

GLENURQUHART RURAL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

MONDAY 14th SEPTEMBER 2020

Annual General Meeting – held online via Zoom

Present: Susan Clark (SC) Chair, Carolyn Wilson (CW) Secretary, Diane Norris, John Norris, Russell Fraser, Lynne Kropp, Gordon Findlay, Miranda Service, Dot MacKenzie, Jan Bell, Alan Bell, Fraser Mackenzie, Fiona Urquhart, Jack Meredith, Anne Macdonald, Morag Fraser and Graham Fraser

Apologies: Apologies were received from Adrian and Margaret Varwell, Peter Bellew, Erik Trelfer, Neil Barron, Gordon Watson and Helen Maclennan,

Susan Clark (SC) welcomed everyone to this, our first ever GURCA Open meeting held via Zoom! Covid-19 restrictions had meant that it seemed unlikely we would be able to hold a public meeting in the near future, and she thanked those who had attended and allowed the AGM to take place online.

Before the meeting commenced, SC outlined the 'rules' by which the meeting would be conducted, to ensure everyone was able to speak on subjects, if they wished, and that all members present could vote on any tabled issues.

1. Previous minutes and matters arising:

The minutes of the AGM held on 17th June 2019 had been circulated in advance of the meeting to all attendees. Approval of the minutes was proposed by Fiona Urquhart and seconded by Fraser Mackenzie/. There were no actions arising from the minutes not covered by the meeting agenda.

2. Chair's Report:

SC gave the following report:

"It has been my privilege to Chair GURCA for the 3rd year and what a strange year it has been for our Community and GURCA. My thanks go to all of our Trustees for the hard work and dedication they demonstrate towards their Community and all the volunteer hours expended. During the past year we were saddened at the passing of George Cruickshank who was one of GURCA's co-opted members. He was an enthusiastic supporter of what we were trying to achieve and I am sure he would be very pleased to see the progress we are making as a Community. This year we welcomed Neil Barron who took over as Treasurer who took over from Nicola Vestey who stood down as a result of moving away from the community. My thanks go to Nicola for her years of service to GURCA.

COVID 19 has undoubtedly had a significant effect on us all and GURCA has been part of a Community COVID resilience group who have been meeting virtually every 2 weeks of so since April. This groups was set up to look at how we supported our community during the crisis and working with the Glenurquhart centre, Soirbheas

and others, the Community Helpline was established. A grant was awarded by HIE for around £23k which helped purchase a range of items and set up services in the community such as the food larders, sanitising equipment, support the helpline, new IT for the Childcare Centre and Glenurquhart Centre to assist with remote working and delivering services remotely. We still continue to meet and as a result of this will be working with other groups to dust down the Community Resilience Plan. If anyone would like to get involved in this please let us know.

Key achievements over the past year are as follows:

Glenurquhart Public Hall – the hall refurbishment project has not been forgotten. Work has been underway applying for funding and as we speak the Hall Chair, Gordon Watson, is working with Highland Council on an application to the Regional Regeneration for a significant grant towards our objective. We managed to get a COVID grant to help with running costs as a result of the hall being out of use.

Loch Ness Hub – formerly known as the TIC, this project has progressed significantly since last year. Not only has GURCA been through the Community Asset Transfer process with Highland Council resulting in approval to purchase the building, we have obtained the funding to purchase the building, we have a grant from SSE and are about the launch the Community Share offer which gives you in the community the opportunity to invest in this exciting community social enterprise. The launch is being held on 19th September at the Loch Ness Hub from 9am until 6pm.

Urquhart Castle - Over the past year, our main efforts have been focussed on the Loch Ness Hub project but we have continued to meet with HES through the Liaison Group. The castle was closed through lockdown and only re-opened in August and HES are keeping us updated with how this is going. I think it would be fair to say that progress with them has been slow but once the Loch Ness Hub project is up and running we can turn our attentions fully to Urquhart castle.

Community Action Plan – we had hoped to find additional funding for this piece of work but to date that has not been possible. However, it is even more important now since any surplus funds from the Loch Ness Hub will be re-invested back into community projects. This means that we need an agreed strategy and methodology for deciding what these are and so more work will continue on that in the next year.

Loch Ness Homes – work continues very slowly to try and agree a long term lease for the land between Cafe 82 and East Lewiston. We will keep GURCA updated.

GUSC – The trustees have been approached about the renewal of the lease between GURCA and GUSC for the solum of the Shinty Pavilion. GUSC would like a longer term lease over this land to help them with funding applications going forwards. The Trustees have approved this in principle with the caveats that we need to protect GURCA into the future. So, with your approval we will move to agree a lease for a longer term lease which ensures that this will not affect GURCA's overall

ownership of the land into the longer terms or frustrates GURCA's ability to use and give access to others to Blairbeg Park.

Fireworks and parties - these were held as usual and thanks go to those who run those on behalf of the community. Unfortunately we have decided to cancel the Fireworks this year due to Covid.

Market on the Green – these have now become a bit of a fixture and have restarted post COVID. My thanks go to the organisers and all the stall holders who come along to these events.

The Green – a huge thanks goes to the team who have been out diligently through COVID cutting the grass on the green. I was there today as the hum of mowers started about 5pm and the team went to work to ensure that the green looks its best!"

3. Financial report:

A summary of the accounts had been circulated to attendees in advance of the meeting. Carolyn Wilson (CW) confirmed that they had been independently audited and no issues had arisen from this. The accounts would now be submitted to OSCR, subject to the approval of the meeting.

A copy of the financial summary is attached as Appendix A

Overall, with unrestricted funds, GURCA made a surplus of £1,214.00 and carried forward £19,082.

Restricted funds carried forward were £17,638.00

The accounts summary was proposed for approval by Fiona Urquhart and seconded by Fraser Mackenzie

4. Election of Trustees:

In accordance with the Association's constitution, three of the current Trustees were required to stand down, although they were eligible to be re-elected. The three standing down were Gordon Findlay, Neil Barron and Fraser Mackenzie. All three had indicated willingness to be re-elected.

The meeting unanimously returned all the Trustees.

The full list of Trustees, along with the other bodies they represent, for the coming year is:

Susan Clark (Games Committee)

Carolyn Wilson (Hall, Care Project)

Neil Barron

Fraser Mackenzie (Shinty Club)

Anne Macdonald (Care Project)

Gordon Watson (Hall)

Fiona Urquhart (Community Council)

Gordon Findlay (Chamber of Commerce)

Co-opted Trustee is Councillor Margaret Davidson

There are vacancies for up to three more Trustees on the GURCA Board.

Because of the unusual circumstances surrounding this year's AGM, there had not been an invitation to members to nominate potential new Trustees.

It was agreed that the invitation would be issued to all members to consider whether they would wish to nominate any member to become a Trustee. The nominated individual must have given their agreement to being nominated.

Please advise Carolyn Wilson before October 30th if you wish to nominate anyone. In the event of over subscription, a vote will be arranged.

5. Hall:

CW advised the meeting that the hall had been well used during the year to March 2020, and had made a small surplus on its activities, of £197.00. Although this may not seem much, it was actually a very good result when expenditure was taken into account. Around £2,500 had been spent replacing and greatly improving the lighting throughout the main hall and the meeting rooms.

Income had been boosted by Gordon Watson's heroic 'Crawl for the Hall' fundraiser, which raised almost £1,500, along with the bottle stall at the Games which raised £1,275.

Alan Bell asked how much had been applied for in terms of funding, to the Regional regeneration fund? It was agreed this figure would be advised in the minutes.

The amount being applied for is £750,000

6. Any other business:

Craigmony woodland Alan Bell advised the meeting of the great progress with the replacement paths being built following felling works in the Craigmonie woods. Once the paths are handed back, it is proposed to plant native broadleaf trees. The woodland group is looking for able bodied volunteers to assist with the planting, once the saplings are delivered (probably in October).

If you would be willing to volunteer some time, please contact Alan Bell, Gordon Watson or Peter Wilkes.

Glenurquhart Bulletin – Fraser Mackenzie reminded us that the Bulletin is now available to purchase from the Lewiston garage or the Post Office. It is a particularly interesting read this year, given the impact of Covid-19 on our community.

Shinty club solum lease – Susan Clark advised the meeting that the Shinty Club is continuing its discussions with GURCA regarding a significant extension to the lease agreement for the solum of the pavilion. She explained that any agreement would protect GURCA's ownership of the land, should the shinty club cease to exist, or cease to have an interest in the land.

SC asked the meeting if it was in agreement with this approach. Those present unanimously approved the proposal to agree an extension, subject to protecting GURCA's long term interest in the land.

Cobb display at Loch Ness Hub – Jan Bell asked whether the information display in the former TIC building, about John Cobb, should be removed for safekeeping. The display is the property of the heritage group and it was agreed that should they wish to remove it, access can be arranged.

Filming at Cobb memorial – SC advised she had been asked for permission to film at the Cobb Memorial, by the 'Grand tours of Scotland' TV producers. She had granted permission.

SC closed the meeting by thanking attendees for taking the time to join in the zoom meeting, and once again reminding those present of the imminent launch of the Community Share Offer for Loch Ness Hub. She asked members to spread the word about this to their friends and neighbours who may not have been aware of it through GURCA or social media.

A photograph of the master zoom screen was taken, to record this historic AGM!