



Minutes of the Tarland Development Group Annual General Meeting Online via Zoom on Tuesday 15th September 2020

1. Attendees and apologies

Present (18): P Craig, J Healey, N Healey, L Shepherd, M Cuthbert-Wood, L Cunningham, K Dale, C Redmond, M Albon, G Needham, D Currie, D Hirst, C Bruce, S Power, A McKee, C Bond, K Redpath, Y Davidson

Apologies (2): S van Heusden, L Cooper

2. Welcome

Kate Redpath (TDG Chair) welcomed everyone to the 22nd AGM of the Development Group and explained how attendees should raise their hand or use the chat function in order to ask a question.

She then introduced the Chair's Report and shared her screen such that attendees were able to view slides showing images of TDG projects.

3. Chair's Report

The Chair provided an update on the Group's current activities. The detailed report is attached at Appendix A.

4. TDG Annual Accounts

Dave Hirst (TDG Treasurer) gave a summary of the financial situation of the Group, inserted below:

Tarland Development Group Accounts For Financial year 1st July 2019 to 30th June 2020

Cash in bank: £65,556

Surplus for year: £22,041

Total income: £68,622

Total expenditure: £46,581

Of the income £21,937 was grants from the Scottish Government to fund the Development Officer, Housing Officer and Food and Music Festival Co-ordinator. £16,900 was various grants for the apiary development. £2,122 was a grant for the Food and Music Festival from the MacRobert Trust. A large part of the rest of the income (£14,805) was ticket sales and other





income from the Food and Music Festival. Most of the rest is fund raising by the various groups. The only unallocated income is a grant of £667 from Johnston Oils.

Comments:

The financial position of TDG is sound at the moment with a healthy bank balance and a surplus for the year. However, of the cash in the bank only £1,221 is unallocated (i.e. available for general administrative costs) and the only unallocated income is the grant from Johnston Oils.

Dave suggested that further income could be raised by diverting some of the income from sub-group membership fees into the central TDG pot, as the sub-groups benefit from the shared accounts and legal structure of the Group.

5. Election of Trustees

Kathy Dale (TDG Secretary) explained the election process. Each year all the Trustees resign and put their names forward for re-election (unless they want to step down), along with any new Members who want to become Trustees.

All of the existing Trustees decided to remain as Trustees.

There was one new nomination from Liz Cooper. Liz was duly elected, bringing the total number of Trustees to 10, out of a possible 12 positions. The full list of current Trustees now stands as follows:

K Dale	Y Davidson
D Hirst	A McKee
S Power	C Redmond
A Pena del Vale	L Shepherd
K Redpath	L Cooper

Kathy explained that two Trustee vacancies remain and that the Trustees could co-opt up to two additional Trustees over the year to fill these vacancies.

6. Tarland as a possible case study for a new project from the University of Aberdeen

Dr Clare Bond of the School of Geosciences at the University of Aberdeen, and resident of Tarland, presented an opportunity for the community to get involved with a study on decarbonisation.

Clare explained that she and her colleagues, particularly Dr Russell McKenna, were in the process of applying to a government funding call to carry out research in to the decarbonisation of homes in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire. They are looking for potential case studies and would like to have a mixture of urban and rural examples.





Should the study receive funding, and should Tarland then take part in the study, they would be asked to give their views and perceptions of home decarbonisation strategies (such as ground source heat pumps, solar panels, insulation). The study aims to assess the readiness of communities, and the barriers they face.

Clare does not envisage this engagement being too onerous, and would also work through other networks in the village such as Cromar Future Group and Tarland Primary School.

The benefit she sees to the community of taking part is the opportunity for individuals to present their views to policy makers, and experience the policy making process. The project would not involve the funding of practical decarbonisation in Tarland, but might possibly put Tarland in line for grant funding in the future.

7. Questions

Nigel Healey asked whether the plants for the hanging baskets in the square could be sourced from the Community Garden. Kate Redpath explained that a heated greenhouse would be required to bring the plants on, and this facility is currently only available at Douneside.

8. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

9. Date of next Trustees meeting

The date of the next Trustees meeting will be the 21st October.



Brief Trustees Meeting Following the Business of the AGM

At this point non-trustee participants left the Zoom call to allow Trustees to have a short discussion.

1. Election of Office Bearers

The agreement of office bearers by the Trustees is unchanged. They are as follows:

Chair	Kate Redpath
Vice Chair	Lizzy Shepherd
Secretary	Kathy Dale
Treasurer	Dave Hirst

2. Tarland Community Housing

KD gave an update on Tarland Community Housing. As Sam Foster's Line Manager she has agreed to meet with Sam online once a week to discuss progress on the project. The Steering Group will be meeting on the 24th September. Sam has been on holiday for three weeks but has been able to have a useful chat with SP since returning.

3. Tarland Trails

CR updated the Group that the four signs discouraging campervans from parking overnight are ready and have been collected.

4. Food and Music Festival

KD reminded the Trustees that raffle tickets for the festival are now available online. The festival programme will be streamed live on Facebook but will be available to watch later on Facebook and YouTube.

5. Apple Pressing

DH voiced his concern that although apple pressing could technically be held under the current coronavirus restrictions, the Group was anxious not to increase the risk of an outbreak of the disease in Tarland.

A question remains as to how to make some income from the apple pressing this year, which is generally a good fundraiser for TDG. In this vein CR added that he felt that Tarland Trails might be able to contribute more of the donations they receive to the central TDG pot.



Appendix A – Chair’s Report

Tarland Community Housing

Tarland Community Housing (TCH) remains a sub-group of TDG and continues to pursue routes to meet the need for affordable housing within Tarland. Since the 2019 AGM, several key steps have been taken by TCH. In September 2019, TCH submitted a Stage 1 application to the Scottish Land Fund (SLF) for the costs of purchasing serviced plots at Village Farm. Unfortunately, this application was rejected by the SLF due in part to the high cost of the Village Farm development (and limited budget remaining to the SLF). A future application was encouraged by a new community organisation. This is a key next step for TCH and was discussed during community consultation sessions in November 2019 and March 2020.

In early Spring 2020, TDG was awarded funding from the Scottish Government’s Investing in Communities Fund. Part of this funding was allocated to the employment of a Housing Development Worker. This post was advertised during May 2020 and online interviews were conducted. Sam Foster, a trained architect and now Project Officer with Rural Housing Scotland (RHS) was appointed, and a contract was agreed with RHS. Sam brings experience of supporting Braemar Community Ltd in their community-led housing project. Since Sam started in this role in June he has sought to build relationships with a range of different Tarland residents and key stakeholders, and to identify alternative possible development sites. Sam’s next steps are to convene a meeting of those who have kindly offered to support a new community housing organisation in Tarland, and to continue partnership-working with the MacRobert Trust.

Tarland Food and Music Festival

Tarland Food and Music Festival is now in its seventh year. The 2019 Festival ran over the weekend of 20th – 22nd September, which coincided with some fantastic late summer weather. The Festival was a great success, with a large number of visitors and local residents enjoying the range of food and music events held. We are very grateful to Sarah Smith, who coordinated this fantastic Food and Music Festival, and to all the volunteers.

Sarah stepped down as Coordinator in October, and in January the festival committee appointed local singer Shona Donaldson as the new Festival Coordinator. Shona has lots of relevant experience of organising music events and has been an active participant in previous festivals. Unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 outbreak, the 2020 festival will be held online, rather than as a physical event. Shona has overcome this challenge and has organised a full programme of food and music events to be streamed live via Facebook during the weekend of 25-27th September. There will be a virtual local produce market, food and music workshops, guided walks, music sessions, a pub quiz, children’s activities, and plenty of fantastic folk music. Please follow the Tarland Food and Music Festival on Facebook to learn more about the programme and join these events over the Festival weekend.





Bee Group

We managed to complete our Beginners Course class work sessions online but could not complete the practical sessions due to Covid. We have decided that this is very disjointed for the beginners and will repeat the course entirely for the 2020 students. Practical teaching could not take place at the apiary however mentors were on hand to provide any support required by our members. We managed to provide lots of troubleshooting help throughout the summer which was much appreciated by everyone. E-mail and telephone support was on hand and Whatsapp was useful for photo questions and small video sessions when help was required.

The lease hives have done well again, and the apiary hives have also produced honey. We have a number of small colonies to overwinter and the aim is to have them ready for beginners in the spring of 2021. Work parties to complete maintenance have been hampered due to Covid but we have managed to maintain all the apiaries with the help of individual members. We are ever closer to building the Education Facility with most of the funding in place and we hope to proceed before the end of the year.

Apple Group

Last year was a very poor year for apples, we made only 125 bottles of juice compared to 640 in 2018. We nevertheless managed to buy a second press and pasturiser which made the process a lot quicker. This year looks to be a bumper year for apples, but Covid restrictions are going to make it harder to get groups together to do the pressing. We hope to start on the 16th September in the MacRobert Hall, but there is still some uncertainty about what will be possible. Members of the group can hire the equipment to press their own apples if they wish.

Paths Group

Maintenance of the paths has been a challenge this year. The MacRobert Trust continues to mow the grass on the paths on their land, but Aberdeenshire Council has stopped funding maintenance of the Tarland Way and the paths around Alastrian House (although they have agreed to continue structural surveys of the bridges on the Tarland Way). Members of TDG have always done ad hoc maintenance including broom clearing and repairing waymarkers, but in response to the additional workload a paths maintenance groups is being set up, led by Gillian Needham and David Currie. The Aboyne Paths Group have agreed to look after the Tarland Way south of the southern bridge but the stretch south of Coull is now TDG's responsibility and requires mowing (at least) twice a year. This year because of the Covid problems we were late getting going but we did get all the paths cleared and we have some more volunteers lined up to help next year. The council will provide equipment if we need any. We are also looking at the possibility of extending the path network. Some suggestions have been made to the MRT and they are looking into them.



Community Garden

The community garden remains a vibrant and productive project. Thankfully allotments were able to remain open during lockdown, and the garden was important in supporting mental health and wellbeing during a difficult time. Shielding members had their plots cared for by those able to get out and about. The planned Scotland's Gardens Open Day had to be cancelled unfortunately. The Cromar Horticultural and Industrial Society held the Big Potato Challenge weigh-in at the garden under Covid-safe conditions and hopes to repeat the same competition next year. The Community Garden participated in the lockdown Share Chair Scheme, where the chair located outside the garden became a location for sharing spare plants and seedlings.

Community Composting

The composting scheme continues to work well, with a good team of committed volunteers. Three new tractor drivers were trained and ready to go. Unfortunately, the scheme had to be put on hold during full lockdown, but was able to resume mid-June, when restrictions eased, and garden waste collections became a permitted activity. It was decided not to charge customers this year, due to the reduced service, and the possibility that the scheme might have to be suspended again at any time due to Covid-19. Donations will be asked for at the end of the season.

Compost produced by the scheme was used to fill the village hanging baskets in lieu of that previously provided by the council. The flowers have been fabulous this year.

Tarland Tapestry

The tapestry is complete and framed, and looking wonderful. We had planned an unveiling by Dorie Wilkie with a celebration including music, tea and cake just as lockdown caused the closing of the MacRobert Hall so we were unable to go ahead. Michael Cameron had already made all the preparations for its hanging in the foyer, however it resided on Jan Healey's spare bed for many weeks until she had visitors!

Right now the tapestry is installed in the foyer of the hall covered with brown paper so that we are ready for an unveiling when the time is right.

Tarland Trails

Tarland Trails continues to be well used. We had a hugely successful event as part of the Food and Music Festival in September 2019 bringing over 300 cyclists to try a whole range of bikes and sessions. Since lockdown the trails have seen a 50% increase in visitors in relation to the norm.





The trails suffered some vandalism this year in the theft of the donation post income. This however rallied the biking community to support the trails further with donations from local businesses and others.

Tarland Trails 2 has had a quiet year. We have continued to try and source funding to begin to start the construction phase of this project.

Gone to Seed

The Gone to Seed project continues to grow and develop. The Seed Swap and Potato Day held in February 2020 was very busy, with approximately 200 people attending. By popular demand we sold onion sets, garlic and shallots again, as well as seed potatoes, so this will now become a regular feature of the event.

We scheduled a series of three seed saving workshops throughout the 2019 growing season, covering a range of topics, including:

- Seed saving basics - why and how
- Rogueing carrots
- Isolation techniques
- Hand pollination of cucurbits
- Germination test
- Cleaning and threshing seed
- Storing seed

The workshops were very successful and we had more seed savers enthusiastically saving seed for the 2020 Seed Swap and Potato Day. We started running the same course for 2020 but sadly due to Covid-19 the workshops during the spring and summer had to be cancelled.

Also due to Covid -19 it is likely that the annual event in the hall will have to be cancelled but we are planning on finding out if gardeners would like to pre-order their seed potatoes etc. These could be packaged and picked up whilst still following the required health and safety procedures.

Information will be sent out shortly to gauge demand.

Wetlands Group

The group's vision is to develop a set of natural wetlands fitting within the farming system, for the benefit of wildlife, the environment and local people.





The group held a public awareness-raising event on 11 March and over 30 people attended. The group has carried out some field visits to look at suitable sites for leaky dams, bunds etc. to hold back water in the landscape. The James Hutton Institute (JHI) will be involved in the design of these natural flood management measures and they will be fully discussed with the farm tenants before anything is implemented. The group aims to provide the means (information and guidance) to enable land managers / the community to build more of these structures in the future.

The group has engaged with the Cromar History Group and the MacRobert Trust to identify the former courses and locations of waterbodies (including former mill ponds) in order to inform their restoration. The group has been in touch with the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) to find out what licencing would be required to restore these sites, in order to apply the SEPA assessment methods to other potential sites.

Parallel tasks that the Group has undertaken include management of the Sewage Treatment Works (STW) wetland, an art exhibition on a wetland theme, and a drone flight to provide stills and video footage of wetlands.

The Group intends to produce a plan for wetlands in the Howe of Cromar by November 2020. This would include recommendations to protect specific wet areas and refer to the body of previous work that has been carried out. It would include case studies and possibly farm plans.

Squirrel Bridge

Plans are afoot to re-hang the rope bridge for red squirrels.

Future Plans

Electric Car Share Scheme

This project has been stalled by Covid19 but has already resulted in Tarland being scheduled for an electric vehicle charging point.

Food Pantry

TDG will support Tarland Climate Crisis Group to address issues around food waste.