

FRIENDS OF LOCH LOMOND & THE TROSSACHS

ANNUAL REPORT

For the YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2015



FRIENDS OF LOCH LOMOND & THE TROSSACHS

| | Page |
|---|--------------|
| Contents | 1 |
| Office Bearers etc. | 2 |
| Notice of Annual General Meeting | 3 |
| Minutes of 2014 Annual General Meeting | 4-6 |
| Chairman's Report | 7-14 |
| Annual Accounts | 15-17 |
| Independent Examiners Report | 18 |

FRIENDS OF LOCH LOMOND & THE TROSSACHS

Office Bearers etc.

Honorary President - Sir Malcolm Colquhoun Bart.

Honorary Vice-Presidents

Professor Gavin Arneil
William Petrie OBE DL
Lord John McFall of Alcluith

Office Bearers

George Boyd – Vice President
Mr James Fraser – Chairman
Mr John Urquhart – Vice-Chairman
Mr Tom Wallace -Treasurer

Executive Council

Dr Joyce Deans CBE
Mr Iain Stuart
Ms Sheila Winstone
Mr William Dalrymple
Mr Philip Norris

Office

The Old Station, Balloch Road, Balloch, G83 8SS
Tel. No: 01389 298008
Email address: info@lochlomondtrossachs.org.uk
Website: www.lochlomondtrossachs.org.uk

Bankers

Royal Bank of Scotland, Colquhoun Square, Helensburgh

Independent Examiner

W.M. Hassall, 121 West Clyde Street, Helensburgh, G84 8ET.

Scottish Charities Registration Number: SC015389

FRIENDS OF LOCH LOMOND & THE TROSSACHS

Notice of Meeting

Notice is hereby given that the thirty-seventh Annual General Meeting of the Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs will be held at Ross Priory, Gartocharn on Wednesday 18th May 2016, at 7.30pm, for the transacting of the following business:

1. Receive apologies for absence.
2. To approve the minutes of the last AGM.
3. Receive the Chairman's Report.
4. Receive the Treasurer's Report and approve the Independently Examined Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2015.
5. To approve no increase in the Annual Membership fees
6. To re-appoint the office bearers and trustees and endorse other nominations.
 - (i) Existing Trustees seeking re-election:
James Fraser – Chairman
Mr John Urquhart –Vice-Chairman
Mr Tom Wallace - Treasurer
Dr Joyce Deans CBE
Mr Iain Stuart
Ms Sheila Winstone
Mr William Dalrymple
Mr Philip Norris
 - (ii) Vice President: - Mr George Boyd
7. Annual Awards including Volunteer of the Year, Business Supporter of the Year and the Hannah Stirling National Park Award
8. To transact any other competent business

After the AGM there will be interesting talks by Rosie Winch, project officer of The Mountains and The People project; and Maggie McCallum, National Park Ranger.

By order of the Executive Council

James Fraser
Chair

Wednesday, May 13 2015 at 7.30pm at Loch Lomond Arms Hotel, Luss

Chair: J Fraser (JF).

Committee Present: G Boyd (GB); J Urquhart (JU); W Dalrymple (WD); J Deans (JD).

In Attendance: A Blazy-Winning (ABW); A Galloway (AG); S Cameron (SC); S Miller (SM); P Palgrave (PP); K Crawford (KC); A Urquhart (AU); J Beveridge (JB); A MacLeod (AMaL); R Anderson (RA); J Anderson (JAnd); J Ashworth (JAsh); V Ashworth (VA); G Bruce (GB); I Bruce (IB); S Fraser (SF); H Hall (HH); W Hassall (WH); B Johnstone (BJ); N Lawrence (NL); I MacKenzie (IMaK); R Maund (RM); J Maund (JM); F Maxwell (FMax); F Moore (FMo); D Nelson (DN); W Nisbet (WN); J Pearson (JP); A Pringle (AP); H Stewart (HS); S Taylor (ST); M Tucker (MT); C Tucker (CT).

Apologies: I Stuart (IS); P Norris (PN); S Winstone (SW); T Wallace (TW); T Brownrigg (TB); R Weir (RW); J Kelso (JK); E Henderson (EH); N Wells (NW); Sir Malcolm Colquhoun (SMC); G Arneil (GA); J Arneil (JA); K Hood (KH).

1. Welcome

JF welcomed those present to the meeting and thanked them for their attendance. He also expressed thanks to Simon Miller and the staff of the Loch Lomond Arms Hotel for hosting this year's AGM.

The evening started with tributes from the Chairman to Hannah Stirling, Jock Scott-Park and Frank Bracewell, who had all passed away over the year since the last AGM. Three awards were then presented, including the newly-introduced Hannah Stirling National Park Award, to recognise the contribution of volunteers and businesses towards furthering the aims of the Friends for the benefit of the National Park area. George Bruce was presented with the Hannah Stirling National Park Award following his tireless work to save Ardroy Outdoor Education Centre and place it on a financially sustainable future. The Volunteer of the Year Award went to Susan Taylor for her work as administrator of the Tom Weir Statue Campaign, which culminated in the statue being unveiled at Balmaha Bay in December 2014. Lastly, Fred Moore accepted the Business Supporter of the Year Award on behalf of Cruise Loch Lomond, who introduced the MV Lomond Hannah vessel to their fleet in September 2014 to mark Hannah Stirling's 100th birthday. All award winners suitably replied to the citations from the Chairman and this was followed by a photocall.

2. Chairman's Report

JF spoke to his Chairman's Report on charity's activity over the last year (tabled) and this was accompanied by a Powerpoint presentation highlighting some of the Friends projects and initiatives and a range of current topical issues. He provided a brief overview of how the charity had worked to further the key aims of protecting and

nurturing the special qualities of the National Park, promoting and celebrating the National Park's cultural heritage, and providing support to projects to make the National Park a better place for people and nature. Highlights of the past year included record levels of fundraising, with £156,000 allocated to 16 different projects, including the Tom Weir Statue, and over 200 volunteers taking part in 11 different conservation and fundraising tasks. More than 22,000 visitor donations have also been made at over 100 businesses through the Friends of OUR park visitor giving scheme.

Several slides highlighted the work which had gone into the delivery of the Tom Weir Statue in December 2014 at Balmaha in partnership with the Tom Weir Memorial Group and with the help of Sandy Fraser and his outdoor team at the Oak Tree Inn. Projects associated with the A82 upgrade and the Friends 'tree tunnel' 3 year programme were also covered. Mention was also made of various projects financially supported by the Friends in 2014/15, including the Wheelyboat at Lake of Menteith Fisheries, Aberfoyle Bike Park and the Green Routes project at Gartmore. Support for activity days out for young people in the National Park. Also supported by the Friends this year have been activity days out in the National Park for young people and the installation of more defibrillators throughout the area in partnership with Trossachs Search and Rescue and local communities were mentioned as high priorities.

Three Make a Difference volunteer Days have taken place in the 2014/15 period in Cowal, the Trossachs and on East Loch Lomondside. The Friends have also continued to strongly promote the charity, producing two further copies of Voice magazine along with a new-look membership leaflet. The extensive press coverage enjoyed by the Friends was also highlighted.

Members were informed of three events being staged by the Friends over the coming months – the Loch Lomond Cruise in August in conjunction with Lennox Literary Society; the Classic Two Lochs Tour in October; and Christmas at Ross Priory in November.

In conclusion, JF thanked all Trustees and Friends staff for their efforts over the past 12 months, and expressed sincere thanks to members for their continued support.

3. Accounts for 2014

The Chairman spoke briefly to the accounts. These were proposed by JU and seconded by PP and unanimously approved. The Chairman also thanked Bill Hassall for his work auditing of the accounts in his role as the independent auditor.

4. Approve no increase in annual membership fees

This was proposed by KC and seconded by AU. It was unanimously agreed fees will remain at £20 for individual membership and £28 for family membership.

5. Re-appointment of office bearers

Retention of the list of the Board of Trustees was proposed by JB and seconded by AMacL. It was also proposed to appoint Tom Wallace to the Board of Trustees to strengthen the link with the Community Partnership and to tap into his project management skills. This was proposed by AU, seconded by PP and unanimously approved.

The Chairman intimated to members that two further positions on the Board of Trustees are available and that any interest in filling them would be welcome.

6. Awards

These had already been presented earlier in the evening.

7. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

8. Guest Speaker

Simon Miller, Chief Executive of Luss Estates, gave an interesting talk on the story of Luss Estates and the efforts being made to develop a range of businesses to help sustain the long term future of the Estate. He outlined a range of management challenges and future plans .

There were a range of questions from the floor which Simon responded to before the Chairman and members thanked him for an excellent overview of the Luss Estate Story.

Chairman's Report

1. Introduction

It has been another very busy and successful year for the Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs as we have worked hard to make a difference through our campaigning, fundraising and volunteering efforts. In our role as the only independent conservation and heritage charity covering the National Park, and as a consequence of our limited staff, volunteer and financial resources, we have focused our efforts on a carefully selected number of priorities and actions in line with the 4 year strategy and action plan agreed in 2012.

We have made some solid progress on a number of fronts under the umbrella of our three main aims to:

- protect and nurture the National Park's special qualities;*
- promote and celebrate the National Park's rich and diverse natural and cultural heritage; and*
- provide support for projects to make the National Park a better place for people and nature.*

Where appropriate we have worked in partnership with the National Park Authority, Scottish Enterprise, the Community Partnership, local tourism groups such as Destination National Park and Love Loch Lomond, community councils, local project champions and others to further our aims.

Important factors in our continuing success have been the commitment, enthusiasm and hard work of our two part-time staff Alice Blazy-Winning and Andrew Galloway and our band of 9 trustees, the support from our membership and our greatly expanded group of volunteers who donate their time so generously, financial contributions and support in kind from our business and Friends of OUR Park supporters and public sector partners. This has resulted in good levels of fundraising and volunteering in 2015 which, in turn, has meant we have been able to achieve much through initiatives such as Friends of OUR Park visitor giving scheme, Make a Difference Days, our Young Friends programme, the delivery of further improvements at the Tom Weir's Rest site in Balmaha. We have also been able to financially support a large number of access, heritage and conservation projects working with local groups and others throughout the National Park.

We continued to enjoy a good working relationship with the senior staff and members of the National Park Authority without compromising our independent stance on key issues. We also greatly appreciated the National Park Authority's 'in kind' support for the Friends of OUR Park voluntary visitor giving and volunteering initiative as well as financial support for a Nature of the Bay storyboard at Tom Weir's rest site at Balmaha and sponsored pages in Voice magazine.

2. Review of Future Priorities

In 2015 the Trustees undertook a review of activities undertaken over the past four years and agreed an ambitious agenda for the next four years with a major focus on campaigning and fundraising to support a range of activities that are complementary to the work of the national Park Authority. The priorities and supporting actions are set out in simple strategy summary sheet which can be viewed on the Friends website.

The five themes identified in the strategy summary are *Windows on the Park; Celebrating Cultural Heritage; Nature Conservation; Protecting the Park's Special Qualities and Young Friends*. This builds on the work undertaken in the past four years but there will be a greater emphasis on delivering more youth initiatives and capitalising on the Scottish Government's special theme years to showcase the rich natural and cultural heritage of the National Park more effectively. Campaigning to protect the National Park's special qualities will also remain as a high priority.

3. Funding

We were very grateful to receive a very generous legacy of £50,000 from the will of our late founder and President, Dr Hannah Stirling MBE early in 2015 and following her death the previous November. This funding has come at a very welcome time and has helped secure the future of the organisation at a time when the opportunities to secure public sector grants for revenue and capital activities is becoming more challenging as national cuts in public sector funding take their toll.

We were also pleased to secure a grant of £10,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund for a new 'Tom Weir's Loch Lomond Wonderland' project that follows on from the success of the unveiling of the Tom Weir Statue and associated site upgrading works at Balmaha coordinated by the Friends in partnership with the Tom Weir Memorial Group. Grants of £1,500, £6,000 and £3,000 were secured from Stirling Council and Love Loch Lomond for path and boundary wall improvements and storyboard installations at Tom Weir's Rest site. And finally two grants totalling just under £3,000 were secured from Argyll and Bute Council to support youth activities in the National Park linked to John Muir awards.

4. Campaigning and Consultations

(i) Planning

We have continued to monitor planning applications in and around the National Park and fortunately more developers are recognising the National Park is a special place with better quality and less contentious planning applications coming forward. This has also been helped by the success of the National Park Authority's pre-application process and the more participative local development plan and community 'charrette' consultation exercises which means there is more of a consensus around future planning for the area.

The level of planning applications dealt with by the National Park in the past year has remained relatively low but there continued to be a steady flow of applications for low impact micro-hydro schemes. These schemes are much more preferable to high impact wind turbine developments that are now thankfully banned from both Scotland's National Parks following successful lobbying efforts by the Friends, the Scottish Campaign for National Parks and others several years ago. However, we remain vigilant as the buffer zones around the national Park are still potential areas of search for wind farm developments. We recently gave evidence at a wind farm public local enquiry in Gourrock and spoke at a packed meeting in Dunoon where scoping proposals for a prominent site above the town were under consideration by a developer.

We made representations on a number of planning applications in 2015. We supported small scale tourism proposals in Luss which were aimed at strengthening the appeal of the village as part of Luss Estates plans to create more year round employment opportunities and to raise the quality of the visitor experience on West Loch Lomondside.

We lodged objections to a controversial application for housing and a cancer respite care centre on a field at the front of the busy Gartocharn village hall which has stunning views over Loch Lomond. This application was refused by the Park Authority. We also joined forces with Balloch and Haldane Community Council to lodge an objection to a housing scheme on one of the last remaining potential sites for public parking in Balloch east of the River Leven and next to the National Park headquarters. Despite putting forward a strong case for the site to be retained for the provision of a large car park and open space to address the chronic shortage of parking spaces and to support the growth and development of tourism in the core of the village, the planning application for housing was approved.

We recently took an active part in a LIVE in Balloch initiative being coordinated by the Park Authority and West Dunbartonshire Council with support from the Scottish Government and Scottish Enterprise. This took the form of a design charrette which had successfully been tested in other towns and villages in the National Park and involved a series of intensive workshops with local residents and other interested parties. Key challenges addressed were how to link old and new Balloch and reviews of key sites such as West Riverside and Balloch Castle Country Park. Hopefully the final plan will set out an ambitious framework to realise the tourism potential of Balloch as well as addressing issues such as improving the quality of the public realm and addressing the major car parking shortages near the centre of the village.

(ii) Visitor Management and Camping

Visitor management and camping issues in particular have continued to feature heavily in consultations during the past year. After a significant time lapse between the end of the 'Your Park' proposals consultation undertaken by the National Park Authority, the review of responses and submission of revised proposals to the Scottish Government, at the end of January 2016 the Minister for the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform, Dr Aileen McLeod, approved camping management proposals. The proposals include the introduction of new byelaws on corridors beside the National Park's busiest lochshores and will come into effect on 1st March 2017 covering the period March – September each year.

The byelaws are being linked with the provision of much needed new camping facilities and the introduction of a camping permit scheme in lochshore management zones. This follows on from the success of the pilot no camping and no drinking byelaws on East Loch Lomond over the past few years which has helped transform the visitor experience and has led to more families being attracted back to the area.

The proposals have been strongly supported by local communities while the Friends and the Scottish Campaign for National Parks have broadly supported them but have stressed the need to address camping shortages throughout the National Park and not just simply in the new management zones. We have also written a number of letters to national newspapers supporting the measures being introduced which have been the subject of considerable opposition from a number of outdoor access groups such as Ramblers Scotland and John Muir Trust who have concerns about criminalisation of camping over wider areas in the National Park and issues such as the impact of displacement on areas outwith the proposed management zones.

(iii) Pylon Visual Impact Project

During the past year we have participated in stakeholder meetings organised by the major energy companies to review a series of measures to minimise the impact of pylon and related infrastructure in the National Park. Scottish and Southern Energy and SP Energy Networks have joined forces to employ landscape specialists LUC to review the

visual impact of existing wirescape in the National Park and to work with local stakeholders to come forward with a series of costed measures to reduce the visual impact of pylon lines. These proposals will be packaged as part of a 40-50 million pound funding bid to energy regulator OFGEM in the second half of 2016. OFGEM is administering a £500 million fund that is available on a UK wide basis to mitigate or positively enhance the visual impact of pre-existing transmission infrastructure located in nationally designated landscapes, including National Parks and National Scenic Areas.

This is a welcome initiative and could help to make a significant contribution to furthering the aims of the National Park and the Friends. In our representations we have suggested undergrounding of short stretches of pylons should be ruled out with the available funding being used for tree planting and small scale diversions in some of the busier and scenically sensitive areas. We have also submitted a strong case for some of the funds to be used to take stretches of the Three Lochs Way through the Luss Glens and away from under pylon lines as part of a wider West Loch Lomond access initiative in partnership with Helensburgh and District Access Trust and Luss Estates.

The A82 and A83

We were pleased to see the completion of the upgrading works at Pulpit Rock on Loch Lomondside in late spring 2015 and the opening of the new Crianlarich bypass works in December 2014. We are continuing to monitor the emerging options for upgrading some of the more challenging stretches of the A82 north of Tarbet which were the subject of consultation exercises during 2014 and 2015. We also made representations on the measures being used to minimise rock and sediment falls on the A83 near the Rest and be Thankful west of Arrochar. We have concerns that the netting option currently being favoured by the Scottish Government has limitations and believe other longer term solutions such as the construction of a canopy should be explored more fully to provide a more robust and environmentally acceptable solution.

We continued to campaign for a better tree and lay-by litter management regime on the A82 between Balloch and Tarbet where over a three year period, with funding support from the National Park Authority, we invested heavily in removing parts of the 'tree tunnel' to open up views of Loch Lomond. We are still at a loss to understand why throughout the entire stretch of the A9 in the Cairngorms National Park there are litter bins in every lay-by while there are none in lay-bys along the A82 in Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park. Local authorities and others are also being actively encouraged to improve the litter clearance arrangements along this busy stretch of the A82.

Tom Weir's Rest, Balmaha

Following the successful public launch of the Tom Weir Statue in late December 2014 we have continued to work closely with the Tom Weir Memorial Group to carry out further improvements on the adjoining picnic site at Balmaha overlooking scenic Balmaha Bay. The site has also attracted over 100,000 visitors since the statue was unveiled and is proving to be one of Loch Lomond's top tourist attractions.

The total invested at Tom Weir's Rest has now risen to over £130,000 with some of this coming from the ongoing public appeal. Grants were secured from Stirling Council, Love Loch Lomond and the National Park Authority to assist with further site improvement works and a sizeable portion of a £10,000 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund was used to provide attractive storyboards on the site. £10,000 from Hannah Stirling's

legacy was used to fund some site improvements and Rhona Weir very generously donated £5,000 to assist with the costs of the recently completed Tom and Rhona's Mountain Garden at the front entrance to the site. We are also grateful to local businessman Sandy Fraser who has sponsored some of the work and has also overseen much of the groundworks which were undertaken by his skilled outdoor team.

Improvements completed on the site during the past year have included constructing extensive boundary walls which are an essential part of flood prevention measures, upgrading paths to all abilities standard, replacing picnic benches and seats and laying out an attractive mountain garden which is proving to be popular with visitors to the site. Stirling Council has also upgraded the adjacent pavement and entrances to the site with new tarred surfaces.

Fundraising is ongoing as further improvements as we need to fund regular site maintenance and meet other annual costs such as insurance. A new initiative entitled 'Tom Weir's Loch Lomond Wonderland' is also being taken forward with funding support from the Heritage Lottery Fund. In addition to storyboard installations on the site a special booklet is being produced with input from over 100 children attending primary schools around the loch and it is encouraging to see how enthusiastic they are in coming forward with their views on the wonders of Loch Lomond in drawings, poems and writings.

Friends of OUR Park

We continued to receive financial support from Scottish Enterprise to develop the Friends of OUR Park visitor giving and volunteering project (£10,000) but sadly direct funding support from Scottish Natural Heritage and the Park Authority came to an end. However, the Park Authority are continuing to provide 'in kind' office support costs which have a real value. New options to assist with the core costs of funding the Project Officer's post are being explored as the Friends will be unable to sustain the costs in future on their own.

The number of businesses (100) actively involved in the visitor voluntary donation scheme and associated 'Make a Difference' volunteering programmes to support conservation, heritage and access projects throughout the National Park has remained fairly stable during the past year. Most of the focus has been on encouraging some of the existing businesses to become more actively involved in fundraising and releasing staff for the very successful Make a Difference volunteering days.

A total of £20,000 the income raised from visitors donations and our participation in the Glasgow to Balloch Kiltwalk was used to support the following 21 projects: Ardentinnny walled garden signage (£150); Drymen paths leaflet (£800); West Dumbartonshire Youth Group activity days (£1,163); Mhor Festival (£300); Tom Weir's Rest site improvements (£6,000); Callander Summerfest (£372); Loch Tarsan access (£800); Powan in the classroom (£500); defibrillators (£1,000); Arrochar & Tarbet paths leaflet (£800); Loch Tay Trail signposting (£500); Queen's Oak Tree, Luss (£500); Helensburgh and Clyde Sea Lochs paths leaflet (£800); John Muir Awards (£2,900); Rhododendron Make a Difference Days (£500); Cowal Red Squirrels project (£500); Ben Lomond path improvements (£1,000); Drymen Biodiversity (£200); Cowalfest (£300); and Trossachs Trail (£700).

We stepped in to support local groups fund three paths leaflets as we consider there is still a demand for good quality local information on local walks and cycling routes. It is disappointing various public sector bodies have cut back on funding information leaflets

of this nature when they have such an important role to play in helping people to enjoy the great outdoors of the National Park. While more people are accessing information online in a destination where mobile phone coverage is so patchy printed information will still have a role for some time to come. As part of the sustainability agenda local groups supported have been encouraged to introduce a cover charge for the paths leaflets to help fund future re-prints.

The National Park-wide public access defibrillator scheme that is being coordinated by the Trossachs Search and Rescue Team, with financial support from the Friends and others, reached an important milestone with the installation of the 75th unit recently. During 2015 we financially supported the installation of defibrillators in Gartmore and Aberfoyle and funding was also provided for an online app featuring a map with all the locations of units in and around the National Park.

Supporting youngsters from communities near the National Park on activity days out linked to John Muir awards continued to be a high priority with groups from West Dunbartonshire, Dunoon and Cowal all benefitting from funding support.

We were a partner for a third year in the Glasgow to Loch Lomond Kiltwalk but on a scaled down basis compared to 2014 with groups from Tarbet Hotel and the Vale of Leven walking to raise funds for youth projects supported by the Friends. A large number of prizes were sourced from businesses for the very successful Kiltwalk raffle that was coordinated by volunteer Sue Cameron.

The voluntary visitor donation element of Friends of OUR Park continues to be an important source of funds to support access, conservation and heritage projects. The most successful fundraising technique used by businesses has been the use of opt out visitor donation opportunities linked to accommodation and food bills. Our most successful fundraisers using this technique are lodge on Loch Lomond Hotel, the Oak Tree Inn, Monachyle Mhor, Loch Lomond Arms Hotel and Balmillig B&B.

An encouraging number of people from different walks of life are now involved in volunteering with the Friends and staff from a wider range of businesses took part in 'Make a Difference Days' organised by our Project Manager, Alice Blazy-Winning with support from National Park Rangers and various business sponsors.

In the spring a group of 20 volunteers took part in a clear up at the Tom Weir's Rest site in Balmaha removing debris that had accumulated over the winter floods and planting bulbs in partnership with the Community Council. In the autumn 38 volunteers from national companies such as Direct Line Insurance and Scottish Water joined forces with some of our local volunteers and Luss Estates to take part in a 'Make a Difference Day' that involved the removal of rhodies on West Loch Lomond.

An attractive and informative booklet capturing the successes of the Friends of OUR park visitor giving and volunteering scheme was compiled and published. This coincided with the fifth anniversary of the introduction of a pilot scheme which has steadily grown into a compelling movement that brings together individuals and businesses who enjoy and value the cultural and natural heritage of the National Park, with organisations and local groups carrying out valuable work to make the Park and its communities a better place for people and nature.

The scheme now involves 100 businesses and tens of thousands of individuals making personal contributions to help look after and improve the area every year. Encouragingly, over £200,000 has now been raised with over 60 projects being

supported. Thousands of volunteer hours have also been generously given by individuals and businesses to help with conservation and environmental improvement tasks in the National Park.

The booklet has been widely distributed to key contacts and is actively being used as a recruitment tool as efforts continue to involve more businesses in the scheme.

Promoting and Celebrating the National Park

We continued to produce the popular Voice magazine twice a year and have tried to keep the content relevant and topical to raise awareness of the special qualities of the Park, the Friends activities and current issues. As a result of a good level of advertising support and sponsorship it was possible to produce two 28 page editions of Voice with print runs of 5,000 copies. The magazine was widely distributed to members and others and we further strengthened the distribution of copies to visitors via a growing number of tourism businesses throughout the National Park. The magazine continues to fulfil a useful purpose in the absence of the National Park Authority's own magazine and we received very positive feedback from many quarters on the quality and content of Voice.

We also continued to raise the profile of the Friends and used the media to good effect to highlight some of our work and a range of campaigning issues. We issued 12 press releases during the past year and they were picked up well by the local and national media. The success of the Tom Weir statue and Weirfest received great media coverage and included interviews on BBC Radio Scotland and STV. Project grant awards and campaigning issues such as car parking and realising the tourism potential of Balloch generated significant publicity too.

We again had a very successful 'Meet the Friends' stand at Luss Highland Games in July and our first Weirfest at Balmaha in May, organised jointly with the Tom Weir Memorial Group, was also a great success raising much needed funds to help cover the annual statue insurance and site maintenance costs.

Our sunset cruise on Loch Lomond in August, which we organised for a third year in a row with the Lennox Literary Society, was again well supported and enjoyed by the 90 people in attendance. The annual Christmas event hosted by Dr Joyce Deans at Ross Priory was also a great success with over 60 members and Friends supporters in attendance.

The event highlight of the year was the sell-out Classic Tour of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs in October which was organised by volunteer Anne Urquhart. This tour retraced the steps of William and Dorothy Wordsworth while travelling by historic steamship and classic coaches from the 1960s.

Offices and Staffing

We occupied a rent free office courtesy of VisitScotland above the visitor information centre in Balloch where our Support Officer was based throughout 2015. However, at the end of the year we moved our office base to the National Park offices at Carrochan in Balloch where we already had some desk space courtesy of the National Park Authority as part of their contribution to the Friends of OUR park voluntary visitor giving and volunteering scheme. This move has ensured the staff employed to deliver the important £6 million Mountains and the People project over the next 5 years can be housed in the accommodation we vacated on the upper floor of the Old Station building.

Andrew Galloway continued in the role of Support Officer and the office is generally manned between 9.30am and 4pm Tuesday-Friday. Alice Blazy-Winning, who manages the Friends of OUR Park voluntary visitor giving scheme and our volunteering activities continued to work part-time (Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays) and went on maternity leave in December. Office costs here are met by the National Park Authority as an 'in kind' contribution to the Friends and following our move from the Old Station we are delighted the Park Authority has agreed to continue the 'in kind' office support services for a further 5 years.

The support of both VisitScotland and the National Park Authority in providing office accommodation is greatly appreciated as this frees up some of our limited resources for priority activities. I would like to place on record my thanks to Andrew and Alice for all their efforts and hard work on behalf of the Friends during what has been an exceptionally busy year.

Our Trustees and Thanks

There has only been one change to our Board of Trustees during 2015 with Tom Wallace, the former Community Partnerships Manager and the current co-ordinator of the Mountains and the People becoming a Trustee in June 2015. George Boyd stepped down as a Trustee of the Friends in early 2016 after many decades of sterling service in a variety of roles including Chairman, Treasurer, Vice-President and Trustee. We owe a great debt of gratitude to George for all his efforts over the years and we are pleased he will be remaining in the role of Vice-President to provide wise counsel and guidance when required.

A total of 5 bi-monthly meetings of the Trustees and 3 meetings of Sub-Committees were held courtesy of Strathclyde University at Ross Priory in 2015. We are grateful to the University for continuing to provide meeting space and refreshments free of charge via Trustee Joyce Deans who has been closely involved with the University for a number of years and who has a courtyard at Ross Priory named in her honour. The Trustees also participated in an informative study tour of the Loch Lomond in June to visit some projects supported by the Friends and to meet community council and National Trust for Scotland representatives for discussions on some of the current live issues on the ground.

The Board of Trustees have worked closely with our staff and partners to ensure the Friends continue to flourish and contribute in a positive way to the future well-being of the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park area.

We look forward to continuing to make a positive contribution working for the benefit of people and nature as the only truly independent conservation and heritage charity for the area covered by Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park. In concluding, I wish to thank my fellow trustees, staff, our members and business supporters and various public sector partners, and in particular the National Park Authority and Scottish Enterprise, for all their support, commitment and encouragement during the past year which has proved to be very productive as we strived to make a real difference.

James Fraser
Chairman

| | 2015 Unrestricted | 2015 Restricted | 2014 |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Income | | | |
| Membership | 1,842 | - | 1,474 |
| Donations /Appeals | 50,939 | - | 4,239 |
| Gift Aid | - | - | - |
| Business supporters | 5,300 | - | 5,500 |
| Voice Advertising | 5,472 | - | 3,460 |
| Project Funding: | | | |
| National Park Authority | 13,650 | - | 6,524 |
| Scottish Enterprise | 10,000 | - | 10,000 |
| Scottish Natural Heritage | - | - | 4,945 |
| OUR Park Business Donations | 18,507 | - | 13,223 |
| Other grants | 1,500 | 1,440 | 9,987 |
| Events | | | |
| AGM | 310 | - | 393 |
| Caledonian Challenge | 400 | - | 300 |
| Christmas Event | 664 | - | 698 |
| Kiltwalk | 2,797 | - | 15,126 |
| JM Event | - | - | 612 |
| JM Conference | - | - | 633 |
| Loch Lomond Cruise | 594 | - | 447 |
| Two Lochs Tour | 1,210 | - | - |
| Merchandising | 2,603 | - | 323 |
| Miscellaneous | - | - | 2,380 |
| HMRC | 2,462 | - | - |
| Bank interest | 33 | - | 16 |
| Tom Weir Statue | 20,848 | 10,000 | 58,299 |
| Love Loch Lomond | 261 | - | 89 |
| Helensburgh office sale | - | - | 17,202 |
| <u>Income TOTAL</u> | <u>139,392</u> | <u>11,440</u> | <u>155,870</u> |

Note: Restricted funds are as follows:

Other grants – Argyll and Bute Council youth activity project £1,440

Tom Weir's Loch Lomond Wonderland – HLF £10,000 grant for work due to be completed in 2016

Total of £11,440 restricted funds to be expended in 2015

| Expenditure | 2015 | 2014 |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Salaries and on-costs | 25,122 | 26,552 |
| HMRC | 2,859 | 2,801 |
| Training | - | 299 |
| Travel & Expenses | 1,132 | 1,500 |
| Office Costs | 1,695 | 4,965 |
| Voice | 7,674 | 7,604 |
| Projects: | | |
| Friends of OUR park | 9,550 | 20,740 |
| Website Redevelopment | 1,332 | - |
| Tree Tunnel | 13,650 | 1,524 |
| Hannah's boat | - | 2,267 |
| Events | | |
| AGM | 156 | 578 |
| Annual Study Visit | 208 | - |
| Christmas Event | 26 | 1,257 |
| Kiltwalk | 297 | 613 |
| JM Events | - | 667 |
| JM Conference | - | 760 |
| Loch Lomond Cruise | 550 | 518 |
| Two Lochs Tour | 756 | - |
| Marketing | 2,730 | 336 |
| Tom Weir Statue | 56,070 | 71,626 |
| SCVO membership etc | 670 | 653 |
| <u>Expenditure TOTAL</u> | <u>124,477</u> | <u>145,260</u> |
| <u>Income TOTAL</u> | <u>150,832</u> | |
| <u>Operating surplus in year</u> | <u>26,355</u> | |
| Cash reconciliation | | |
| Balance brought forward | 33,170 | |
| Operating surplus for year | 26,355 | |
| Cash in bank | 59,525 | |

Friends of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs

Statement of Assets & Liabilities as at 31st. December, 2015

| | 31/12/15 | | Total | 31/12/14 |
|------------------------------|--------------|------------|---------|----------|
| | Unrestricted | Restricted | | |
| Current assets: | | | | |
| Bank: | | | | |
| Combined balance at year end | £59,525 | - | £59,525 | £33,170 |
| Capital: | £48,085 | £11,440 | £59,525 | £33,170 |

James B Fraser (Chairman)

Tom Wallace (Treasurer)

WM Hassall (Independent Examiner)

25th May 2016

Notes/

Notes to the accounts

Year ended 31 December 2015

Nature and purpose of funds

The aims of Friends of Loch Lomond & the Trossachs "the charity" are:

To cherish, protect and enhance the natural beauty, amenity and character of Loch Lomond, its islands and the surrounding countryside.
To protect and encourage the preservation, conservation and improvement of features of public amenity or historic interest within the above area.

To promote and encourage an energetic and consistent implementation of good planning policies appropriate to the above area and consistent with these objects.

To stimulate public interest in these objects by means of publications, meetings, exhibitions, appeals and other forms of publicity.

To co-operate with other bodies to promote the foregoing objects.

Executive Council

None of the trustees received any remuneration in the year.

There were no transactions with trustees and connected persons in the year.

Other information

At 31 December 2015 there was no outstanding capital expenditure approved or committed.

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE FRIENDS OF
LOCH LOMOND & THE TROSSACHS NATIONAL PARK

I report on the accounts of the charity for the period ended 31ST. December, 2015 which are set out in the accompanying documents.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The Charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the Charities and Trustees Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006.

The Charity trustees consider that the audit requirement of Regulation 10(1) (a) to (c) of the Accounts Regulations does not apply. It is my responsibility to examine the accounts as required under section 44(1)(c) of the Act and to state whether certain matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's statement

My examination is carried out in accordance with Regulation 11 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006. An examination included a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeks explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the views given by the accounts.

Independent examiner's statement

In the course of my examination no matter has come to my attention

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with Section 44(1)(a) of the 2005 Act and Regulation 4 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations, and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with Regulation 8 of the 2006 Accounts Regulationshave not been met, or
2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



W.M. Hassall, Accountant,
121, West Clyde Street, Helensburgh

8th. May, 2016