

**Minutes****ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING****Soirbheas**

Investing in the communities of Glen Urquhart &amp; Strathglass

Held at Balnain Hall, Glen Urquhart on **Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022****Directors  
Present:**James Murray (JPM), Morag Fraser (MF), Malcolm Wield (MW), David Cooper (DC)  
Jenny Service (JS)**Other  
Members**Erik Trelfer, Company Secretary (ET), Susan Clark, Russell Fraser, Arlene Johnstone,  
Bill Smart, Neil MacInnes, Pam Lucas**In  
attendance:**Colin Gray (Frame Kennedy -Treasurer and Accountants to Soirbheas), Nicky  
MacLennan (NM – Assistant Community Development Officer),  
Marianne Townsley SSE**Apologies**

Jack Meredith, Ian McKay, Carol Masheter

James Murray, Chairperson, opened the meeting, welcomed everyone. 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 electronic or paper options to re-elect one director and ratify the appointment of one new director. 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 2022 photo competition have been presented by NM.

The meeting was quorate and there being no questions or queries on the **Minutes of Previous AGM** on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2021 (a draft of which had been made available to members via the Soirbheas website), the minutes were proposed and seconded by Morag Fraser and Malcolm Wield respectively, and adopted to be signed by the Chairman as an accurate record.

**DIRECTORS REPORT & ACCOUNTS****REVIEW OF THE PAST YEAR****Chairpersons Report**

Even though we were still hampered by Covid restrictions, for the year to March 2022 we allocated an impressive c£132,000 in grant awards. The Social Investment Scotland loan will be paid back in full in May 2022, and a presentation on our achievements since 2014 will be delivered later in the meeting. I would like to thank all members, community groups and supporters with the work we do, it is a privilege to serve you.

**Grants and Funding**

Tier 1 grants have an annual limit of £1000 per group. We awarded five grants totalling £3,720. There were a broad range of projects including the design of an ecommerce system; heritage interpretation panels and craft items.

Tier 2 grants are limited to £10,000, and 90% of project costs. Three applications totalling £35,799 were approved and support delivery of a venison education project; purchase of a minibus; and Phase 1 of Glenurquhart Hall renovations.



Tier 3 grants are for use towards 60% of capital projects. We increased the limit for project funding to £50,000. One application was withdrawn due to difficulties with match funding; and phase 2 of Affric Kintail Way was awarded with £48,500.

Apprenticeship funding is available to businesses for up to £22,500 over three years to help with salary and training costs. An additional £1000 is available for essential resources for the apprentice. Three apprentices complete their qualifications last year – congratulations to all. One new apprenticeship fund was approved for the Glenurquhart Childcare Centre whose apprentice will start later in the year.

The Community support fund closed at the end of March 2022. Eight awards were issued to groups facing financial difficulty directly resulting from covid restrictions. This grant can be reinstated if there is future need.

The Employee Training grant was closed at the end of March 2022, no enquiries progressed to application.

We look forward to a busy year, supporting our communities to prosper.

**Community Work** was carried out by CM and NM to complement the management of grant programmes. This included

- Development Support days enabled Soirbheas staff time to be allocated to local groups to support projects, including the Glenurquhart Community Action Plan and paths development.
- We continued to stock the food larder and encouraged growing and sharing projects including the annual tattie day.
- We managed the Glens Befriending Service in partnership with the Highland Hospice. The service supported people of all ages who were feeling isolated or lonely by matching them with a trained volunteer.

I would like to extend many thanks to Carol and Nicky - our development staff - for their work in achieving our objectives and supporting our communities.

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 Chairman thanked Colin Gray and his team for their help in providing the services of Treasurer and Accountancy advisors. The Draft Annual Report and Accounts were made available prior to the AGM on the Soirbheas website. Colin Gray was in attendance to present the report and to answer any queries on the accounts.

The summary to **31 MARCH 2022:**

- Soirbheas continued to be in an extremely sound fiscal position, with £100k committed to approved grants.
- Total charity income for the year was £139k, down from £172k for the previous year. The main reason for the reduction due to the income from CEL payment being variable and dependant on wind speeds and maintenance.

- £59k was received from SSE from Blairidh windfarm, which is a slight increase as the payment is index linked
- Total expenditure was £180k, an increase from £120k in the previous year. But this deficit is good as it shows reserves being used as there is an increase in grants awarded.
- There will be an increase in available finances next year as the final payment to Social Investment Scotland will be made in May 2022 and an increase of revenue from CEL.

### **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 from the report submitted for the year:

- The wind farm has historically been performing ahead of expectations. Performance does, however, vary each year depending on weather patterns and performance of the turbines.
- The Base Case annual output performance for the wind farm was estimated to be 26,293MWs.
- In the year from June 21 to May 22 the wind farm produced 27,572.19MWs. This is compared to 23,908.345MWs for the year to May 21 and 31,201.43MWs in year to May 20.
- It is pleasing to note the improved performance of Enercon on the back of a difficult 18 months due to COVID, difficulty in moving parts due to Brexit and staff shortages. Hopefully, next year we will be able to report a full 12 months of expected turbine availability.
- As at the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June the wind farm had produced 1,904MWs. In the prior year the wind farm produced 1,811MWs for the full month.

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

### **SOCIAL INVESTMENT SCOTLAND PRESENTATION**

JPM thanked CM for preparing the report, and in her absence presented the findings on how we have achieved our outcomes to reduce fuel poverty; protect our environment for future generations; strengthen our local economy and capacity of our communities; and improve the quality of life of the elderly & vulnerable, including young people. In summary, since April 2014 Soirbheas has:

- awarded over £505,000 distributed across 132 grant awards, benefiting 39 groups and 5 businesses. These awards have leveraging in £1,586,758 in match funding.
  - Tier 1 – there have been 71 awards to 36 groups totalling £34,540
  - Tier 2 – there have been 34 awards to 14 groups totalling £220,470
  - Tier 3 – there have been 4 awards to 3 projects totalling £136,000
  - Apprenticeships - 8 awards to 7 businesses totalling £102,025
  - Community Fund – 15 awards to 10 groups totalling £14,600
- offered Development Support Days to local organisations and groups to assist with the development of ideas and projects within Glen Urquhart and Strathglass
- engaged with our community through an annual photo competition, produced community calendars, supported the health walks, provided a food larder, delivered growing projects and managed the befriending service



- been instrumental in a range of community consultation and research for the area including the elderly and Vulnerable Plan; Local Energy Plan; Transport Feasibility Study and Glen Urquhart Community Action Plan.

## AGM ELECTIONS AND RESOLUTIONS

The Company Secretary confirmed that a total of 19 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 19 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 three consecutive years of service. The Chairman warmly thanked Sarah McPherson for her commitment to the Board and wished her well for the future. Morag Fraser stood down by rotation and is standing for re-election. The board had welcomed one new director, Jennifer Service who had been co-opted to the board during the year and now stood for Ratification of their appointments. There was one abstention.

a) **Re-elect Morag Fraser as a Director** – unanimous vote by the members

b) **Ratify the appointment of Jennifer Service as a Director** – unanimous vote by the members

## Any other Proposals for additional Directors:

CM or NM can be contacted for informal discussion if anyone would like more information.

## Any Other Business and Questions:

- A question raised about future income streams. This will depend on renewable developments and extensions being approved. Blairidh is the most advanced but not been concluded as yet. SSE do not enter into discussions on community benefit until the project is consented. There is a small working group monitoring what is happening with developments for Statcraft and Corrimony.
- Soirbheas were winners of the 2022 best community project for the Scottish Highlands and Islands Renewable Energy Awards
- Connie MacLennan and Beth Luscombe-Smith were winners of the Glen Urquhart High School Community Achievement Award for their contribution to the Cnocan Burraidh heritage project which Soirbheas funded and supported.
- Susan Clark thanked the Soirbheas Board of Directors on behalf of the communities.

## 2022 PHOTO COMPETITION RESULTS

There were 105 entries received across three themes and two classes (one for adults, one for under 18's). All voting is anonymous, the selection panel consisting of MW, DC and CM shortlisted the entries to three per class. A community vote then selected the overall winners based on highest number of votes submitted. This year there were 298 votes and the results were very close.

The 25 members who submitted a photo were entered into a bonus prize draw. Pam Lucas selected a random number which was linked to a 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 nominated a local charity/group to receive £100 from Soirbheas funds. Three winners nominated Glen Urquhart Childcare Centre who will receive £300; two winners nominated Glen Urquhart Primary School parent council who will receive £200, and the final nomination was to Glen Urquhart High School parent council who will receive £100.

Due to the success of the community calendars last year - with over £600 raised - we are producing a calendar for 2023. 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:

*James Murray*

James Murray

Clerk to the Board:

*Erik Trelfer*

Erik Trelfer

Date:

31/8/23

