

FIFE & KINROSS LOCAL GROUP, SCOTTISH WILDLIFE TRUST
Minutes of Annual General Meeting:
May 11th 2025 at Willie Clark Centre, Lochore Meadows

Present

Andy Cage (Chair & Correspondence Secretary), Alison Irvine (Treasurer), Lindsay Adam, Ian Hunter (editor FAWN), Susan Lindsay, Richard Smith, Noelle Smith, Anne Smith (Minutes) and seven other SWT Members – total attendees 15.

Absent

Tim Brain, Steve Buckland, Craig Kay (& Clare Toner, Regional Reserves Manager)

Apologies for absence

Fiona Melville, Jean Stewart, Margaret Hunter, Norman Still

Approval of the minutes of the previous AGM

Not applicable. Andy explained that the previous Secretary, Louise Crane, had been indisposed due to childbirth and no minute had been received. The meeting was understanding of the situation and no concerns were raised.

Matters arising from minutes

None. Andy asked if anyone had other matters to raise and none were offered.

Presentation and approval of the annual report

Please see **Appendix 1**. Andy presented the annual report, and it was well received. Proposed by Lindsay Adam and seconded by Ian Hunter: **Annual Report was approved.**

Presentation and approval of the group's verified accounts

Please see **Appendix 2**. Alison presented the accounts and there were no queries. Proposed by Diana Sykes and seconded by Erica Hollis: **Accounts were approved.** FAWN costs £300 per edition but had been supported by a donation in 2024. Lindsay was thanked for her contribution of £800 from the 'plastic bags tax' for the 2 years from 2023 and 2024. There was a deficit of £682.95 for the year but reserves were healthy at £6,491.30. The group had repeatedly offered funding support for local reserve projects, and this can be further explored.

Election of office bearers and committee members

The following current committee members were approved by a block vote with no objections:

Alison Irvine **TREASURER**

Richard Smith **Committee member**

Steve Buckland **currently a co-opted member to become a full Committee member**

Proposed by Gordon Baxter and seconded by Ian Hunter.

The following new committee members were approved by a block vote with no objections:

Anne Smith **MINUTE SECRETARY**

Fiona Melville **Committee member**

Noelle Smith **Co-opted Committee member**

Proposed by Alison Irvine and seconded by Diana Sykes.

AOCB

Lindsay asked for people to contact the group with suggestions of local projects to support. Richard confirmed that SWT often asks for funding for projects. Andy requests the group preferentially support local projects.

APPENDIX 1

FIFE & KINROSS LOCAL GROUP, SCOTTISH WILDLIFE TRUST Annual Report 2025

As always the AGM presents an opportunity to look back over the year at what the group has been up to.

EVENTS:

One of our main focuses, as usual, has been on providing events for our members to enjoy. We have had trips across Fife and further afield with destinations including here at Lochore Meadows, Glen Turret in Perthshire, the newly created wetland at Kilminning, Townhill Woods, Loch Leven, Downfield Organic Farm near Cupar, Cameron Reservoir, Ruddons Point, Inverkeithing and Bankhead Moss (where we celebrated the 60th anniversary of the reserve in the pouring rain). Midweek small group trips to Morton Lochs have proved popular and will continue.

Using Eventbrite for bookings has caused a few problems but it does have big advantages allowing us to have all the information for each attendee in one place and to be able to contact people easily in the event of a cancellation. With over 150 bookings for events in the last year it simply wouldn't be possible for a committee member to cope with all the bookings by phone or email.

RESERVES:

We held work parties at some of our reserves including Fleecefaulds Meadow, Barnyards Marsh, Fife Ness Muir and Bankhead Moss and are very grateful to all the volunteers who turned out to carry out varied tasks such as fencing repairs, pond clearance, birch control and a trial of sphagnum moss translocation.

At Fleecefaulds Meadow and Bankhead Moss we have sheep from the Trust's Flying Flock grazing - at Fleecefaulds to maintain the meadow habitat and at the Moss to try and control the encroachment by young birch. Teams of sheep checker volunteers have been recruited to check the sheep daily and we are hugely grateful to them for turning out in all weathers. Incidentally I am needing someone to check them at Fleecefaulds on Saturdays so if anyone is interested please let me know after the meeting.

Wildlife highlights on our reserves have included pine marten at Cullaloe, crossbills and bog asphodel at Bankhead Moss and woodcock and two Holly Blue butterflies at Fleecefaulds.

Every few years the Trust carries out a review of its reserves across Scotland to ensure that the charity's resources are being used to maximise the benefit for wildlife. This may mean fewer but better managed reserves allowing limited resources to be used to maximum effect which is particularly important in the current economic climate. The last review was in 2016, nine years ago. The latest review has now concluded and there are implications for a few reserves in Fife namely Fife Ness Muir, West Quarry Braes, Barnyards Marsh and Cullaloe.

Fife Ness Muir is currently owned by the Trust having been gifted to us by the late Jim Cobb. Historically it has always been primarily a site for bird migration and bird ringing and hasn't sat particularly comfortably within the Trust's portfolio of reserves. Approaches are being made to local community, birding and ringing groups in order to find a new owner who can better manage and enhance the site as a premier east coast migration monitoring point.

West Quarry Braes is owned by Fife Council and leased by the Trust. It was formerly a local rubbish dump which was capped in the days before more stringent landfill regulations were in force. Rubbish, including a lot of glass, is now coming to the surface posing a huge challenge. As the whole site may need recapping and replanting, which is beyond the Trust's resources, the reserve will be returned to Fife Council, along with a suggested environmental management plan, when the lease runs out in 2026.

Barnyards Marsh is currently owned by Church of Scotland. The boardwalk which was in a state of disrepair has been removed for reasons of health and safety. Access is now difficult and there is continuing encroachment by invasive Japanese Knotweed. The liabilities of maintaining the site are too onerous for the Trust to continue managing it and responsibility will be returned to the Church.

Cullaloe reserve is owned by Fife Council but managed for them by the Trust as a Local Nature Reserve but with no financial support from the Council. The Trust will be requesting a management fee for the work that they do and if this is not agreed further options may be necessary.

I know that those of you with close links to any of these reserves will be saddened by these decisions but the hope is that the changes will allow the reserves team to focus more on much-needed work on the remaining reserves and be of more benefit for wildlife in the long run.

PLANNING:

Over the year Committee Member Richard Smith has kept a close eye on planning applications in Fife and Kinross with a particular interest in forestry projects. Thank you Richard. We have monitored progress on electricity substation expansions, a solar farm, redevelopment of a former opencast mining site, cabin developments at wetland sites and the proposed quarry extension at Balmullo. The quarry extension would destroy a significant area of hilltop heathland habitat. The formal planning application is expected soon so we may be in touch asking for your help to oppose that one.

COLLABORATION:

Over the year we have tried to improve communication with other wildlife and community groups including Fife Bird Club, Fife Coast and Countryside Trust, Kilwinning Community Rewilding Project and NatureScot among others. I have attended meetings with the River Eden Sustainability Partnership, Newburgh Train Station Group, Rewilding Kinkell and CLEAR (Community-led Environmental Action for Regeneration of Buckhaven and Methil. Alison

Irvine and Richard Smith have been involved with the Local Wildlife Steering Group and the Fife Biodiversity Action Plan.

COMMITTEE:

For the last year the committee has operated without a secretary. I have combined the roles of Chair and Correspondence Secretary and for most of our meetings Alison Irvine has stepped up to record the minutes. Thanks for that Alison. A few months ago we advertised for a Minutes Secretary and I was amazed and delighted that four members volunteered. I am even more pleased to say that not only have we filled the Minutes Secretary role but two of the other three have agreed to join the committee. More on that later but the committee goes from strength to strength with a good mix of members with long experience and new blood.

THANKS:

A number of thanks are due. Firstly I would like to thank all the committee for their hard work over the last year. Please all stand so that members can see who you are. A round of applause is called for. I've already mentioned Alison and Richard but special thanks also to Lindsey Adam for keeping the Facebook page up-to date and turning out for most events as a back-marker and to Ian Hunter for editing the newsletter and chasing us all for articles.

The Trust reserves team has worked tirelessly to keep our reserves in good condition and respond to emergencies such as storm damage as well as liaising with the local group. A big thank you is due to Clare Toner, Regional Reserves Manager and her team for all their efforts.

There is someone else to whom we owe a big thank you, Jean Stewart. Unfortunately Jean is unwell and can't be with us today but for many years she has acted as the liaison between the volunteer reserve conveners, the regional management team and the local committee. She has been responsible for arranging the regular conveners' meetings, organising work parties and the botanical monitoring on our reserves. It hasn't always been an easy role but she has always done it with professionalism and good humour. Jean is now retiring from that role and the committee would like to wish her all the very best for the future.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?:

The Trust is currently carrying out a review of local groups and how they work but has yet to report so the future is a little unclear at present.

However, with an enlarged and rejuvenated committee we hope to continue and even expand our events program. We have some new and I hope exciting events planned for the summer and autumn including a bioblitz at Dumbarnie, a moth-trapping event and a trip to look for lichens and mosses in the dunes at Tentsmuir. We will share more details of these soon. Suggestions for venues and topic from members are always welcome.

We will continue to monitor planning applications for any that might impact our wildlife and object or propose mitigations where appropriate.

And we will increase our involvement with other groups acting in the interests of wildlife throughout Fife and Kinross.

Through our website, Facebook pages and the FAWN newsletter we will try to involve and enthuse more of the public with our work and with the importance of our wildlife in difficult times.

That concludes the Annual Report. Thank you for listening.

Andy Cage
Chair, Fife & Kinross Local Group, Scottish Wildlife Trust

11 May 2025

APPENDIX 1

FIFE & KINROSS LOCAL GROUP, SCOTTISH WILDLIFE TRUST

ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR 1ST APRIL 2024 TO 31ST MARCH 2025

	£		£
<u>INCOME</u>		<u>EXPENDITURE</u>	
Walks and talks	£271.70	Marketing/Communications (FAWN)	£605.00
Donation	£6.15	Meetings	£85.00
Total income	<u>£277.85</u>	Donation to CLEAR	£250.00
		First Aid kit	£10.80
		Repayment to Eventbrite	£10.00
		Total expenditure	<u>£960.80</u>

Opening Balance, 1.4.2024	£7,174.25
Total income	£277.85
Total expenditure	£960.80
Deficit for year	£682.95
Closing balance, 31.3.25	Bank £6,441.15
Cash	£60.15
Less unrepresented cheques	£10.00
Total	£6,491.30

Treasurer, Alison Irvine
Dated 15th April 2025

Independent verifier, Norman Still
Dated 18th April 2025