

FINDHORN BAY LOCAL NATURE RESERVE (FBLNR)

MINUTES OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

HELD IN THE JAMES MILNE INSTITUTE, FINDHORN AT 1900HRS
ON TUESDAY 28 MARCH 2017

Committee members present:

Roy Dennis (RHD) - Chair
Mo Hyde (MH) - Vice Chair, also representing Findhorn Heritage
Ian Hampson (IH) - Treasurer
Mike Crutch (MC) - Secretary

Bill Barber (WB), Findhorn Angling Club
Glenn Buchanan (GB), Royal Findhorn Yacht Club
Pat Carroll (PC), Findhorn & Kinloss Community Council
Karen Cunningham (KC), RSPB
Pete Finch (PF), Findhorn Foundation
Jen Heatley (JH), SNH
Bob MacKay (RM), FNDWA
Simon Paterson (SP), Findhorn Marina
David Shaw (DS), Dyke & Landward Community Council
Dr Colin Shedden (CS), BASC
Richard Somers-Cocks (RS-C), nature conservation/ornithology
Ian Suttie (IS), nature conservation/ornithology
Davina Thomas (DT), Findhorn Village Centre

Apologies: Lorna Creswell, Colin Bell, Lisa Mead

1. Welcome

RHD welcomed all for attending.

2. Minutes of the AGM 2016

The minutes were accepted - proposed by PC, seconded by GB.

3. Chairman's Annual Report

RHD read from the following written report:

Chairman's Report for 2016-2017

My tenure started on 21st June 2016, when I took over from Pat Carroll who had done sterling work leading the LNR for many years.

Familiarisation. After taking over – I read all relevant papers and documents, wrote to The Moray Council for advice and help re: my responsibilities as the new chairman and the relationship and responsibilities between The Moray Council's officers & elected members and the committee. Received an up-to-date map of the limits of the LNR, the names of the individual owners and arrangements/leases the Council have with individual land-owners and when those agreements require renewing. I recommended that the future ownership of the strip of land along the bay, on the other side of the public road, belonging to MOD, should be safeguarded for the LNR by transfer to The Moray Council's present landholding at Findhorn Bay.

To encourage greater attendance at AGM I recommended a switch to March each year rather than summer. This was approved at meeting.

I also introduced a 'recent news' segment at the start of each committee meeting to reflect that we are all involved in management of the LNR because it is a special place to us all. Other aspects I have started to put in train include the composition of the membership of the FBLNR management committee, LNR aspects related to land ownership changes from Novar Estate to Findhorn Village Conservation Company, and a proposal to construct a tern species breeding raft.

Membership: new members Bill Barber (Findhorn Angling Club), David Shaw (Dyke & Landward CC), Lisa Mead (Friends of Findhorn Bay) and Pete Finch (Findhorn Foundation). Mike Crutch agreed to be secretary and I am very grateful to him for his valued support. The Chairman intimated he would review the membership when there was more time. David Willing, a stalwart of the LNR management committee, sadly passed away in the winter and members attended his memorial service in Findhorn.

Website: the new website became active and I am very grateful to those members who helped get it up and running with Canary Dwarf, and especially to Richard Somers-Cocks for photos, web content and keeping it updated.

Information Boards: following funding from Berry Burn Wind Farm Community Fund the information boards could be completed and have started to be erected (currently four) around the LNR. They are of high quality and we congratulate the members of the committee, (Richard, Ian, Pat and Glenn) that have worked hard on this project.

Bird Hide: new people took on the role of issuing the codes for accessing the bird hide, refurbished and surroundings tied up.

Management Plan: Pat Carroll worked on the draft plan and this has now passed to others to complete with completion this year and publication on the website.

Wildfowling. This has taken up a huge amount of voluntary time, effort and travel. I attended two meetings at The Moray Council HQ to observe mediation by council between Friends of Findhorn Bay and Martin Gauld (and at one meeting Scottish Association for Country Sports). Subsequently, there was much media interest, letters in papers, etc., etc. – I was asked for comments as chairman but kept these to a minimum. I had discussions, before The Moray Council (TMC) meeting of 20th September, with George Alexander and Aaron Maclean, who asked to see me. I talked with a range of other interested parties, and others including SNH to discuss LNRs and their involvement. Wildfowling issues.

After The Moray Council meeting 20th September, they recommended a sub-committee of FB LNR Management Committee address the issues and put the matter in the hands of the chairman of LNR MC. I had a good meeting on Monday 26th September with The Moray Council's Stephen Cooper (Head of Direct Services) and Alasdair McEachan (head legal services). I also discussed the situation with Police Scotland.

I examined all the possible options, brought myself up to date with legal issues, national and international designations and the situation in other LNRs in the UK. I met with 4 representatives of wildfowling, 2 from Friends of Findhorn Bay and 2 representing ornithology and conservation.

On 13th December 2016 as chairman I convened a meeting at Forres under the chairmanship of the Findhorn Bay Local Nature Reserve Management Committee. This had been recommended by the Economic Development & Infrastructure Services Committee of The Moray Council which was responding to serious conflicting concerns about the numbers and behaviour of wildfowling, particularly visitors from outwith Moray and Nairn.

The meeting was attended by the above 8 representatives of the principal participants. Also participating were three senior staff of The Moray Council, two elected members of The Moray Council and the Forres area police Inspector. The meeting was chaired by myself as the chairman of Findhorn Bay Local Nature Reserve Management Committee.

All parties agreed to the following points:

1. Findhorn Bay is an important wildlife site with the following designations: SSSI, SPA, Ramsar Site and LNR.
2. The conflict between high numbers of unregulated wildfowling and significant numbers of the local community is now serious and must be addressed.
3. That a voluntary, self-regulated permit scheme should be set up for the season 2017/2018.

4. That for subsequent seasons byelaws should be enacted and a permit system operated by the Findhorn Bay Local Nature Reserve. It was suggested that this be overseen by a wildfowling sub-committee of the FBLNR Management Committee.

Debate identified the fact that the areas of most concern were the bay closest to Kinloss village and the pre-dawn vehicle use of the Netherton track. Both involved unacceptable disturbance and interference to local people; and the first area involved unacceptable disturbance to roosts and feeding areas of waders and wildfowl, listed in national and international designations.

Some subjects of local concern, including litter, dog fouling and bad shooting practice, were identified as already illegal under local law or should be covered under good wildfowling practice.

Compromises were suggested but it proved very difficult to find sufficient agreement on changes to wildfowling practices to solve the issues causing the present aggravation. There was a recognised lack of clarity over a potential way forward which could be used for both a voluntary and a future formal permit system. It was emphasised that this had to be simple, in order to accommodate all the many uses of the bay and to protect nature.

I went away from the meeting disappointed but determined that some agreement must be met in 2017. It would not be good enough to allow the problem to continue to drift from year to year.

The best options that, I considered, might satisfy all sides are as follows:

1. Byelaws would be enacted (by TMC or SNH) for the 2018/19 wildfowling season and a voluntary system brought in for 2017/18.
2. Future wildfowling arrangements would be overseen by a wildfowling sub-committee comprising the following members of the FBLNR management committee; two wildfowlers, one representing public interests, one bird conservation and the Chairman.
3. There would be no shooting on Sundays, Mondays and Tuesdays.
4. Wildfowlers - both local residents and visitors could shoot on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.
5. Local wildfowlers resident in Moray & Nairn, within 20 miles of Forres, would have exclusive use on Saturdays.
6. The area of highest conflict at the bay at Kinloss, delineated from the Mosset Burn eastwards, would be open for goose shooting during the month of October and be closed to wildfowling outwith October.
7. Local wildfowlers could apply for a season permit.
8. Visitors could apply for day permits, up to a maximum of 5 visiting wildfowlers per day, for Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.

9. A range of other management issues would be decided by the wildfowling sub-committee, and ratified by the FBLNR management committee.

The latter point would include the issue of permits, cost of permits and guidance for wildfowlers, moves to remove disturbance at Netherton, bag limits (5 per flight), maximum number of cartridges (15 per flight), litter, dog fouling, removal of dead geese, etc..

Design and content of wildfowling good practice at Findhorn Bay will be written by the wildfowling sub-committee with advice from the wildfowling clubs and organisations. It will be posted on the FBLNR website and attached with permits.

Secretary's Note: As of the evening of this AGM, points 3 and 6 above had not been accepted by the collective wildfowling group.

4. Treasurer's Annual Report

IH presented the accounts to 24 March 2017 (shown at Appendix 'A') - with the change to the date of the AGM from June, accounts to 31 March will remain in place and be audited accordingly - reflection and recording of such will take place at the next subsequent meeting of the FBLNR Management Committee. IH commented that the Berry Burn Wind Farm Community Fund grant was a great help during the year.

RHD recorded the thanks of the committee to Ian for his work as treasurer over recent years.

5. Election of officers

With the standing down as treasurer by IH, RHD expressed his thanks to SP for volunteering for the position. Proposed by DT, seconded by MH.

6. Any other business

MC reported that Ian Cassells had stated he no longer wished to represent the Fairway Committee; a replacement will be sought in due course.

RHD opened the floor to comments from the public observing the meeting, most of which were related to the wildfowling and with a number expressing their thanks on the work conducted by RHD thus far. The meeting was then brought to a close.

prepared by Mike Crutch, Secretary FBLNR MC

Appendix A

Findhorn Bay Local Nature Reserve
Management Committee

Receipts and payments Accounts for year up to 24th March 2017.

<u>Receipts</u>	<u>Payments</u>
Moray Council payment . £14.76 (Forres Gazette Advert.)	Pat Carroll. Cheque No. 30. £14.76
Moray Council payment. £250.00	Canary Dwarf. " " 31. £1040.00
Berry Burn.(interim)Grant.£1125.00	Canary Dwarf. " " 32. £249.51
Berry Burn.(final) Grant. £375.00	Signs Express. " " 33. £720.00
	Signs Express. " " 34. £719.64
	Signs Installation. " " 35. £148.50
	Signs installation. " " 36. £374.16
Total £1764.76	Total £3266.57
<i>*Surplus of Payments over Receipts.</i>	
£1501.81	
<u>£3266.57</u>	<u>£3266.57</u>

Balance Sheet at 24th March 2017

<u>Opening Balance</u>	<u>Closing Balance</u>
Bank of Scotland Current A/C	B of S Current A/C.
£2410.22	£908.41
Cash	Cash
£6.08	£6.08
	<i>*Surplus of Payments Over Receipts</i>
	£1501.81
<u>£2416.30</u>	<u>£2416.30</u>

Ian C Hampson
Hon. Treasurer

I certify that the above Accounts
are correctly prepared from the
books and other documents
submitted to me.

Harvey Morton.

Date:-