

FRIENDS OF LOCH LOMOND & THE TROSSACHS

ANNUAL REPORT

For the YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2016



FRIENDS OF LOCH LOMOND & THE TROSSACHS

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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

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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 Loch Lomond Arms Hotel, Luss on Tuesday 16th May 2017, 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 2016.
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
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 John Urquhart, Vice Chairman of the Friends on **Loch Lomond's Treasure Islands** and Dave Dewar on **the Harry Lauder Story** and his connections with the National Park and Cowal.

By order of the Executive Council

James Fraser
Chair

Wednesday, May 18 2016 at 7.30pm at Ross Priory, Gartocharn

Chair: J Fraser (JF).

Committee Present: J Urquhart (JU); W Dalrymple (WD); J Deans (JD); P Norris (PN).

In Attendance: R Anderson (RA); J Beveridge (JB); G Boyd (GB); C Brownrigg (CB); T Brownrigg (TB); S Cameron (SC); L Cockill (LC); P Cockill (PC); A Colquhoun (AC); N Colquhoun (NC); J Cossar (JoC); K Crawford (KC); J Crawford (JeC); T Dance (TD); V Dance (VD); S Fraser (SF); A Galloway (AGa); A Grey (AGr); W Hassall (WH); B Johnston (BJ); I MacKenzie (IMacK); J MacKenzie (JMack); Avril MacLeod (AvMacL); Andy MacLeod (AnMacL); F Maxwell (FM); M McCallum (MMcC); A McInnes (AMcI); W Nisbet (WN); P Palgrave (PP); B Richards (BR); M Richards (MR); A Urquhart (AU); R Weir (RWe); J Wilson (JW); R Winch (RWi).

Apologies: J Baillie (JB); A Blazy-Winning (ABW); M Brown (MB); A Kerr (AK); J MacGregor (JMacG); S Miller (SM); A Sobey (AS); I Stuart (IS); J Sweeney (JS); T Wallace (TW); N Wells (NW); S Winstone (SW).

1. Welcome

JF welcomed those present to the meeting and thanked them for their attendance. He also expressed thanks to David Upton and the staff of Ross Priory for their hospitality in hosting this year's AGM.

Three awards were then presented. George Bruce received the Hannah Stirling National Park Award following his tireless work with the Friends as chairman, treasurer and currently vice-president since joining as a member in 1994. The Volunteer of the Year Award went to Irene MacKenzie for her work as a volunteer with the Friends and the National Park Authority which has accumulated more than 100 hours. Lastly, Niall Colquhoun accepted the Business Supporter of the Year Award on behalf of the Lodge on Loch Lomond and the Inn on Loch Lomond, which have raised almost £20,000 for the Friends of OUR park project. All award winners suitably replied to the citations from the Chairman and this was followed by a photocall.

2. Minutes of last AGM

The minutes of the last AGM were approved with no queries arising. They were proposed by AU and seconded by WD.

3. 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 over £150,000 being raised, supporting a total of 22 projects in the National Park; along with over 100 businesses being involved in the Friends of OUR park project and more than 100 volunteers taking part in Make a Difference Days and helping out at Weirfest in June 2015. Members were also shown a copy of the updated strategy chart, which was previously sent out late last year.

Projects covered in the presentation included a proposed new windfarm development in Gourrock which could have an impact on views across the River Clyde; and the Balloch Charrette which was held in March 2016. Visitor management and camping, and the VIEW/VISTA project, were also covered along with consultations on the A82 and A83. An update was also given on the Tom Weir Statue site which was augmented in April 2016 with Tom and Rhona's Mountain Garden, which was launched at a special ceremony in Balmaha. Storyboards have also been installed at the site to tell the story of how Tom Weir came to be Scotland's most loved mountain man.

Excerpts were also shown from the Friends of OUR park booklet, which was previously sent to members late last year, in order to highlight some of the projects which have been financially supported by the Friends. Also highlighted was the defibrillator launch which took place at Balmaha in March 2016, which saw Trossachs Search and Rescue hand over the 75th defibrillator to be installed in the National Park, and also launch a new app to help visitors locate the defibrillators in the area.

The Friends have continued to promote their activities, with two further copies of Voice magazine produced and a membership leaflet continuing to be in circulation at venues throughout the National Park. 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 – Weirfest on Saturday, June 18; the Loch Lomond Sunset Cruise on Wednesday, August 17; and Christmas at Ross Priory on Sunday, December 4.

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.

4. Accounts for 2015

The Chairman spoke briefly to the accounts. These were proposed by JU and seconded by RA with no queries arising. The Chairman also thanked WH for his work auditing of the accounts in his role as the independent auditor.

5. Approve no increase in annual membership fees

It was unanimously agreed that annual membership fees should remain the same - £20 for individual membership and £28 for family membership.

6. Re-appointment of office bearers

Retention of the list of the Board of Trustees, including GB as Vice-President, was proposed by KC and seconded by AU. This was unanimously approved.

JF also invited interest from anyone who wished to become a Trustee of the Friends.

7. Awards

These had already been presented earlier in the evening.

8. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

9. Guest Speakers

There were two interesting talks, delivered firstly by MMcC on being a volunteer ranger with the National Park Authority, and then by RW on the Mountains and the People project. Both were well-received by the audience and were followed by a brief exchange of questions and answers.

JU then gave a vote of thanks to the guest speakers and also to JF for his hard work, in particular ensuring that the work on the Tom Weir Statue site came to fruition with the addition of the Mountain Garden.

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 updated and agreed in late 2015.

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 part-time staff and our band of 9 trustees, the support from our membership and our 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 2016 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, our events programme and the delivery of Tom and Rhona's Mountain Garden at Balmaha and path improvements at the Lauder Memorial in Cowal. 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 through the provision of office space and support services as well as sponsorship of some pages in our popular Voice magazine which is published twice a year.

2. Key Priorities

Following a review of activities in late 2015 an ambitious agenda for the next four years was agreed 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.

We have worked hard in 2016 to try and take forward practical initiatives under all five themes identified in the strategy summary which 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 has been 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 has also remained as a high priority with volunteering activity and representation on a range of issues including litter management and the Your Park camping proposals.

3. Funding

We used £10,000 of the £50,000 legacy funding donation we received from the will of our late founder and President, Dr Hannah Stirling MBE and a generous donation from Rhona Weir to complete improvements at Tom Weir's Rest in Balmaha and this included the creation of the attractive Tom and Rhona's Mountain Garden. This was complemented by a very successful Tom Weir's Loch Lomond Wonderland project with £10,000 of funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund which covered the installation of storyboards, the production of a special booklet involving contributions from local school children and the delivery of a successful Weirfest events programme.

We were pleased to secure a grant of £40,000 from Scottish Enterprise for a new ecotourism initiative which we plan to roll out during 2017 and 2018 with the appointment of a part-time Project Officer. This will involve working with businesses to make more of the potential of the National Park and the Clyde Sea Lochs. Through the Friends of OUR park visitor giving scheme, with the help of local businesses, a record £20,000 in 2016 to support a range of projects throughout the National Park.

We were also pleased to receive a surprise, but welcome, donation of \$5,000 from a group of Seattle golfers who had played a mini Ryder Cup tournament at Loch Lomond Golf Course and donated the prize money to three charities including the Friends for path improvements around Loch Lomond.

And finally, as a result of generous donations from members and members signing gift aid agreements, linked to annual membership subscriptions, it has been possible to secure almost £5,000 from HMRC in gift aid rebates.

4. Protecting the Park's Special Qualities

(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.

We made representations on a number of planning applications during the past year. We supported several planning applications in Luss including plans for a new village green and large scale car park at the southern end of the village which were aimed at helping the village to cope with large influxes of visitors.

We lodged objections to plans for a cluster of large scale holiday houses and associated buildings at Wards Estate at the southern end of Loch Lomond on the basis this was out of scale with the sensitive landscape setting and was adding to the sense of creeping urbanisation.

We supported plans for much needed low cost housing in Balmaha and wrote to the Herald to correct the inaccurate claims by objectors that the 22 unit housing scheme would have a major detrimental impact on the West Highland Way. This high quality scheme generated expressions of interest from 100 different people with 50 of the expressions of interest coming from people within the the immediate Buchanan and Drymen catchment areas which reflects the acute shortage of affordable housing.

We submitted observations on the Park Authority's plans for a £340,000 camp site at Loch Chon. While we supported the principle of a camp site here we did express reservations about the proposed scale of the site and the inappropriate cladding of the cluster of converted sea containers. The Park Authority addressed these concerns by reducing the site and cladding the buildings in timber which was more appropriate in this sensitive setting.

(ii)Community Planning

Balloch- We took an active part in a LIVE in Balloch initiative 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. The final plan set out a framework to realise the tourism potential of Balloch as well as addressing issues such as improving the quality of the public realm. However, it failed to adequately addressing the major car parking shortages near the centre of the village. The charrette has been followed up quickly with a funding commitment of over £1million from West Dunbartonshire to create two village squares in the centre of the village and SUSTRANs has been employed to work up options in close consultation with the local community.

Callander- We attended a couple of workshops to help shape the content of a new community action plan for Callander which is due to be adopted and published in 2017. In parallel with this we provided a strong letter of support for the Callander Landscape project which received a stage 1 approval from the Heritage Lottery Fund for £1.5 million. These initiatives are designed to make more of Callnader as the 'Outdoor Capital of the National Park' and it is hoped the finally adopted suite of projects are bold and ambitious enough to help re-position Callander which has been losing out to other destinations in Scotland over recent times due to a lack of investment.

Luss- We have strongly supported the Community Council and Luss Estates in their efforts to persuade Argyll and Bute Council to adopt a more sensible and workable package of traffic management proposals to ensure the heart of the village is more appealing with less conflict with traffic. We have supported the revised proposals developed by the local community and hope that the Council will not press ahead with their original proposals that does little to alleviate the traffic flow and parking problems in Luss.

Arrochar-We are represented on the strategic group that has been set up by the Community Council and is chaired by Jackie Baillie MSP to address some longstanding issues in and around the village that can only be addressed by more effective inter-agency working. Issues being addressed by the group include litter management at the head of Loch Long, the future development of the former pier area, the creation of better quality public realm areas in the village and tidying up the derelict torpedo range site where development of a leisure resort has stalled. Some steady progress is being made by the group.

(ii) Visitor Management and Camping

Visitor management and camping issues in particular have continued to feature heavily in our deliberations during the past year following approval of the national Park Authority's controversial camping proposals in January 2016 by the Minister for the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform, Dr Aileen McLeod. The proposals include the introduction of new byelaws in camping management zones along 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 five 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 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, the Scottish Mountaineering Trust 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.

We have provided constructive input to the first of the camping stakeholders meetings held by the National Park Authority and we have met with representatives of the National Park to discuss practical implementation issues following the publication of the camping strategy document in the latter part of 2016. We have lobbied for an increase in the woefully inadequate campervan spaces being allowed for alongside the busy A82 and in particular at popular pull over areas such as Tarbet and Inveruglas car parks. We have also raised concerns about the requirement to book permit spaces in advance and the inadequacy of on-site payment methods when such a high proportion of campers and campervanners simply turn up as 'chance trade' and given the inadequacy of mobile signals in some parts of the National Park to make bookings online. We have welcomed the provision of a new camp site at Loch Chon and have been involved in trying to secure new provision near Trossachs Pier.

(iii) Pylon Visual Impact Project

Disappointingly no stakeholder meetings have been organised by the major energy companies in the past year 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 are due to be packaged as part of a 40-50 million pound funding bid to energy regulator OFGEM who are 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.

There are signs that 5-6 projects will go forward as part of a funding bid in 2017 and there is a real prospect of a scheme to open up Luss Glens for a new walking route being on the shortlist. This particular project has been promoted by the Friends, Helensburgh & District Access Trust and Luss Estates. The funds would 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.

(iii) Litter Management

We continued to campaign for a better and more coordinated litter management regime in the national park and in particular alongside the busy trunk routes passing through the National Park where there are ongoing litter management problems due to the lack of litter bin provision. 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 north of Balloch in the 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 and we have lobbied for the inclusion of better litter management in the next 5 year partnership plan that is currently being prepared for adoption later in 2017.

Providing Support for Projects

(i) 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. In April 2016 we completed the final phase of improvement works with the opening of Tom and Rhona's Mountain Garden which features a typical range of mountain plants and a selection of stones gathered close to the Highland Fault Line and Ben Lomond. The garden also includes a couple of specially engraved slate slabs with quotes written by Tom Weir in the Scots Magazine 50 years ago.

The site has also attracted over 200,000 visitors since the statue was unveiled and is proving to be one of Loch Lomond's top tourist attractions. Future arrangements for maintaining the site are also now being well supported by visitors with several donation posts installed in May 2016 generating several thousands of pounds to cover the costs of site maintenance and statue insurance.

The associated Tom Weir's Lomond Wonderland' project was also successfully completed with funding support from the Heritage Lottery Fund. In addition to storyboard installations on the site a special booklet and exhibition were produced with input from around 300 children attending primary schools around the loch and it was encouraging to see how enthusiastic they were in coming forward with their views on the wonders of Loch Lomond in drawings, poems and writings.

(ii) Lauder Memorial and Viewpoint

Following the success of the Tom Weir project we have taken on responsibility for tackling another badly neglected site at Invernoaden in Argyll Forest Park. The path to a stunning viewpoint and memorial built to honour John Lauder, the son of famous Scots entertainer Harry Lauder, was greatly improved in time for the 100th anniversary of his death in World War 1 on 28th December 1916, aged just 25. This is the first phase of an initiative led by the Friends to celebrate the Lauder connection with Cowal with a series of events and activities planned throughout 2017.

The path improvement project has been supported by Forestry Commission Scotland and the local landowner, John Montgomery. Work on replacing the rotting timber steps with a stone path was carried out by trainees of the Mountains and the People project. Materials for the path works were funded with a grant from the Friends of OUR park visitor giving scheme. Future plans include site interpretation, improving advance signing of the site and creating a small informal car park.

(iii) Friends of OUR Park

Despite the absence of our Project Manager, Alice Blazy-Winning for the entire year on maternity leave we were able to keep the Friends of OUR park visitor giving and volunteering scheme ticking over and an encouraging £20,000 was raised by participating businesses from visitors to support a wide range of projects throughout the National Park.

We received no direct financial support from funding bodies to develop the Friends of OUR Park visitor giving and volunteering scheme in 2016. However, the Park Authority continued 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 were explored during the year and we were delighted to receive confirmation of £40,000 worth of support from Scottish Enterprise for a new two year ecotourism initiative which will build on the success of the OUR park scheme. This funding was secured as part of a wider £300,000 'Collaborating for Success' initiative with Love Loch Lomond trade group and the National Park Authority.

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 was used to support the following 15 projects: John Muir awards for young people (£1,440); Cowalfest (£300); Tom Weir site maintenance (£1,000); West Dunbartonshire Youth Group (£350); National Park Authority Young Ranger Project (£500); Callander Summerfest (£250); Killin Footpath Signage (£290); Cormonachan Woodlands Car Park (£500); Mountains and the People (£5,000); Loch Lomond Mountain Rescue (£1,000); Ardlui Defibrillator (£800); Lauder Statue Path and Signage (£723); Greenspace Woodland Skills Training (£300); Tom Weir's Rest site improvements (£2,755) and Tarbet War Memorial improvements (£200).

We stepped up support for path maintenance work with a 4 year commitment to provide £5,000 per year to the Mountains and the People partnership project developed and led

by the Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust (COAT) and embracing both of Scotland's National Parks. This project, which started in June 2015 and will continue until summer 2020, focuses on the conservation of the vulnerable mountain landscapes of the National Parks. Over 84,000 metres of upland paths within the Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park will be upgraded as part of this ambitious project by trainee path builders and contractors with major funding support being provided by the Heritage Lottery Fund, the National Park Authorities, Forestry Commission Scotland and Scottish Natural Heritage.

On the path front we were pleased to support the Scottish Woodland Trust with the £30,000 scheme to improve the Whinneyhill Path that links Balloch Castle Country Park with the Scottish Water Board road near Gartocharn. This path was completed by summer 2016 and provides a useful addition to the emerging network of family friendly paths at the south end of Loch Lomond. We were also pleased to step in and support the plans by Luss Estates to open up a circular path to the former Luss quarries by agreeing to enter a management agreement that helped unlock £48,000 for path works that are due to be implemented in 2017.

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 another important milestone during 2016 with the installation of the 75th life-saving unit. This was marked by a special celebratory event at Balmaha in April which was attended by local MSPs Jackie Baillie and Bruce Crawford. At this event the online app, sponsored by the Friends, was launched. This features a map with all the locations of units in and around the National Park.

Supporting youngsters from communities within or near the National Park on activity days out linked to John Muir awards and woodland skills was a high priority for the Friends with groups from West Dunbartonshire and Cowal benefitting from funding support. We also supported the expansion of the Young Ranger programme, coordinated by the National Park Authority and involving secondary school youngsters attending McLaren and Balfron High Schools.

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 Inn on Loch Lomond Hotel, the Oak Tree Inn, Monachyle Mhor Country House Hotel, 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 a 'Make a Difference Day' organised at Inversnaid by our Support Officer, Andrew Galloway with support from the National Park Authority, the Countryside Trust, the Mountains and the People Project and Cruise Loch Lomond. Tasks undertaken on the day included the removal of rhododendrons and path improvement works.

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 80 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.

A key priority for 2017 is getting more businesses actively involved in the Friends of OUR park scheme linked to our new ecotourism initiative and the recruitment of Jared Bowers as our part-time Ecotourism Project Manager.

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 and other outlets 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 launch of Tom and Rhona's Mountain Garden, the success of the Tom Weir' Loch Lomond Wonderland project and Weirfest received great media coverage and included interviews on BBC Radio Scotland and STV. Project grant awards and campaigning issues such as visitor management issues in Luss generated significant publicity too. We also contributed to a couple of TV programmes including the special half hour ITV network programme from East Loch Lomond which was fronted by Julia Bradbury and featured local walks

As part of the US National Park Service centennial celebrations, Friends Vice-Chairman, John Urquhart helped coordinate a series of involving US National Parks 'Centennial Ambassador', Lee Stetson, who brought 'the spirit of John Muir' home to Scotland in a portrayal of the great man symbolically walking home to Dunbar where he was born in 1838. Lee's packed programme included an inspirational talk to pupils at hermitage Academy on the importance of preserving wild places; a walk on the first stage of the John Muir Way; a reception at the headquarters of the Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park where he met young people starting out on a John Muir award programme; the opening of Helensburgh's Wildlife and Ecology Film Festival; planting sapling Californian sequoia trees at Hermitage Park and opening the Friends sponsored Tom and Rhona's Mountain Garden in Balmaha. The programme was sponsored by the Friends, Argyll and Bute Council and local businesses and was a great success.

We again had a very successful 'Meet the Friends' stand at Luss Highland Games in July and our second Weirfest at Balmaha in May, organised jointly with the Tom Weir Memorial Group, was also a success with artists freely donating their time to support the one day festival celebrating mountain life. A highlight of Weirfest was an exhibition of local primary schoolchildren on the theme of Loch Lomond Wonders.

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 50 members and Friends supporters in attendance.

Offices and Staffing

To ensure the staff employed to deliver the important £6 million Mountains and the People project over a 5 year period could be housed in the National Park we vacated the accommodation we occupied on the upper floor of the Old Station building in the centre of Balloch, courtesy of VisitScotland, at the end of 2015. We moved our Support Officer, Andrew Galloway to the National Park offices at Carrochan in Balloch to take up the space previously occupied by the Friends of OUR park Project Manager, Alice Blazy-Winning. Alice was on maternity leave during 2016 and decided not to return to her post at the end of the year. At our annual Xmas event at Ross Priory in December her great contribution to setting up the visitor giving scheme and undertaking other project work for the Friends was recognised with a special presentation.

Andrew Galloway continued in the role of Support Officer and the office is generally manned between 9.30am and 4pm Tuesday-Friday. In December we recruited Jared Bowers as our new part-time Ecotourism Project Manager and he normally works Monday-Wednesday. His role is to build on the work undertaken by Alice but also to focus more on stimulating interest in, and action by the trade in ecotourism activities and the development of new ecotourism products to capitalise more on the special heritage qualities of the National Park and the Clyde Sea Lochs. 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 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 for all his efforts and hard work on behalf of the Friends during what has been an exceptionally busy year.

Our Trustees and Thanks

There were no changes to our Board of Trustees during 2016.

A total of 5 bi-monthly meetings of the Trustees and 4 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 Board of Trustees have worked closely with 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 auditor Bill Hassle, 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

Financial Report and Accounts

	2016 Unrestricted	2016 Restricted	2015
Income			
Membership	1,991	-	1,842
Donations /Appeals	516	3,668	50,939
Gift Aid	4,681	-	-
Business supporters	4,700	-	5,300
Voice Advertising	5,058	-	5,472
Project Funding:			
National Park Authority	3,000	-	13,650
Scottish Enterprise	-	-	10,000
OUR Park Business Donations	19,823	-	18,507
Other grants	-	-	1,500
Events			
AGM	240	-	310
Caledonian Challenge	-	-	400
Christmas Event	663	-	664
Kiltwalk	465	-	2,797
Other events	500	-	-
Loch Lomond Cruise	572	-	594
Two Lochs Tour	-	-	1,210
Merchandising	422	-	2,603
HMRC	3,205	-	2,462
Bank interest	25	-	33
Tom Weir Statue	8,079	-	40,848
Love Loch Lomond	-	-	261
 <u>Income TOTAL</u>	 <u>53,940</u>	 <u>3,668</u>	 <u>150,832</u>

Note: Restricted funds are as follows:

Donations/appeals – donation from visiting US golfers which was requested to be used for path improvements or tree conservation.

Expenditure	2016	2015
Salaries and on-costs	20,100	25,122
HMRC	927	2,859
Travel & Expenses	591	1,132
Office Costs	4,713	1,695
Voice	7,564	7,674
Projects:		
Friends of OUR park	15,408	9,550
Website Redevelopment	540	1,332
Tree Tunnel	-	13,650
Tom Weir Statue	20,137	56,070
Events		
AGM	706	156
Annual Study Visit	-	208
Christmas Event	462	26
Kiltwalk	-	297
Other events	600	-
Loch Lomond Cruise	600	550
Two Lochs Tour	148	756
Marketing	-	2,730
SCVO membership etc	695	670
<u>Expenditure TOTAL</u>	<u>73,191</u>	<u>124,477</u>
<u>Income TOTAL</u>	<u>57,608</u>	
<u>Net deficit in year</u>	<u>-15,583</u>	
Cash reconciliation		
Balance brought forward	59,525	
Net deficit for year	-15,583	
Cash in bank	43,942	

Friends of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs

Statement of Assets & Liabilities as at 31st. December, 2016

	31/12/16		Total	31/12/15
	Unrestricted	Restricted		
Current assets:				
Bank:				
Combined balance at year end	£43,942	-	£43,942	£59,525
Capital:	£40,274	£3,668	£43,942	£59,525

James B Fraser (Chairman)

Tom Wallace (Treasurer)

WM Hassall (Independent Examiner)

16th May 2017

Notes/

Notes to the accounts

Year ended 31 December 2016

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 2016 there was no outstanding capital expenditure approved or committed.

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

I report on the accounts of the charity for the period ended 31st December, 2016 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.

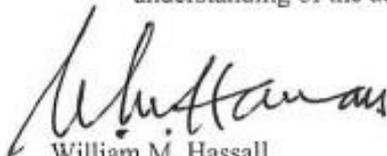
Independent examiner's statement

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 Regulations

have 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.



William M. Hassall,
Helensburgh.

20th. April, 2017