig, Alan Henderson, Willie Linklater, Peter Stock and Allan Will.

Attendees – Bailies (online and in room): Jackie Cumberbirch, William Justice, Stuart Laird, David Prosser, Anne Robertson, Jim Rose, Donald Thomas, John Wills, Ann Baillie, Judith Bale, Michael Coutts, Barry & Chris Foster, Hugh Fraser, Stella Gauld, Peter Kellas, Susan MacLellan, David McClure, Shona & Gary McLean, Colin Miller, Karen Noble, Kit Pawson, Sheila Ritchie, Sandra Edwards, John & Kate Hesketh, Gordon Benzie.

Minutes of the Meeting

1. Welcome	Peter Stock opened the meeting with a welcome to all.
2. Apologies	Apologies were received from Trustee Graeme Ralph, and Janelle Anderson, Sandy Bremner, Patricia Brown, Ann-Marie Coleman, Revel & Marsali Coles, Duncan Grant, Michael Grant, Senga Grant, Rae Jardine, John McKay, Sandy Meldrum, Nanette Milne, Frank Musgrove, Gordon & Kathleen Selbie, Andrew Wainwright.
3. Previous Minutes	It was advised that the previous AGM minutes of 21 st March 2024 had been sent out with the Agenda and Peter Stock invited comments on the content. There being no adjustments to the minutes, these were proposed and seconded by Allan Will and David Bale and unanimously accepted as approved.
4. Constitution Amendments	<p>A marked up copy of suggested amendments, along with a clean copy of the proposed new constitution had been sent out with the Agenda. Several considered alterations were suggested ahead of the meeting by member Donald Thomas; those were also incorporated into the proposed constitution amendments and shared with those in the room and online.</p> <p>A unanimous adoption of the changes was declared with a show of hands in the room, along with 5 of the 7 hands online. The new constitution will be updated on the website shortly.</p>
5. Chairman Report	<p>Peter Stock reflected on how 2024 sits with the last few years and where we are now. Still working with A Voice for the Hill, which is now embedded as part of the culture and the five key points are met when there are budget or action decisions.</p> <p>Volunteers working well. We have a portable defibrillator carried on the Work Parties, also we now have permission for Power Tools, so Electric Work Parties now meet as well as the usual Work Parties. Over 100 volunteers and we have waiting list, but short on Team Leaders to keep larger groups safe.</p>

	<p>Excellent relationships are also held with the key stakeholders of Forestry and Land Scotland, Foresight/RTS, working in partnership.</p> <p>BLPG report working to the Colony Management Plan, new leaflet, new signposts, working closely with the Work Party Group too for clearing ahead of their work. Allan Will reported of the visit of Mary Spencer from Ohio visited and told of his poem he wrote to mark the occasion.</p> <p>Annual dig at Pittodrie 2024: big drive for new volunteers, with a lot of new faces, successful dig overall on a complex site. Will return to this site in future, but the Long House will be the focus for 2025. Plan for a training dig to teach novices ahead of the main dig.</p> <p>Erland Flett shared some old documents with BLPG, they took some time to be transcribed into legible language, now on website, and these documents sitting with the Trustees, but will go into the Special Collections at Aberdeen University.</p> <p>The new book from the BLPG group is available here for sale today, Cultural Landscapes of North-east Scotland, including one of the contributors in Colin Miller was in attendance.</p> <p>Environment & Wildlife have 8 walks already on the diary for 2025 following successful walks last year. Fields for Wildlife was not so successful. The Environmental Strategy has been published in 2025, and this will be rolled out to the landowners in due course.</p> <p>Work Parties are very professional, with good quality equipment and high levels of training provided along with PPE. Cross drain maintenance is carried out along with path clearing. Hill Management Plan has been written this year, and with 30 km of paths and over 30 landmarks, it means we can better project manage the work over several seasons.</p> <p>Projects: A3 poster info boxes have been created, 2 already installed last year, at Cairn Couttie and Shepherd's Lodge, and another 3 to come this year. QR codes did not happen as not enough signal on the hill.</p> <p>New website: will be created in 2025, background work done in 2024. Tracking more volunteers, members, and generate revenue for Bailies, particularly major funding for project work.</p> <p>Timeline Path upgrade: 900m of path. Working with Outdoor Access Trust for Scotland (OATS) to project manage the repair of this path. Grant funding being investigated. Willie Linklater gave a summary of the path project, including the funding approach by the Bailies to fund this project, and look for grant funding to maintain our funds.</p> <p>Kings Award for Voluntary Service: awarded in November 2024, the equivalent of the MBE for organisations, presented by the Lord Lieutenant Sandy Manson in March 2025.</p> <p>Membership: 2024 saw a costly exercise in the clean-up of the membership, writing and emailing all members. From the responses, we are now at c 700. The remainder will be marked as inactive.</p> <p>In conclusion, all the trustees in attendance were introduced to the room and thanked for their work. Also noted that Secretary and Projects Trustee, Willie Linklater has resigned and was thanked in particular for his work for GDPR and Memberships and Projects. Willie be a big loss to the team.</p>
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	<p>Questions were opened to the floor:</p> <p>Susan Macallan asked if we can ask the members to fund the project if donations can be found. The new website will have some revenue funding areas and ideas.</p> <p>Michael Coutts asked if the waterfall by the Fog House was now clear of trees. This was replied as a yes though we would not encourage visiting just yet.</p>
6. Accounts	<p>Alan Henderson, Treasurer, reported on the Accounts of the Bailies of Bennachie.</p> <p>Accounts were broadly similar to last year. Calendar sales were good and all sold this year, dividend income was up.</p> <p>Expenditure went up some 50% year on last year. This was due to a number of extraordinary that should not need to repeated going forward.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases on Work Party support, admin support and archiving support. • Significant level of investment in the Work Parties, tools, training, first aid and PPE. • Admin costs in the renewal of the membership • some archiving costs in sorting our old records. <p>Gains on our investments, managed by Rathbones. Slightly below last year.</p> <p>Governance matters, filed with OSCR in Feb 2025, and externally examined. Meet investment advisors some three times last year. Performance slightly below the benchmark, but not exposed to USA movements in high technology stocks. Keep bank interest as maximum as possible by moving money on short term high interest accounts. Budget is agreed in November, with aim of projecting income covering the operating expenditure, excluding anything project related.</p> <p>No questions were received on the accounts and Alan Henderson was thanked for his work.</p>
7. Election of Trustees	<p>As required in the Constitution, the 9 incumbent trustees, David Bale, Lorna Bell, David Caney, Alex Doig, Alan Henderson, William Linklater, Graeme Ralph, Peter Stock and Allan Will stood down.</p> <p>All Trustees were willing to re-stand for election, with the exception of Willie Linklater who had declared in writing not willing to stand. Graeme Ralph had declared in writing his willingness to stand again. The re-election of the eight trustees was unanimously approved with a show of hands from the attendees.</p> <p>Additional new Trustees were then requested to be put forward for election. No names were put forward at this time.</p>
8. 2025	<p>Peter Stock then continued with overview of 2025. Continue to invest in plans that align with The Voice for the Hill, new website is going to look good, with bulk email to contact members, and online sign up.</p> <p>Litter picking hub. Hill management plan and tracker to better plan the activities on the hill. Environmental Plan will continue to grow, meeting with landowners and fleshing out the activities required for that.</p>

	<p>Community Woodland Plan, RTS has given a hectare of land, around Pittodrie House, create an outdoor biodiversity laboratory and community woodland. Pollen analysis to compare trees from the past, use similar trees. Create volunteer area, establish crafts, encourage schools, biodiversity, and important project.</p> <p>Pittodrie Dig 2025, training days and investigate the Longhouse site. New archaeological site. Limited number of experts available, so novice archaeologists will get close training experience in June, before the dig proper in July and August.</p> <p>2025, 2 work parties already, KAVS presentation, first aid training, new website in Q2. Wildlife walk and talks, first one next week. Timeline path upgrade will continue to tender, but hopefully work will start later in the year. Repairs to the Fog House, covered with trees in Storm Arwen, now cleared. Some donations from RTS, at least 50% for that repair work.</p> <p>The year is already busy.</p>
9. AOCB	<p>There were no items of additional business.</p> <p>The meeting closed at 20:14.</p>

Signed: (Chair) _____ Date: _____

Signed: (Deputy Chair) _____ Date: _____

Note: Formal approval of the 2025 AGM minutes will be at the 2026 AGM.

A presentation and talk then followed by David Caney, Trustee and Hugh Fraser, Outdoor Co-Ordinator with a review of the 2024 Work Parties, how they achieved this work safely, with banksmen, radios, etc., to ensure the safety of the public. This included presentation of the Stihl brush cutter, the reasons for adoption of this model over the petrol versions and images shown of the work done, along with the PPE kit used. Additionally, a full management plan will be used to manage the workload of all of the 30km of paths which the Bailies currently maintain as volunteers, can be progressively maintained.