



Lochaber Environmental Group AGM 2019

6pm An Drochaid, Claggan

Incorporating LEG's 20th Birthday Celebrations and a presentation on the proposed Hydro Electric scheme and update on current activities

Present: Marian Austin (Chair), Susan Carstairs, Martyn Green, Benny Macdonald, Jessica Maxwell, Christine Rolin, Stephen McDonach, Kate Willis, Andrew Green, Andy Rogers, Andrew Baldrey, Bryony Brooks, Wallace Hastings, Ise Stumpff, Ally Entwiste, David Mann, Ross Lynn, Andrew Squire, Dennis Rixson.

Apologies: Annie Burton, Zach Wishart.

1. Welcome

- Marian Austin welcomed everyone.

2. Minutes of the last AGM – 27 Nov 2018

- Request for any feedback, comments, amendments.
- Accepted. Proposed by Andy Rodgers, seconded by Kate Willis.

3. Chairman's report (Marian Austin)

- See **Appendix A** for the Chairman's report for the year ending 31st March 2019.
- Highlights include:
 - GO (sustainable transport and active travel)
 - rehoming 60 unloved bikes to help reduce car travel.
 - promoting electric cars and electric bike events and promoting fuel efficient driving.
 - GLOW (involves energy savings and reducing energy costs for participants)
 - providing energy surveys for 63 homes and some businesses.
 - GROW (food growing and composting)
 - encouraging 150 households to grow food and 160 to take on a compost bin.
 - hosting 7 growing classes and 3 compost classes.
 - constructing a new polytunnel for the use of the schools at Strontian.
 - developing a producers group, including a brand and website, Food Lochaber.



- EDUCATION (cross cutting theme – engaging with primary schools and delivering courses)
 - Engaging with over 20 primary schools.
 - Delivering 3 Carbon Literacy courses.
- PUBLICITY the staff are to be congratulated on producing regular high quality content in local print media and further afield.
- Update on personnel changes: staff and the board.
- Thank you to all the staff and directors for their enthusiasm, thoughtfulness and commitment not only to LEG as an organisation but to the future of Lochaber, Scotland and further afield.

4. Annual accounts (Benny Macdonald)

- Brief overview provided.
- Hard copies available at the AGM. See **Appendix B** for a copy of the annual accounts.
- Accounts examined and signed by an independent examiner.
- Breakdown provided of unrestricted funds (donations, membership) and restricted funds (from funders).
- Total income £128,815, total expenditure £120,800 – net income £8,015.
- Questions:
 - What was in the equipment expenditure?
 - Quite a lot of growing going on (seeds), compost bins, polytunnel (Strontian Primary School), spare parts for the bikes, tools for bike repairs, bat boxes.
 - Presentation of the accounts.
 - Chairman's report will be added.

5. Election of board (Martyn Green)

- Constitution requires board members to stand down every three years.
 - One third of the board retires by rotation: so Susan Carstairs and Marian Austin retire but both are prepared to stand again.
 - i. Marian Austin (proposed by Andrew Baldry, seconded by Susan Carstairs)
 - ii. Susan Carstairs (proposed by Jessica Maxwell, seconded by Andrew Baldrey)
 - iii. Vote: 100% in favour – unanimous.
 - There have been two resignations, so the board has vacancies for more directors.
 - i. Wallace Hastings has resigned.
 - ii. Andrew Squire has resigned.
-



- iii. Scott McCombie has resigned.
- As well as having an interest in the environment can you help with membership spreadsheets and communications, providing HR back up for staff, lobbying or campaigning? If you have time for 10 meetings a year and a few hours between, we would love to hear from you.
 - i. Christine Rolin (proposed by Martyn Green, seconded by Andrew Baldrey).
 - ii. Ailsa Pooleman (proposed by Jessica Maxwell, seconded by Martyn Green).
 - iii. Julie French (job share) (proposed by Marian Austin, seconded by Kate Willis).
 - iv. Carrie Starkie (job share) (proposed by Marian Austin, seconded by Andy Rodgers).

6. Subscriptions

- The board propose to leave individual subs at £12.50 and couples and organisations at £20.
- Members: had 90 members, gained members since then, now 90-95.
- Facebook: followers 1500.

7. AOB

- Electric cars: depriving the state of tax revenue. How to make this up?
 - Get the fossil fuel industry to make it up.
 - Shifting taxation from carbon based fuels to other alternatives.

Close of formal business.

- ➔ Update from staff on Go, Grow, Glow project (Kate Willis and Stephen McDonach).
- ➔ Update on plans for the future from staff (Kate Willis and Stephen McDonach).
- ➔ Overview of Glenachulish Hydro – a short presentation on the proposed hydro project (Marian Austin) followed by questions, positive comments and offers of help from members.
- ➔ LEG 20th birthday cake and presentations to board members who have retired (Susan Carstairs).



Appendix A Chairman's report Nov 2019

In attempting to review the year from April 18 to March 19, I find that there is so much going on, that it is difficult to summarise all the activity in a short report, but here goes:

April 2018 saw the beginning of the Climate Challenge Fund Project named Go, Glow and Grow. It is a 2 year project with funding for 3 full time staff so at the end of March 2019 it was only half way through and there will be further updates on this from the staff later and at next year's AGM. We learned a lot in the first year and not everything worked so there have been adaptations in year 2.

GO is about sustainable transport and active travel and involved

- rehoming 60 unloved bikes to help reduce car travel. This proved more challenging than expected with lots of bikes donated but requiring lots of work, so a successful application was made to Paths for All and Jamie was recruited to fix bikes 2 days a week for a year! I quote from a recipient:

"I was very excited to hear about the Adopt a Bike scheme in the hopes that I would be able to get a new (to me) bike for my commuting and other day to day activities. I was very pleased with my new Trek mountain bike. The frame was a much better fit for me, the seat was much more comfortable, and thicker tyres and front suspension meant that it was much easier to ride around on uneven roads and paths. I was riding to work almost every day which was 3.8 miles each way. As well as being much faster than the bus or even sometimes a car if the traffic was bad, I was getting a good amount of exercise and fresh air every day. I didn't have the money to buy a new or decent second hand bike so this scheme really helped me."

- Promoting electric cars and electric bike events and promoting fuel efficient driving.

Like many of our projects, this is a 'slow burn' as it involves investment from participants, but 25 people test drove electric cars and subsequently 2 cars and an electric van were ordered after the 2018 event and many more people were considering the change. Also quite a few more charge points were connected across the area.(not our action)

GLOW involves energy savings and reducing energy costs for participants and we aimed to carry out energy surveys for 100 homes and some businesses. Again some of the recommendations require investment and there is a delay in that happening but 63 visits were made to a variety of premises with a wide range of results with some places making significant inroads into their electricity consumption and others resulting in more comfort to residents at no extra costs. 2 Air source heat pumps were installed and faulty appliances and buildings were identified.

GROW has probably evolved more than any other strand with the original plan to encourage 100 households to grow food and 160 to take on a compost bin. This went on to hosting 7 growing classes and 3 compost classes, engaging with 150 households and distributing half the compost bins. Additionally by the end of March, Stephen sourced extra funding to start a producers group and establish a brand and a Food Lochaber website. More of this later.



EDUCATION covers all the strands and the LEG staff are engaged with about 10 primary schools over different environmental subjects from plastic reduction to biking to school. Education also includes developing awareness and 3 Carbon Literacy courses were run for 18 participants and this is something that we are keen to do for other groups and businesses.

LEG staff engaged with a disparate group of businesses from BSW and Liberty over electric cars and fuel efficiency to Ardnamurchan Lighthouse, a chalet business and several high street shops over their energy usage, not to mention trying to create a link between a local brewery and a crofter planning to grow rye.

Something else which covers all the different strands is publicity. The staff are to be congratulated on producing 2 monthly articles for Lochaber Life, frequent articles in the local paper and getting a full colour piece in the Scottish Field on Food Lochaber.

There were personnel changes over the year. We started with Zach Wishart, Christine Rolin and Stephen McDonach. Christine left at Christmas and Kate Willis was appointed in her place in February. Jamie Maxwell also joined us in February as a part time bike development officer. Additionally we have had quite a few volunteers working on various parts of the projects.

On the board, Benny MacDonald resigned as a director and Andrew Baldrey, Jess Maxwell and Wallace Hastings joined the board. Benny continued to act as treasurer for a handover to Helen Cormack and will present the accounts tonight.

I would like to record my thanks to all the staff and directors for their enthusiasm, thoughtfulness and commitment not only to LEG as an organisation but to the future of Lochaber, Scotland and further afield.

Marian Austin

Chair

Nov 2019

Appendix B – Annual Accounts