



MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Langholm Initiative

SC041085

18:30hrs on Tuesday 8th April 2025 - The Buccleuch Centre, Langholm

Trustees attending: Mairi Telford Jammeh (MTJ), Mark Hallam (MH), Eileann Bloomer (EB), Barbara Kite (BK), Daniel Lacey (DL), Margaret Pool (MP),

Staff attending: Inigo Alcaniz (IA), Jenny Barlow (JB), Joyce Ireland (JI), Kat Mayer (KM), Angela Williams (AW).

The total number of attendees was 27, which included 17 Ordinary (voting) members.

1. **Welcome, quorum and apologies**

Chair MTJ welcomed everyone to the meeting and declared we had a quorum of ordinary members.

Apologies from charity trustee Pip Tabor

2. **MoM of previous AGM held on Thursday 30th May 2024* – matters arising**

The minutes of the previous meeting were **approved** by member J. Campbell Scott and **seconded** by Trustee Member Margaret E. Pool. Matters arising-none.

The 2024 MoM, are available here: <https://www.langholminitiative.org.uk/governance>

3. **Report by the Chair, Mairi Telford Jammeh, on the Charity's activities**

MTJ offered a summary of the work undertaken by the Langholm Initiative during a hugely significant year for the organisation- extract as follows:

The Langholm Initiative has continued to place the most focus on the development of the Tarras Valley Nature Reserve but has continued with the Langholm Information Hub and the development of the Townfoot Sports Centre through Campbell Scott.

Volunteers are key to every activity that we do, we have had corporate volunteers and volunteers from third-sector organisations who have worked with us on the nature reserve.

Our partners are key to our work, and we have established good working relationships with local organisations, regional bodies, educational institutions and national organisations and we have taken part in several research projects and hosted visits to the town. This week we have had students from Exeter University who helped plant approximately 1200 trees. We've participated in the Langholm Community Forum which brings together several third-sector organisations in Langholm. This is a useful opportunity to share information. We keep our funders updated on a regular basis as well as our members by producing regular newsletters and are supported in that activity by a local volunteer. We have a very able and skilled staff team, and we could not

achieve what we do without them and we're very grateful to every one of them for the dedication and hard work they put in. One of our board members is now coming off the board but we also had a new board member joining us this year. Kevin Cumming is now very busy and unable to continue in his co-opted role and we must thank him for everything he has done since 2019. Pip Tabor comes to us following a long career as manager of the Southern Uplands Partnership and has a huge amount of knowledge to offer us. We have also worked with some very skilled consultants who have assisted us this year and I particularly want to thank Mags Duncan and Jim Bennet.

MTJ then invited projects leads to present members with an overview of project activity.

Extracts taken from presentations are as follows:

Townfoot Sports Centre is presented by J. Campbell Scott.

- We originally began the journey in planning the new Centre in 2019
- The plans have been amended over the years after consultations with SEPA and the Scottish Planning Regulations
- We require documents in support of the current design sketches, raise funds of approximately £25k, to cover the costs to make a planning application.
- The footprint of the pool will remain the same – pool size approximately 15m by 7m
- The current expected Capital Expenditure is 2.2m, plus fees and VAT.
- The biggest challenge is operating expenditure, the Centre will be heated by a ground source heat pump and the cost of the pool will be approximately £120k to £130k.
- The status of the design supports planning application
- We are looking to recruit volunteers to refresh the working group
- Finally, thanks to Ashley Bank Investments, Mairi and the Trustees of Langholm Initiative and to the working group
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Langholm Information Hub

- Opens April to October, 6 days a week
- MP expressed thanks to all the volunteers whose number stands at 20+ and appealed for more volunteers
- The Langholm Initiative has been providing visitors information now for 27 years
- Visitor numbers for 2024 were 600+
- Sales of coffee and information booklets help contribute to running costs
- Improvements undertaken (*roof insulation, new coffee machine*) and improvements will continue to be made to the building
- Looking ahead – sales pitches to be operated on the decking area to help raise revenue for sustainability of the Hub

Tarras Valley Nature Reserve – an integrated presentation from members of the TVNR team and focused on the project's four pillars of People, Nature, Climate and Sustainability with special emphasis on the project's journey thus far and the aspirations for the future.

- Our 5 Year Plan was launched
- Over 50 events held from 22-24 to get community feedback
- Covering different themes within feedback including nature, food, farming, tourism, climate,

access, recreation, business, enterprise.

- Setting out collective priorities for the next 5 years, sets out 'our shop window' of aspirations
- Used as an example of good practice by Scottish Government for new land reform legislation

People-AW

- We continue to invest in local contractors /services - in order of £110k
- Aim to create new employment on the reserve – still an aspiration
- Future opportunities for Cooms farm – work started on looking at options for transition & diversification
- Look to develop apprenticeship/intern opportunities for young people – bids submitted for a 'graduate' placement programme
- We look to purchase Broomholmshiels cottage which will continue to provide a home and future development opportunity as it is placed at the entrance to the reserve.
- We held many community and engagement events, some of which were Dark Skies event, woodland yoga & guided walks training

KM

- Environmental and outdoor learning programme continues with 50 John Muir Trust awards attained by local pupils
- Higher education and research – we have had visits from Exeter & Bangor Universities
- Outdoor classroom and external training- used by Barony College
- The Crichton Carbon Centre carried out peatland/carbon training on the reserve
- Review current or develop alternative accreditations programme for young people
- Development of plan for permanent learning spaces

Nature -JB

- Continuing to learn about and develop understanding of the land
- Regenerative grazing with herbivores to encourage dynamism in the ecosystem
- Restore the river system including wetlands and natural hydrology
- Restore native woodlands, scrub and plants to their natural limits and range
- Restore damaged peatlands and upland blanket bogs
- Maximise biodiversity and encourage a complex abundant ecological web
- Learning about the land – annual breeding birds, volunteer surveys e.g. moths, plants, bryophytes.
- Halo thinning around 60+ veteran oaks
- Clearance of 30ha of regenerated Sitka spruce from moorlands – cleared 258 hectares!
- 36 ha native woodland restoration following felling operations – new wetlands and approx. 20,000 native trees to be planted
- Beginning work on whole reserve grazing plan – welcomed highland cows and fell ponies last week.

Climate

- Delivering nature-based carbon capture
- Enhancing our natural resilience to extreme weather as the climate changes
- Contributing to local energy and food security

- Reduce our own environmental impact
- Developing Peatland Restoration Phase 1. Phase 1, 54km/ 36 miles of ditch blocking completed!
- Developing 38ha scheme native woodland - Issues with tree planting in SSSI, hosted national discussions on trees in protected landscapes with Trees for Life.
- Restoring natural hydrology and rewetting drained land across the reserve – all artificial drains now mapped and in phased restoration plan
- Community assets register for wildfire incident response – in progress
- Peatland & Hydrology restoration - Planning for phase 2 – 88km and 210ha of artificial peat drains to block on Haunches / Tinnis Hill
- Ongoing work to plant 38ha of low-density native woodland on Perterburn
- Reviewing options for community growing across the reserve
- Reviewing our own organisational operations to reduce impact
- Ongoing input into wider national research and learning

Sustainability -AW

- Working towards improved financial resilience for community land through the development of sustainable and diverse income streams
- Ongoing investment in administrative and financial systems of the Langholm Initiative to support our aspirations for the Reserve
- Maintaining our land and buildings to protect community owned asset
- Ensuring continuity of staff posts – funding secured for reserve manager, own funds to support development manager
- Reinvesting income into revenue creating assets – still in development phase but are reinvesting income
- Investment in day-to-day maintenance, tracks, trees, housing – will be an ongoing activity
- Financial systems improved - improved management accounts system implemented
- Funding secured for glamping, planning secured and works starting on site
- Continue to invest in our land and property
- Grow our base of supporters
- Governance – recruit new trustees
- Investigate alternative options for office base

Sharing our Story -IA

- Last year, we aimed to boost our digital presence and grow our audience, and we successfully delivered on all fronts. Our social media audience grew steadily, helping us reach more people. We launched the website to share updates and stories.
- We committed to continue landscape monitoring to track changes over time, and we did—through key restoration efforts like Lower Tarras, Sitka spruce removal, and the peatland restoration.
We said we would share our story through national and international media, inspiring new audiences with the message of community-led nature restoration and we appeared in print features like Town and Country House and Holyrood Magazine. We've appeared on major broadcasts like PBS's A Brief History of the Future (Episode 3), BBC Landward and Countryfile, reaching millions. We've also contributed to several podcasts, including Reasons to be Cheerful and Stories Sustain Us.
- We said we'd expand our digital tools to help people follow our wildlife—and we have, with regular barn owl updates, and new cameras going live next month at the kingfisher bank and kestrel nest.

A Year in numbers - JB

- Hosted 24 visits (including Community Woodlands Association, Land reform committee, Universities, Natural history groups and more)
- Took part in 6 media requests (Countryfile, podcasts, national and international media)
- 48 volunteer sessions, completing practical tasks on the reserve
- Held 59 sessions with local schools
- Held 28 local events including film nights, dark skies, woodland yoga, guided walks training, design drop ins)
- Contributed to 11 external events (conferences, good practise visits)
- Took part in 3 research projects (students, job centre)
- £110k put back into the local economy using over 40 local contractors and services

Q & A

1. JB was asked where do you see the Reserve 5/10 years' time

It would be nice to look back and check to see the commitments of the Action Plan and that we had completed all that we had set out to do.

2. It was asked of the importance of connection and nature corridors.

We aim to work with all our neighbours where we can on initiatives that help to improve connective habitat beyond our own boundaries. For example, we worked with neighbouring forestry owners to following their felling activities to plant native woodland back to expand native woodland buffers beyond the reserve and limit the spread of Sitka spruce. We also try to work with regional initiatives like the black grouse recovery project which applied for funding to work with multiple landowners to create and extend suitable connective habitat to help boost their declining numbers.

4. Consideration of financial accounts for year ending 31st March 2024*

5.

The accounts, are available here: <https://www.langholminitiative.org.uk/governance>

BK –

- The total amount of worth of LI grew from £6.7m last year to just under £7.5m which includes the total value of the land & buildings
- The revenue from the sale of timber following storm Arwen was a one off and will not be repeated. Some of these funds were moved to the general reserve for day-to-day operations and for the development of properties.
- We have 25 *restricted* projects ongoing currently
- Draft results for *the 2025* financial year *indicate* we are close to breaking even. *This shows we operate* with good governance
- 2025 *has* shown a shift -focusing on the peatland and property regeneration

6. Resolutions

Resolution 1 – Retiral / Re-election of Charity Trustees

In accordance with Clause 91 the following trustees are retiring this year:

Eileann Bloomer, Kevin Cumming, Daniel Lacey, Mark Hallam.

The following are offering themselves for re-election as Member Trustees:
Eileann Bloomer, Kevin Cumming, Daniel Lacey, Mark Hallam.

Members are asked to support the resolution to re-elect the afore-mentioned as Member Trustees.

The Resolution was **adopted** by the members.

MTJ explained that in accordance with Clause 95 co-opt Trustees Kevin Cumming, Barbara Kite & Pip Tabor will retire at the conclusion of the AGM.

7. The Langholm Initiative Trading Company Ltd (Tarras Valley Nature Reserve™)

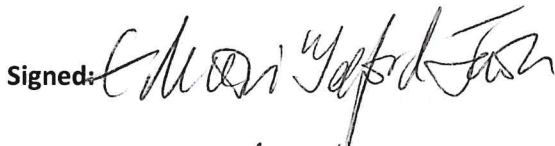
MTJ informed members that in accordance with article 53 of the 'Articles of Agreement' the office-bearers of the subsidiary company will retire at the conclusion of the AGM and office bearers shall subsequently be appointed at the next suitable Langholm Initiative Board meeting.

8. Any other competent business

MTJ extended thanks and appreciation to all attendees for their support and invited anyone who would be interested in joining as a charity trustee to get in touch.

There being no further business and the meeting was closed.

Signed:



Mairi Telford Jammeh, Chair

Date:

17th April 2025