

# FORRES COMMUNITY WOODLANDS TRUST

Chairman's Report 2021



## Annual General Meeting 2021

### Report by the Chairman of the Board of Trustees

This report covers the period from the 2020 AGM in November last year to November 2021

#### Highlights / Lowlights

- Our activities continued to be somewhat impacted by the pandemic.
- Socially distanced work parties were re-started in both Sanquhar and Muiry / Newforres.
- Virtual monthly meetings were held throughout the year.
- Visitor numbers appeared to have increased with the main track becoming a busy thoroughfare for walkers, runners and cyclists.
- Anti-social behaviour continues to be an issue in Sanquhar with damage to the Bike Hut, fire-raising, partying and littering. Increased pressure from Sanquhar residents' campaign to remove the hut.
- Failure of the Cathay Woodlands acquisition

#### Governance

Over the year I have been ably supported by my fellow **Trustees**. We increased to 8 in number with Paul Kendall being co-opted in February. Regrettably we are still too few in numbers. We have 2 candidates for election: Paul Kendall and Gisela MacFarquhar and 3 trustees standing down. Of the 3, Steve Hull and Don Wright are seeking re-election whilst Dan Puplett is discontinuing after 7 years. I would like to thank Dan for his valuable contribution as a trustee.

Gisela is returning to the Board after an enforced year out during which she continued as secretary. In the case of our Chairman, he has served 3 terms and under the terms of our Articles is due to take a year out. However, if he is to continue as chairman then the Articles will have to be changed.

Without singling out anyone, I would like to thank my fellow trustees for their continued support. We have a broad range of skills within the group which are pertinent to the business of running the Trust and much effort has been expended by all. As ever, we are on the lookout for new blood. We can have a maximum of 12 members on the Board.

#### Members

Membership numbers are 51 family memberships and 20 single members which is an increase from last year. We continue to encourage lapsed members to re-join by sending out reminders.

Membership subscriptions and donations are an important source of income for the Trust. Most membership subscriptions are now paid directly to our bank account. We are grateful to those of you who continue as members and to those who have made donations. We value your continued support.

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## Volunteers

With the exception of specialised services, the maintenance work in the Woodlands and on the Bike Track is carried out by volunteers. Although hampered somewhat by Covid regular work parties were carried out. Their main focus has been on clearance of non-native invasive species. Path maintenance work in Sanquhar is planned, and a contractor has been engaged.

The Bike Track squad were less active over this period having lost our remaining trained volunteer. However, the track is in good condition and scheduled inspections were carried out.

We are grateful to those who give up their time to the monthly work parties and we continue to look for new volunteers.

## Events

School parties have been regular visitors both with WildThings! and our own volunteer leaders. There are an increasing number of groups taking children, youths and adults into Sanquhar for educational and recreational purposes.

In September our trustee Dan Puplett who is a naturalist, conservationist and outdoor educator led two well-attended and much enjoyed nature walks.

## Admin

Our website is functioning well. We are receiving correspondence from members and others through that medium and we are posting news events.

The FCWT Facebook page continues to receive lots of visitors, and we get many 'likes'. It targets a different audience from the website, and we feel that it is raising our profile and attracting new members and volunteers.

Newsletters were issued three times over the course of the year. Thanks are due to Gisela, the editor, and to trustees Dan Puplett and Steve Hull for their contributions.

## Plans for the coming year

Continue with invasive species containment and source funding for same.

Paths maintenance work in Sanquhar, Muiry and Newforres.

Issue the 5-year plan for period 2022 - 2026

## Financial

At Year End 31 March 2021 an operating surplus of £716 was reported (2019 – £3,965 deficit)

The surplus was due to there being less 3<sup>rd</sup> party work carried out combined with an increase in donations and subscriptions. A Gift Aid payment was also obtained.

Our current cash position is healthy. I would remind members that our income from subscriptions and donations falls some way short of our annual operating costs.

Further details are contained in the abbreviated Financial Statements which are contained in the meeting papers. A complete set of Financial Statements can be provided on request. Reports to Companies House and the Office of Scottish Charities Register have been completed.

In closing, I would like to thank our trustees, members, and volunteers for their continued support.

D J Wright