



SIXTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE TORPHINS PATHS GROUP

Lochnagar Room, Mid-Deeside Church, Torphins.
Tuesday 11th April 2023 at 7.30pm.

The Chairman of the Torphins Paths Group (TPG) opened the meeting and welcomed all members including a representative from the Lumphanan Paths Group. The meeting was quorate.

1. Attendance and Apologies:

- 1.1. **Board Members - Present:** Nigel Bennett (NB), Neil Campbell (NC), Tessa Campbell (TC), Derek Clarke (DC), Eric Day (ED), Duncan Grant (DG), Will Maclean (Chair) (WM), and Brian Murray (BM).
- 1.2. **Board Members - Apologies:** Paul Culley (PC), Anouk Kloppert (AK) and Karen Whyatt (KW).
- 1.3. **Member Attendees:** Andrew Brown, Daisy Burnett, Raj Fernandez, Ian Firth, Mike Hendry, Elaine Lovie, Fiona Maclean, Alan Mearns, Ann Raeburn, Carol Reid, Ted Ling, Lorraine Robertson, Andrew Tozer and Beryl Watson.

2. Previous Minutes:

Minutes of Meeting of 21st April 2022 were approved with no matters arising. Approval of minutes proposed by WM and seconded by TC.

3. Report of Chair:

WM presented the Chair's report for the reporting period. The full presentation can be found at: <https://www.torphinspathsgroup.org/tpg-members-area>

Key elements of the report include:

- 3.1. **Thank you:** Huge thank you to everyone for all the generous donations received to enable work to continue on the various paths and developments. Special thanks to:
 - Scottish Rural Payments Service, Improving Public Access Grant administered by NatureScot for Easter Beltie Path
 - Aberdeenshire Council for Lumphanan Path Surveys
 - Marr Area Committee for Flood Repair Easter Beltie
 - Bread of Life and Scotmid Community Fund for Monboddo to Craigmyle West Lodge restoration
 - Scotmid Community Fund for Fruit Trees
 - Torphins Golf Club Seniors and Banchory Rotary Club for general purposes
 - Many personal donations for general purposes
 - All the volunteers working on the various paths – 15 active volunteers during the year. WM expressed thanks to both Paul Culley who is retiring from the Board and to Karen Whyatt retiring from her position as Secretary. Thanks also given to Dr Campbell and Tessa Campbell recently returned from New Zealand and supporting TPG.
 - Finally special thanks to Alan Morrison who along with his assorted equipment has proven invaluable to the team.

- 3.2. **Health and Safety:** Safety policy and operating guidance developed for the different activities with training on going to help raise awareness. First aid course carried out and additional safety equipment purchased.
 - 3.3. **Path Maintenance:** Following flood damage, repairs to Waukmill Farm Path completed and route from Monboddo to Craigmyle well underway. A zigzag section to reduce gradient also installed between Monboddo and Saint Marnan road exit.
 - 3.4. **Winter Wonderland:** A great success with the addition of new equipment and displays. Donations reached almost £1,500. New bench was also installed at the entrance.
 - 3.5. **Lumphanan Path:** Not much progress. Negotiations still on-going on the routing of path and planning application pending. Noted that it is essential that TPG works with Burnett and Reid regarding agreement for farm land to accommodate path and any access issues. Means of obtaining grant funding to be found.
 - 3.6. **Banchory / Easter Beltie:** Path completed thanks to Public Access Grant, McIntosh Plant and Construction Legal Services, The Chamber, Dunecht. Path is already well used with seats and signage installed. Car park installed by Bert McIntosh. Report from Inspection indicated that the path is very well constructed. The path currently ends at the western side of the bridge. Approval has been given to extend from the other side but funds in the region of £75,000 will need to be raised.
 - 3.7. **Torphins to Mid Beltie / Easter Beltie:** Progress slow with Burnett and Reid for Mid Beltie Trust land access agreement. Some residents have expressed concerns re traffic, access and car parking at Kincardine Road. These issues are being dealt with sensitively and through obtaining planning permissions.
 - 3.8. **Marr Paths Forum:** Provides opportunity for all Paths Groups around Deeside to meet quarterly to share ideas and expertise as well as opportunities to discuss issues and co-ordinate activities where possible.
 - 3.9. **Torphins Gala:** TPG anticipates having a stall to promote the work and raise funds. A presence at Aboyne Games and Tarland Show also under consideration with other Paths Groups.
 - 3.10. **Achievements:** In addition to work carried out already mentioned above WM outlined all the various achievements during the reporting year including an updated Walks Around Torphins leaflet, Safety and training for volunteers, Signage, Facility for donations to be made via credit card, Networking. There is of course much still to be done and again, WM highlighted key areas in his reporting of projects.
 - 3.11. **Big Vision:** To create a circular route long distance path connecting the communities of the wider mid -Deeside area including Torphins, Lumphanan, Tarland and Kincardine O'Neill.
4. **Report of Treasurer:** TC presented the Accounts and Treasurer's Report for the year ended 31st March 2023. The report can be found at:
<https://www.torphinspathsgroup.org/tpg-members-area>
 Key elements of the Report include:
- 4.1. **Accounts:** We are a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) so formal accounts will be submitted to the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) and available for public viewing.
 - 4.2. **Income:** Total income was £83,831 of which three quarters were grants to fund the Easter Beltie development. Generous donations and associated gift aid also received and have bolstered unrestricted funds.
 - 4.3. **Income – Grants:** We received grants from Improving Public Access of £55,467 and Marr Area Committee of £3,000 for the Easter Beltie path. Aberdeenshire Council gave us a grant for Lumphanan. We have just been awarded £1,686 from Bread of Life and £500 from ScotMid for the repair of the Monboddo / Craigmyle path. ScotMid also gave £200 for tree planting.
 - 4.4. **Income – Donations:** We received donations from many individuals which totalled £1,561 as a result of the Woodland Wonderland and associated publicity about the charity's work. We were also extremely grateful to receive generous donations from

several others for general funds, including £200 from Torphins Golf Club senior section, and £500 from Banchory Rotary. We have been able to reclaim Gift aid of £3,750.

- 4.5. **Expenditure:** This totalled £72,682 (last year £13,955). The largest spend was on the Easter Beltie path (£67,107) which included £3,000 in repairs covered by Marr Area Committee, and £4,670 on benches and signs, part of which is covered by the IPA grant. The main works cost £58,617 of which all bar £5,000 was covered by the IPA grant. However, there was an overall shortfall of £7,686 which has been met from unrestricted funds. Other expenditure included £503 on Torphins Paths.
 - 4.6. **Expenditure – Other:** For Lumphanan we paid for the final ecological survey, the Woodland Wonderland cost £1,176, and trees to be planted cost £208. From general funds we purchased an additional bench (off William Steet), a re-print of leaflets, and the first aid course at a cost of £781.
 - 4.7. **Project Funds:** For Banchory, we have a lot of income, and even more expense so the balance was met from unrestricted general funds. The Banchory fund is now nil. The Lumphanan Path fund has a current balance of £1,008 which is to cover the planning application fees. Torphins Path shows a balance of £2,186 being grants to spend on the Craigmyle-Monboddoo repairs. There was a deficit of £235 on general local path work which has been covered by a small transfer from general funds generated via the Woodland Wonderland donations. Woodland Wonderland has a remaining balance of £875, after donations, less spend and transfers. The tree money has all been spent, and the tiny deficit has been met from general funds.
 - 4.8. **Unrestricted Funds:** Following the generous donations, the general unrestricted fund totals £14,924 after transfers to supplement the Easter Beltie path. As these were gifted without conditions, they can be spent on running costs, or projects or provide working capital. We made a surplus of £11,149 during the year (compared to £4,054 last year). Going forward we have reserves of £18,993, most of which is unrestricted, and so we are in a comfortable position to go ahead with projects even where grant funding is not quite sufficient.
5. **Retirement of all Trustees under Clause 60:** Paul Culley intimated he will retire from the Board. All remaining retirees indicated their willingness to stand for re-election, namely: Nigel Bennett, Neil Campbell, Tessa Campbell, Derek Clarke, Eric Day, Duncan Grant, Will Maclean, Brian Murray and Karen Whyatt. There was one vacancy for an Open Board place and nominations invited (only one received: Lorraine Robertson was proposed by WM and seconded by DC. Councillor Anouk Kloppert replaces Peter Argyll as the Aberdeenshire Council Observer.
 6. **Election of Officers by Trustees:** Karen Whyatt intimated her wish to stand down as Secretary. The following positions were duly appointed:
 - Chairperson: Will Maclean – proposed by TC and seconded by BM.
 - Secretary: Lorraine Robertson – proposed by WM and seconded by NC.
 - Treasurer: Tessa Campbell – proposed by BM and seconded by NB.
 7. **Open Discussion:** WM invited queries and discussion from the membership.
 - 7.1. One member applauded (and echoed by others) the remarkable amount of work carried out by TPG and heavily praised the active volunteers especially re the Easter Beltie Path – a job very well done. The space has been opened up and already very well used, the car park is always busy. There have been no negatives from surrounding residents only praise.
 - 7.2. There was some discussion re linking Easter Beltie to Torphins side including difficulties for path to Hill of Beltie and route to Torphins. Comment was made on routing through housing convoluted and issues with crossing main road.
 - 7.3. Suggestion for funding option to approach King George V Funds. WM reported that TPG had previously obtained funds from this group but that the fund has now closed - their focus is to create a central facility in Banchory accessible to all.
 - 7.4. Query on whether TPG has a view on the windfarm developments. WM reported that the issue had not been discussed thus far with members. Noted that Windfarm

operators may be a means of obtaining funds in the future particular re the big vision of creating circular path and opening routes for the well-being of both locals and visitors to the area.

7.5. Membership acknowledged and gave thanks to WM for the enormous amount of work (particularly behind the scenes) that he carries out on behalf of TPG and the community.

8. **Close of Meeting.** WM gave final vote of thanks to all attendees and closed the meeting.