

Minutes**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING****Soirbheas**
Investing in the communities of Glen Urquhart & StrathglassHeld by Telephone Conference on **Thursday 24th June 2021****Directors
Present:**James Murray (JPM), Fraser Mackenzie (FM), Jack Meredith (JM), Morag Fraser (MF), Malcolm Wield (MW), Sarah McPherson (SM), David Cooper (DC)
Ian McKay (IM)**Other
Members**

Erik Trelfer (ET – Co Secretary), Suzanne Irvine, Graham Fraser, Gordon Watson, Susan Clark, Diane Fraser, Rosie Hazelton, Jenny Service, Archie Drennan

**In
attendance:**

Carol Masheter (CM – Community Development Officer), Jim Barr (director Soirbheas Trading Ltd), Colin Gray (Frame Kennedy -Treasurer and Accountants to Soirbheas), Nicky MacLennan (NM – Assistant Community Development Officer), Katrina Ashton,

Apologies:

None received

James Murray, Chairperson, opened the meeting, welcomed everyone, and hoped this would be the last AGM to be held through digital format. The order of agenda was confirmed and attendees offered the opportunity to ask questions when required. Thanks were extended to all members for voting in advance using the electronic or paper options to re-elect one director and ratify the appointment of two new directors. Colin Gray will present the financial report and JPM will present the directors report, summary of the year, and provide a brief update on the performance of Corrimony Energy Ltd (CEL). The meeting will close after the results of the 2021 photo competition have been presented by NM.

JPM moved on to the formal Annual General Meeting matters. The meeting was quorate and there being no questions or queries on the **Minutes of Previous AGM: Thursday 29th October 2020** (a draft of which had been made available to members via the Soirbheas website), the minutes were proposed and seconded by Malcolm Wield and David Cooper respectively and adopted to be signed off by the Chairman as an accurate record.

DIRECTORS REPORT & ACCOUNTS REVIEW OF THE PAST YEAR

It had been a strange year in terms of delivery of existing and new projects, but we approved £53,380 across all grant programmes during the financial year.

Grants and Funding

Tier 1 grants are for up to £1000. We awarded six grants totalling £5059, an increase on the previous year despite covid restrictions. There were a broad range of projects from swimming lessons, minibus driver training and an application from GURCA to develop pathways information. Some Tier 1 grants have not been drawn down yet, but as soon as lockdown restrictions allow projects will proceed.

Tier 2 grants are for up to £10,000 of funding. One application for £3750 was approved for Glenurquhart Care Project to carry out a planning and business review.

Tier 3 grants are for capital projects. One application was approved for The Loch Ness Hub. Despite restrictions The Hub is making great progress becoming established. We also approved two Expressions of Interest to progress to full application. One towards refurbishment of Glen Urquhart Public Hall; the other towards Phase 2 of The Affric to Kintale Way. We are delighted that Phase 1 is now complete. We are seeing tentative signs of an increase in interest for new projects as restrictions ease. The Tier 3 programme was launched two years ago, with funding up to £30,000. We are pleased to announce to members that we have increased the fund level to £50,000 for capital projects, and we hope this will really help larger community projects proceed.

Apprenticeship funding is available to businesses for up to £22,500 over three years to help with salary and training costs. Last year we awarded one new apprenticeship grant, bringing the total of apprenticeships supported to five. There continues to be interest in apprenticeships and we are very pleased with how the scheme is growing.

We established an Employee Support grant in March, with applications open from April. This fund is to support businesses to re-skill or up-skill existing staff as part of recovery from covid restrictions.

Community Work is carried out by CM and NM to complement the management of grant programmes.

Development Support days had been provided informally and have now been formalised where Soirbheas staff time can be allocated to local groups to support projects, e.g., to help develop business plans or source external funding. For smaller projects an allocation of 2 – 3 days may be appropriate, or for more complex projects an allocation of 10+ days may be required.

Soirbheas has led with community resilience projects including the food larders, delivery of actions in the elderly and young action plan and support for health walks.

The befriending project is at the end of the pilot phase and is currently under review.

The highlights of our work for the year were circulated with the AGM papers, and can be read on the website <https://www.soirbheas.org/next-board-meetings/>

FINANCIAL

The Draft Annual Report and Accounts had been made available prior to the AGM on the Soirbheas website. Colin Gray of Frame Kennedy was in attendance to answer any queries on these accounts. The Chairman thanked Colin and his team for their help in providing the services of Treasurer and accountancy advisors. Soirbheas continued to be in an extremely sound financial position. The summary to **31 MARCH 2021**:

- Total charity income for the year was £172k, down from £204k for the previous year.
- The main funding continues to be from Corrimony Energy which is variable dependant on weather conditions, maintenance costs etc; and SSE which is a more fixed income.
- Total expenditure was £121k, primarily due to the reduction in grant applications.
- There was a £51k surplus for the year.
- The fund currently has £371,000 including grants allocated but not yet drawn down.

CORRIMONY ENERGY (CEL) REPORT:

CEL own and operate the windfarm which continues to be our most significant source of income. Chris Rodgers of Gen Capital Ltd, responsible for management services to CEL, was unable to attend the meeting. JPM summarised performance for the year:

The windfarm year to year is performing ahead of original expectations.

Income is dependent on different weather conditions.

This year there were 26,000 megawatt hours generated, compared to the last two years which were c31k megawatt hours, which is a drop of 19%. This was primarily due to lower-than-average windspeeds during January and February 2021 and faults with turbine 5 over the year.

There were also unforeseen increases in grid costs (the cost for exporting energy to the grid).

The income received was £98,000 compared to £125,000 in 2020

We publish monthly results on our website so performance can be followed in real time.

<https://www.soirbheas.org/wind-farm-performance>

AGMELECTIONS AND RESOLUTIONS

The Company Secretary confirmed that a total of 23 voting forms had been received from members prior to the meeting. ET offered the opportunity to any members at the meeting to vote and one further vote was confirmed, so a total of 24 votes received.

1) Under OSCR regulation the responsibility for signing off the Annual Report and Accounts rests with the Board of Trustees/Directors.

ELECTIONS TO THE BOARD

2) Under the constitution, each year the longest serving one third of the Soirbheas Board must stand down by rotation but may offer themselves for re-election (always provided no more than 6 consecutive years are served). Appointments to the board made during the year by co-option to the Board must be ratified by members at the next AGM.

This year one board member had retired having completed five consecutive years of service. The Chairman warmly thanked Fraser Mackenzie - who is retiring from the Board this evening - for his support and dedicated service, particularly with his great understanding of culture, heritage and of course, Gaelic pronunciation and translation. Jack Meredith stood down by rotation and is standing for re-election. The board had welcomed two new directors – Malcolm Wield and Ian MacKay who had been co-opted to the board during the year and now stood for Ratification of their appointments. There were three abstentions.

a) **Re-elect Jack Meredith as a Director** – unanimous vote by the members

b) **Ratify the appointment of Malcolm Wield as a Director** – unanimous vote by the members

c) **Ratify the appointment of Ian McKay as a Director** – unanimous vote by the members

Any other Proposals for additional Directors:

None. CM or NM can be contacted for informal discussion if anyone would like more information.

Any Other Business and Questions:

Nothing raised but members can contact JPM CM or NM as required

2021 PHOTO COMPETITION RESULTS

NM announced the winners in this year's competition. There were 101 entries received across three themes and two classes (one for adults, one for under 18's). All names are removed from entries to make all voting anonymous. A selection panel consisting of FM, IM and CM shortlisted the entries to five per class. A community vote then identified the photos with the highest number of votes. We also enter all members into a bonus prize draw. There had been 26 members who submitted an entry this year. Gordon Watson selected a random number which identified the member who will receive a £25 voucher to spend in a local business of their choice. The winners in each class will receive a £50 voucher to spend in a local business of their choice, and also nominated a local charity/group to receive £100 from Soirbheas funds. Four winners nominated Glen Urquhart Childcare Centre who will receive £400; Strathglass Youth Club and Glen Urquhart Tug of War club will receive £100 each.

In addition, to help with local fundraising, we are producing a community calendar. The calendar will be for sale through local outlets on behalf of Strathglass & Affric Community Company and Glen Urquhart Rural Community Association.

Many thanks to everyone who contributed with entries and voting, a thoroughly enjoyable community event that we hope to run again. The results are listed on our web page <https://www.soirbheas.org/soirbheas-photography-competition/>

Chair:

Clerk to the Board:

Date:

James Murray

29/9/22

James Murray

Erik Trelfer