Minutes of the Transition Black Isle AGM on Friday 18th November 2022 at Glachbeg Croft and via Zoom

Present:

At Glachbeg: Martin Sherring, Anne Thomas, Peter Moffatt, Marion Moffatt, Julian Paren, Penny Edwards, Julie Shortreed, Rose Grant, Sheila Currie, Stephen Thomas.

On Zoom: Julie Gibson, Valerie James.

Apologies: Sarah Grant, Vanessa Halhead, Trish McKeggie, Andy Dorin, Mary Paren, Wendy Price, Alaine Macdonald.

Minutes of the last meeting

These were unanimously accepted as a correct record of the meeting.

Convenor’s Report

Julian reported on activities during the year to 31st March 2022, and those which had taken place since then.

Of particular note were:

* Communications, including the newsletter (with a new website under development), website, social media, attendance at events and collaboration with other groups, through Future Communities Highlands & Islands.
* Publications – the Growing Guide, Active Travel Map, and the continuing work to keep the Our Local Larder website current;
* Community markets – the indoor market at N Kessock resumed during the year after a break due to covid, and Cromarty re-started after the year-end;
* A successful seed potato selling regime despite Covid concerns again ruling out the normal approach;
* The Grow North programme of growing workshops which had mixed fortunes in 2022 and would benefit from new volunteer input;
* Bike hire business continuing from Black Isle Yurts and Cromarty, although the Cromarty organiser is looking to handover to someone new;
* The proposed off-road active travel route between Avoch and Munlochy, where resistance from landowners continues to cause delays, and The Highland Council, having agreed to work with us as a partner, has failed to signed a partnership agreement;
* A popular programme of three on-line talks and workshops on home insulation;
* Work on outdoor access – both practical path work and campaigning for better access;
* Strategic work done by the Black Isle Partnership and Highland Council’s Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan (with input from TBI/ our members) both show that our ideas of sustainability are increasingly mainstream;
* Contributions to consultation on Active Travel Masterplans, the John O’ Groats Trail, Net Zero Britain and Forest & Land Scotland’s update of their Black Isle Forest Plan,
* Participation with 7 other Highland Community Groups and Keep Scotland Beautiful in an ambitious 3 year proposal to reduce waste throughout the Highlands. This project commenced in April 2022, and has featured the Black Isle Climate Festival and the start of a regular monthly repair café;
* The sad deaths of two active members, Peter Tilbrook and Jim Grant;

These activities are mostly driven by our directors, one of whom, Sheila Currie, is standing down. Sheila was a big part of the TBI team, in particular having co-edited the newsletter for many years, and she was thanked for her contribution. There’s a great opportunity for others to join the board and help steer our activities.

Finance

The Treasurer, Martin Sherring, gave a summary of finances for the year ended 31st March 2022.

Two years previously the board took a strategic decision to spend some of our accumulated surplus on a project to promote the wider uptake of local food. This led to the Highland Good Food Partnership, initiated by TBI, partnered by The Pebble Trust. After a successful conference in 2021, attended by over 90 people from all parts of the food system, the Partnership now has a co-ordinator and is the Regional Food Group for the Highlands, and a member of the Sustainable Food Places network.

The accounts for the year ended 31st March 2022 showed a deficit of £7,940. This reflected both the spending on Highland Good Food Partnership and reduced income due to the effects of Covid19. Cash funds at 31st March 2022 were £24,624, an increase from the previous year despite the deficit.

For 2022/ 23 the board hopes to see levels of activity and income return to pre-covid levels. No major items of unfunded expenditure are anticipated.

Election of Directors

Martin explained that all Directors have to stand down at each AGM. Any who wish to stand again must be re-elected by the membership.

There were 7 Directors before the AGM, 6 of whom wished to stand again. There were no other candidates.

Martin proposed that all 6 individuals standing for election should be elected en-block. This was carried unanimously. The duly elected board is therefore: Julie Gibson, Martin Sherring, Julian Paren, Anne Thomas, Peter Moffatt and Rose Grant.