

West of Scotland  
Dry Stone Walling Association  
Scottish Charity No SCO 39439

Annual General Meeting  
McLintock Memorial Hall, Balfron  
Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> November 2017, 2:00pm

## **Meeting**

**Sederunt:** John New, Dave Barber, Ronnie Reid, Gordon Millar, Alistair McGeoch, Gordon Gray, G. Richard Donald, Colin McKellar, Derek Winter, Alistair Eadie, Dave Lutwyche, Danny McNaughton, Crawford Andrew

**Apologies:** Alan Patrick, Ian Coutie, Paul Webb, Russ Liddell, Norman Muir

## **Agenda Item 1 - Minutes of the AGM 2016**

The minutes of the previous AGM held on 6th November 2016 were proposed by Gordon Millar, seconded by Alistair McGeoch and passed as a true record of the proceedings.

## **Agenda Item 2 – Annual Report**

Chairman John New gave his report (included in these minutes) as per the Annual Submission to the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) for the period 1st September 2016 to 31st August 2017

John remember our friend Jim McLachlan, our Treasurer who passed away this year. We were all shocked and saddened at his passing. Jim had 5 years with us. His walling and tablet was 2nd to none. John was the previous treasurer and as it's a small job, he will take on the treasurer role for a time.

2017 got off to an excellent start with a lovely dinner at the Abbotsford hotel in Dumbarton, arranged by our late treasure Jim McLachlan and had an excellent attendance.

We had our first Training Course at Kilbarchan with a record 22 attendees, and along with the June Course of 14, and the Kilsyth Course with 21, amount to a total of 57 trainees this season alone, and by National standards this is quite remarkable. It is of course our main source of income and is the bedrock of giving us the freedom to develop our own programme the way we like it, and for the promotion of walling in the wider community. I think that with Dave Barber's input with social media it has led us to a wider awareness of walling and that people of all levels can give it a try.

The Gardening Scotland project was again a great success this year thanks to Alan and Gordon for being the main co-ordinators of this project, namely a Bijoux Courtyard Garden; and I think it will be a theme which we will come back to in the coming years - of how walling can fit in with the garden. Although we only received a Bronze medal this year, this is, for us, immaterial, as we have found in previous years that flowers tended to bury the lovely walling which had been built, so we have to balance off a more "raw" feel to the builds, in order to promote the Dry stonewalling aspects i.e. list flowers.

In between times we had a lovely day at Kilmacolm, with some nice feedback, and continued with the field wall at Muirshiel, which apart from some morning midges, turned out to be a lovely day out in the bracken - back to some original dyking! We also had three in-house training days at Kilsyth which gave all of those attended a chance to upgrade their skills, gain some more practice time and catch up with the banter. Also we had a 2 day Cairn build at Erskine that was completed in one day – it was a good day out.

Unfortunately, due to lack of numbers we had to cancel this years Test day at Kilsyth, nobody's fault, these things happen. However next year is looking more promising with possibly eight or nine candidates, and so we are hoping to run an earlier Test day in June next year.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the committee members for their tireless work behind the scenes which makes it all happen, and of course all you, the members, for attending our walling days and contributing to the continued success of the branch.

### **Agenda Item 3 – Finance Report**

John, as Acting Treasurer have been passed by the accountant and will go off (in the next few weeks) as per the Annual Submission to OSCR for the period 1st September 2016 to 31st August 2017. Funds had reduced during the year (mainly for buying stone for Kilsyth and Gardening Scotland, a few good quality tools, and a new battery for the van – which is why we have the funds), but the bank balance remains healthy around £8300.

The balance sheet was approved unanimously as a true record of the accounts. Proposed Danny and seconded Derek Winter.

### **I.T. Report**

Dave gave a quick update on the website and social media. We have been concentrating on social media but over the winter break we will be adding the missing projects to the website gallery and testing out a Website Store, so that people can pay for their courses online, rather than using cheques, as cheque payments are becoming increasingly rare. We will be talking to the bank about opening an “airlock” account, which we can publish on the web (Sort code and account). This will allow people to use their internet banking to pay for training courses, membership (and we could even consider selling other things if desired). We will then be able to transfer the funds from the airlock account to our main account – which will be invisible to the public. People will also be able to use Credit Cards to pay, using the PayPal platform. Customers will not require a PayPal account to use their Credit/Debit Card.

We will also be added Hotels and B&B details to the website, for trainees who want to stay locally overnight.

One of our trainees in 2017 sent through a PowerPoint presentation of their learnings from the course – including pictures, and we have permission to put that on the website.

## **Annual Scottish Liaison Group meeting at Biggar**

The Scottish branches meet at Biggar every year and discuss any Scottish issues around walling. Dave Barber represented us at the meeting this year. We stated that WSDSWA would happily organise the Gardening Scotland build again this year and issue invites. We have self-funded the show for most of the past few years as it is extremely hard to find sponsorship. We all discussed a possible away weekend which all thought was a good idea. WSDSWA left before the last section of the meeting while the remaining branches of the DSWA discussed their future structures.

### **Agenda Item 4 – Election of Office Bearers**

At this point the chairman and the committee demitted office and the election for 2017/18 office bearers took place.

Chairman: John New was re-elected to post after being proposed by Alistair McGeoch, seconded by Derek Winter and approved unanimously by the meeting.

Deputy Chairman: In his absence, Alan Patrick was re-elected to post after being proposed by Ronnie Reid, seconded by Gordon Millar and approved unanimously by the meeting.

Acting Treasurer: John New was elected to post after being proposed by Ronnie Reid, seconded by Dave Barber and approved unanimously by the meeting.

Secretary: In his absence, Paul Webb was re-elected to post after being proposed by Alistair McGeoch, seconded by Alistair Eadie and approved unanimously by the meeting.

Committee Members: All existing members agreed to stand for re-election after being proposed by Gordon Gray, seconded by Ronnie Reid and approved unanimously by the meeting.

### **Agenda Item 5 – 2018 Programme**

#### **Courses**

We have had good feedback from the three course venues that will continue through to next year. The three means we have a variation of stone types.

Kilbarchan – always ongoing with Whin

Cardross – thin light Sandstone on an exposed site with a great view

Kilsyth – Whin and Sandstone mixture

Some events have definite dates, and others will be allocated when appropriate dates are decided.

- Kilbarchan Course 7/8 Apr
- Kilmacolm show on 12<sup>th</sup> May
- Gardening Scotland Build 26/27 May

- Gardening Scotland Show 1/2/3 June
- Walling Test at Kilsyth 24 Jun
- Cardross course 7/8 July
- Muirshiel Country Park 4/5 Aug
- Kilsyth course Sep 8/9

In the pipeline, plenty of opportunities to improve your skills. The main problem we have is finding time to schedule all the potential projects. We have other projects as well as those mentioned below...

- Bee-boles walls at Greenock
- EngineShed at Stirling may have been completed, and they need some walls made there.
- Holy Well in Kilallan (behind Kilmacolm). A circular dyke to be recreated.
- The Blacksmith at Kilbarchan needs a visit – perhaps at the start of the season.
- Hermitage Park in Helensburgh is ready but no definite time set.

#### **Agenda Item 6 – Any other business**

A discussion was held on the best way of gaining experience when wanting to pick up dyking as a new skill. While volunteering to work for a professional was an option, it was generally considered that the best way was to use the courses and project work in the program to learn and practise with the members. Everyone in the association is always learning and any plenty of practise will always help.

It is generally recognised that there are many walls in the UK that are beyond repair and while we would like to reinstate all the walls, much of the stone has disappeared and would have to be replaced. It was also pointed out that if you are walling by yourself, (for safety) ensure that people know where you are.

The meeting closed at 3:30pm