



**Annual General Meeting
Thursday 21st April 2022 at 7.30pm
Lochnagar Room, Mid-Deeside Church**

1. **Welcome** – WM welcomed all attendees and thanked them for their attendance.
2. **Attendees** – Hamish Booth, Tessa Campbell, Eric Day, Will Maclean, Brian Murray, Karen Whyatt, Sophia Strang Steel, Elaine Lovie, Iris Soeder, Fiona Maclean, Eleanor Day, Daisy Burnett, Colin Macdaid, Carol Reid, Mary Kerr, Gill Bayfield, Neil Bayfield, Sheila Allan (Lumphanan Paths Group), Brian Nunos.
3. **Apologies** – Members of the Board who gave their apologies were: Paul Culley, Neil Campbell, Duncan Grant, Derek Clark, Aberdeenshire Council Observer - Cllr. Peter Argyll
4. **2021 Minutes** - A review was not required by attendees and the minutes were approved.
5. **Report of Retiring Chair** - Will Maclean gave a report on the progress TPG have achieved in the year since April 2021. The details of his presentation are available in the attached Chairman's Report.

In summary, we have received plenty of generous donations from the community, including two major ones, which has been extremely helpful. We have also had good volunteer support in the Torphins Woodlands team, up to 12 volunteers and over 800 hours contributed to that project. Alan Morrison has been especially helpful with his equipment, as have many others with their hands-on help. We are especially grateful to the organisations who have supported us financially this year to progress all three of our major projects including the Easter Beltie section of Banchory path and the Lumphanan to Torphins path. These include, King George V Wind Turbine, Marr Area, Bread of Life and, more recently, Improving Public Access.

TPG now has a total of 68 members and 11 Trustee Board Positions, 10 of these are currently filled.

The Torphins Woodland Path progress, led by Brian Murray, has been strong as is plain for all to see in the new path and upgraded and maintained paths around Torphins. The Woodland Wonderland event, organised by Derek Clark with support from Brian Murray and Eric Day, with some lighting additions, was run for a second

year. The event was well attended and received, as well as generating useful donations. We are grateful to the Scouts who had contributed in year one who also added more lights this time.

The Lumphanan Path is progressing well. CRC have completed the pre-planning Red Route survey and report. The final Summer Ecology survey will be completed by end June. There is some stakeholder engagement needed following the CRC report as there were one or two route changes and to ensure there are no objections to the finalised route proposal before planning application submission expected by 3rd/4th quarter 2022.

The Easter Beltie River Restoration stretch of the Banchory Path is now fully approved and funded. Contracts are being drawn up and agreed to allow the construction phase to commence in 3rd quarter 2022 to be undertaken by Mr Macintosh's construction firm McIntosh Plant Hire (Aberdeen) Limited. The stretch of path from Torphins to the start of the Easter Beltie stretch is at pre-planning application stage with stakeholder engagement still underway. This will be followed by funding applications to allow the Red Route planning report to be generated, followed by final stakeholder engagement and submission of the planning application. Hamish Booth suggested a line of trees to obscure the view to the road on the stretch that runs alongside the road. He also suggested that elements of the path from Torphins to Easter Beltie will set a precedent and expressed concerns. WM acknowledged these comments and that any concerns would be handled within the planning consent which has not yet been submitted.

The Black Linn Burn to Glassel stretch in Dam Wood has been approved by Forestry and Land Scotland and now requires funding, to include the construction of a bridge across the Burn.

Future plans for TPG in 2022 and beyond include:

- i. Further development of the Website to include regular updates to the recently introduced newsletter
- ii. Walks around Torphins leaflet update (3rd Edition)
- iii. Ongoing paths maintenance, including the Monboddo/ Craigmyle path which needs drainage upgrade
- iv. Upgrade and implementation of our Training and Competence programme
- v. Introduction of signage on certain paths
- vi. Planning for a possible summer Community Event to be announced
- vii. Submission of the Lumphanan to Torphins path planning application
- viii. Construction of the Easter Beltie path to be completed September 2022. The Torphins to Easter Beltie stretch will be progressed to planning application submission stage and, eventually, in future years to come, the route through Glassel to Banchory we hope.

6. Report of Retiring Treasurer - Details of this presentation can be found in the attachment. In summary:

- i. We are a SCIO so will prepare formal accounts - submitted to OSCR and available for public viewing.
- ii. Total income is £18,009 (last year £9,599). Half the income came from grants and donations from organisations (blue and green) while we were very fortunate to match this with donations from individuals (red and pink) and associated gift aid.
- iii. We received grants from Marr Area Committee of £5,000 for Lumphanan, and £1,600 from Bread of Life and £1,500 for Paths for All for the new path in Torphins Woods. King George V awarded a £1,000 for the Banchory route.
- iv. We received donations from many individuals which totalled £1,114 as a result of the Woodland Wonderland. We were extremely grateful to receive generous donations from several others for general funds. We can also reclaim Gift aid of £1,513.
- v. Expenditure totalled £13,955 (last year £8,881). £8,100 has been spent on Lumphanan on the red line survey required to apply for planning permission. Torphins Paths costs total £3,936 - related to path building materials, and the hire of machinery. The Banchory project costs included the bridge consultant. Woodland Wonderland costs total £1,007 and includes replacement items plus a new family of deer. It also includes the web-site costs and PayPal fees which relate directly to the booking and funding. Other costs are borne by the general fund and include Paths Group web-site costs and insurance.
- vi. Some of our funds are restricted and have to be spent on certain projects. The income on the Lumphanan Path fund was supplemented by £2,443 transferred from internal funds - now has a balance of £340. Banchory Path has a balance of £954, some of which is ear-marked for legal assistance with the contract. Torphins Paths is now an unrestricted fund - all the restricted funds have been spent and has a closing balance of £248, after a small transfer from general funds. Woodland Wonderland is also unrestricted and has a surplus of £725.
Following the generous donations, the general unrestricted fund totals £5,577. As these were gifted without conditions they can be spent on running costs, or projects or provide working capital to cover the period between paying costs and being able to claim grants.
- vii. We made a surplus of £4,054 during the year. Going forward we have reserves of £7,844 so delighted to say we are in a much more comfortable position than a year ago.

7. Retirement of all Trustees under Clause 60.

All ten standing Trustees were retired.

8. Election of the Board under Clause 61

Trustees who expressed willingness to be re-elected were: Neil (NC) and Tessa Campbell (TC), Derek Clark (DC), Paul Culley (PC), Duncan Grant (DG), Eric Day (ED), Brian Murray (BM), Karen Whyatt (KW), William Maclean (WM).

Unwilling to be re-elected: Hamish Booth

Nominations for new Trustees: Nigel Bennett by Will Maclean, seconded by Tessa Campbell.

Ten Trustee positions were filled, one position remains open.

9. Appointment of Positions

Chair – Will Maclean nominated by Karen seconded by Tessa

Secretary – Karen Whyatt nominated by Will seconded by Eric

Treasurer – Tessa Campbell nominated by Eric seconded by Will

10. Open Discussion and Questions

i. How do we plan to maintain the paths for the next twenty years?

WM - We will develop a formal maintenance plan, inspections, vegetation, resurfacing etc. Conditions of some grants require a 5-year plan.

Access through forestry land is for 5 years with possible repeating 5 years extensions.

We would like to encourage people to get involved so that this is a legacy that continues beyond the life of the current Trustees.

ii. SlowWays are a support for linking villages. A path only needs to be reviewed and walked to be kept as a path. ScotWays want historic routes to be walked and reinstated.

WM - Torphins has Core paths but no rights of way documented. We are aware of Scotways.

iii. Are we considering routes for horses? Gates with high lift opening is helpful for horse riders.

WM – yes, we do consider horses for our two major projects and that is built in to our planning applications, especially re: gates, bridges but also path surface resilience.

iv. Have we considered a Walk and Rest project for our Torphins Woods? Benches at set areas and leaflets created for the local GP surgery. Benches can be donated and dedicated.

WM – Great idea and yes, we will consider it.

v. Will the Torphins to Easter Beltie Path be built after the Easter Beltie Path and will it be done by volunteers?

WM - Yes after as we don't have planning permission yet. Our original idea was to use a contractor.

vi. On the Lumphanan path how will we re-access the old railway line after the cutting?

KW – the plan is to access the old railway line where the land rises up again towards the line. This will be well away from the two houses and shielded by trees.

vii. Will we collect any archaeological finds along the way of the paths as they are being constructed?

KW – Yes, great idea for funding as well.

viii. Will the car park have access for horse boxes?

WM - Not sure but we recognise the importance of access points for cars.

ix. Comment - Paths have to be well compacted to withstand horses.

11. A.O.C.B - Comment by **BM** there is scope on the website to include more walk routes so if any of the members have ideas please submit them.

12. Thanks, and Close by WM