

FRIENDS OF LOCH LOMOND & THE TROSSACHS

ANNUAL REPORT

For the YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2018



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

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
Mr Paul Saunders

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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 Ross Priory, Gartocharn on Wednesday 15th May 2019, 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 2018.
5. To approve no increase in the Annual Membership fees
6. To re-appoint the office bearers and trustees and endorse other nominations.

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 Paul Saunders

To note the retiral of 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 a talk from **Nik Turner**, the recently appointed National Park Authority's **Litter Prevention Manager**.

By order of the Executive Council

James Fraser
Chair

Tuesday, May 15 2018 at 7.30pm at Ross Priory, Gartocharn

Chair: J Fraser (JF).

Committee Present: J Urquhart (JU); W Dalrymple (WD); T Wallace (TW); J Deans (JD); P Saunders (PS); S Winstone (SW).

In Attendance: R Anderson (RA); A Beveridge (AB); J Beveridge (JBe); Mr & Mrs J Biddulph (JBi); J Bowers (JBo); Mr & Mrs M Cameron (MC); V Carroll (VC); Sir M Colquhoun (SMC); T Dance (TD); V Dance (VD); S Fraser (SF); A Galloway (AG); W Hassall (WH); J James (JJ); Mr & Mrs D MacLachlan (DMacL); I McGregor (IMcG) plus guests; C Martin (CM); W Nisbet (WN); P Thompson (PT); A Urquhart (AU); Mr & Mrs F Wood (FW).

Apologies: M Brown (MB); A Cole (AC); D McCowan (DMcC); P Norris (PN); A Sobey (AS); I Stirling (IS); J Stirling (JS); F Taylor (FT); N Wells (NW).

1. Welcome

JF welcomed those present to the meeting and thanked them for their attendance. He also expressed thanks to Ross Priory and its staff for their hospitality and assistance in staging the AGM

Three awards were then presented. JBi and MC jointly received the Hannah Stirling National Park Award following their tireless work, commitment and outstanding service over 20 years to the wellbeing of their community as Secretary and Chairman respectively of Balloch and Haldane Community Council. The Volunteer of the Year Award went to D MacL for his work with Arrochar and Tarbet Community Development Trust which included the imminent launch of the Arrochar Community Hydro Scheme. Lastly, VC, of Lochend Chalets in Port of Menteith, accepted the Business Supporter of the Year Award having raised extensive funds for the Friends of OUR park project through an opt-in donation mechanism and a percentage of the sales of duck feed to visitors. 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 VD.

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 started by paying tribute to Professor Gavin Arneil, one of the founding members of the Friends, who passed away in January 2018. 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 support for a total of 24 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 good levels of fundraising including support.

Campaigning and consultation issues covered in the presentation included camping byelaws in the National Park, and the installation of new campsites at various lochside venues. The issue of litter in the National Park was also raised, with JF talking about the continued liaison with the Park Authority over a solution to overflowing bin problems at Balmaha and Luss. The newly launched Park Partnership Plan was also covered as well as ongoing issues in Arrochar, Balloch, Callander and Balmaha relating to housing developments, and the A82 at Pulpit Rock. An update was also given on the Tom Weir's Rest site, which has seen more than £5,000 given in visitor donations since the donation posts were installed on site less than two years before.

An overview of projects supported with Friends of OUR park was provided along with updates on several projects such as the Lauder Monument and Duck Bay projects and the eco-tourism initiative which is being supported with funding from Scottish Enterprise.

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 along with its website.

Members were informed of three events being staged by the Friends over the coming months – Luss Highland Games on Saturday, July 7; the Loch Lomond Sunset Cruise on Wednesday, August 15; and Christmas at Ross Priory on Sunday, November 25. They were also advised of the International Children's Celebration Cruises which will take place at Loch Katrine on Saturday, June 2.

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 2017

TW spoke briefly to the accounts. These were proposed by FW and seconded by SW with no queries arising. JF expressed thanks to TW for his work as Treasurer, and to WH for his work auditing of the accounts in his role as the independent auditor.

5. Membership fees

It was unanimously agreed that annual membership fees should remain the same - £20 for individual membership and £28 for family membership. This was proposed by FW and seconded by WD.

6. Re-appointment of office bearers

Retention of the list of the Board of Trustees was proposed by VD and seconded by JBe. This was unanimously approved.

JF expressed thanks to all Trustees for their work and 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

VD recorded a vote of thanks to JF and Trustees for their work over the past year on behalf of the members.

9. Guest Speakers

There were two interesting talks, delivered firstly by CM on the work of Callander Youth Project, and then by PT on the history of Ardroy Outdoor Education Centre. Both were well-received by the audience and were followed by a brief exchange of questions and answers.

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 agreed rolling Strategy and Action Plan which takes account of the 2018-2022 National Park Partnership Plan and specific lobbying activities on topics such as visitor management (*Back to Basics*).

We marked a major milestone in October with a 40th anniversary event planting trees in Balloch Castle Country Park with local school children and have made some good progress with projects and initiatives 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.*

As in previous years, where appropriate, we have worked in partnership with the National Park Authority, Scottish Enterprise, local tourism groups Destination National Park and Love Loch Lomond, community councils, community development trusts, local project champions and others to further our aims.

Key to our continuing success have been the commitment, enthusiasm and hard work of our 2 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 again resulted in good levels of fundraising and volunteering in 2018 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, the delivery of our Eco Tourism initiative and the Lauder Monument restoration, access and car park improvement scheme at Invernoaden with help from two Landfill Trusts, the Friends of OUR park scheme and a number of volunteers. We have also been able to financially support a range of access, heritage, youth 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 hosting our two part-time staff through the provision of office space and providing access to IT, telephone, photocopying and postal services as well as sponsorship of double spreads pages in our popular and widely distributed Voice magazine which is published twice a year.

2. Key Priorities

We had a major focus on campaigning and fundraising to support a range of activities that complemented the work of the National Park Authority and others. We contributed

to several consultations on draft policy documents issued by the National Park Authority, including core paths and the woodland strategy, and we successfully lobbied on several aspects of our 'back to basics' campaign on topics such as litter and toilets in busy parts of the National Park. Our 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 2018 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 previous years but there has been a greater emphasis on supporting youth initiatives and access projects particularly through our support for Ardroy Outdoor Education Centre and the Mountains and the People project. The second year of our Eco Tourism initiative led by our part-time Project Manager, Jared Bowers, aimed at encouraging tourism related businesses to capitalise more on the rich natural of the National Park more effectively, has been particularly successful with large turnouts of businesses for a tourism conference and a couple of practical glamping seminars.

Campaigning to protect the National Park's special qualities remained as a high priority with monitoring and the submission of comments on a number of planning applications. Volunteering activity and making representation on key issues including litter management and liaising with the Park Authority on the implementation of the Your Park camping proposals were also priority activities in 2018.

3. 40th Anniversary Celebration

In October we marked the 40th anniversary of the Friends inaugural meeting in 1978 with the planting of 40 trees in Balloch Castle Country Park with the help of local schoolchildren from Balloch & Haldane Primary School and Hermitage Academy as part of their ongoing conservation efforts. Local MSP Jackie Baillie presented the schoolchildren with young conservation volunteer certificates and Gillian Neil of West Dunbartonshire Council's Ranger Service and Jim Biddulph, Secretary of Balloch & Haldane Community Council were present to support the event.

This was a very fitting way to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Friends of Loch Lomond which was founded by the late and energetic Dr. Hannah Stirling MBE with support from the late Professor Gavin Arneil and others who were committed to trying to make a difference and helping to care for what is a very special place enjoyed by millions of people from home and overseas. Over the years the Friends were at the forefront of the campaign to secure National Park status for Loch Lomond and The Trossachs and have delivered a large and diverse number of access, conservation and heritage projects throughout the National Park.

4. Funding

We were successful in securing two grants of £5,000 each from the South Ayrshire and Argyll & Bute Landfill Trusts to assist with the creation of a new car park, a path link, advance signing, interpretation and restoration work at the Lauder Memorial in Cowal. Additional funding was provided from the successful Friends of OUR park visitor giving scheme.

The donation posts at the popular Tom Weir statue and picnic site in Balmaha are continuing to generating a steady income which has been sufficient to cover the annual insurance cost and most of the annual site maintenance works which is topped up as

required from the Friends of OUR park visitor giving scheme. A new donation post was installed at Loch Katrine and it is hoped this too will generate a steady income to support conservation activities around the loch.

We continued to enjoy funding support from Scottish Enterprise for our eco-tourism initiative with £40,000 being provided over a two year period which funded a part-time Project Manager post and supporting activities. The Project Manager worked closely 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, an encouraging £14,625 was raised in donations from visitors to support a range of projects throughout the National Park. The scale of funding from this source was well down on what was originally envisaged due to the tragic fire at Cameron House shortly after the management team signed up to participate in the scheme and it was to their credit that they switched the bedroom opt out donation to both their catering outlets at the Marina and the Carrick within months of the fire.

And finally, with generous donations businesses, through the business supporters scheme, and individual members linked to annual membership subscriptions, it has been possible to continue funding our core activities including retaining the services of a part-time Support Officer.

5. Protecting the Park's Special Qualities

(i) Planning

We have continued to monitor planning applications in and around the National Park and encouragingly more developers are recognising the National Park is a special place with better quality 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 applications for low cost housing in some communities but lodged an objection to the application for 95 houses in Drymen as this was well over the allocation in the Local Development Plan. We also objected to the cluster of large-scale mansion houses as part of a tourist development at Wards Estate as this is a prominent location in a sensitive setting right next to the RSPB Loch Lomond National Nature Reserve. Despite some neighbour objections we were pleased to support the temporary re-opening of the old A82 link from Balloch to Cameron House as part of the hotel reconstruction programme. It was encouraging that the Park Authority took on board our suggestions to include street lighting and pavement upgrading as part of the scheme which means the route which forms part of the John Muir Way and Three Lochs Way is now safer and in a better condition.

After careful consideration we conditionally supported the controversial outline planning application for a £30 million leisure development on West Riverside and the site of the derelict Woodbank Hotel in Balloch as did the local Community Council. We consider the plans will help deliver the vision first set out by Sir Patrick Abercrombie in the Clyde Valley Regional Plan as far back as 1949 and in subsequent local development and subject plans for the southern end of Loch Lomond. We also believe the development will help strengthen Balloch's appeal as a tourist destination with a range of much needed family accommodation, activities and wet weather facilities.

In response to some of the concerns raised by the Friends, Balloch and Haldane Community Council and others some welcome modifications have been made to the plans including:

- the creation of a well-lit walk beside the River Leven between the centre of the village and the Maid of the Loch;
- the relocation of the monorail linking Station Square with the lochside along the edge of Pier Road;
- the addition of residential flats behind the restored façade of the derelict Woodbank House with the removal of most of the houses originally planned in the grounds of the former hotel and the addition of some more family holiday accommodation; and
- the slight repositioning of the proposed waterpark and the aparthotel to safeguard the existing lochside beach and improve car parking arrangements near the pier head.

We are aware that there is considerable controversy surrounding this application which has not been helped by some inaccurate reporting in the national media and on social media networks. It is also unfortunate that the name of the developers-Flamingoland-has led to many thinking the site is being turned into a theme park when most of the area will be developed for family-based holiday accommodation and associated leisure facilities including the new riverside path. The development has also sparked a debate and petition which focuses heavily on land ownership issues on the lochside as opposed to the planning merits of the application. What has been lost in the debate is the fact that Scottish Enterprise was encouraged a number of years ago by the Friends and the local Council to assemble what were previously parcels of derelict industrial land suffering from planning blight due to fragmented ownership.

(ii) Community Planning

Balloch-We continued to take a close interest the LIVE in Balloch initiative coordinated by the Park Authority and West Dunbartonshire Council with support from the Scottish Government and Scottish Enterprise. We expressed some reservations about the proposed townscape scheme which failed to adequately address the concerns of village traders with the potential loss of short stay street car parking. We maintained strong liaison links with Balloch & Haldane Community Council on this scheme and the emerging leisure plans for West Riverside. We supported the Community Council's wish to secure the well-lit riverside promenade which was a strong feature of the Balloch Charrette a couple of years ago.

Callander- We agreed to financially support the Callander Landscape project over a three year period as part of an effort to make more of Callander as the 'Outdoor Capital of the National Park'. It is hoped the project will help re-position Callander which has been losing out to other destinations in Scotland over recent times due to a lack of investment and a substantial reduction in tourist accommodation over the past few decades. We have also supported the recent re-opening of Callander Visitor Information Centre which is being led by a collaboration between community organisations and the Sir Walter Scott Steamship Trust with support from the National Park Authority. We also supported a community led initiative to secure the future of the former Tyndrum Tourist Information Centre as a community facility but sadly this was not successful.

Arrochar-We continue to be 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 delivered through 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. The Community development Trust is currently investigating the option of purchasing Council land to create much needed additional park and other visitor facilities.

(iii) Camping and Visitor Facilities

The National Park Authority's camping byelaw and management arrangements covering a large number of loch shores in the National Parks were broadly successful in the second year since they were introduced despite a delay of almost a year in opening the new Loch Achray campsite. We continued to liaise closely with the Park Authority on some aspects of implementation.

The byelaws were 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 six years which has helped transform the visitor experience and has led to more families being attracted back to the area.

We continued to express concerns about the inadequate arrangements for campervans in the National Park which, like many other parts of Scotland, is struggling to cope with the year on growth in campervan ownership and holiday hire fleets. Dealing with campervan effluent disposal is an issue that requires to be urgently addressed with the provision of some service points at key locations throughout the National Park. Tourist routes such as the A82 and the Trossachs Trail in particular are under pressure from a growing number of campervans staying overnight in laybys and car parks with no support facilities.

We were pleased the Park Authority were successful in securing funding support from the new VisitScotland Infrastructure Investment Fund for upgrading toilet and related facilities at Inveruglas, Tarbet and Luss with a prospect of some additional funding for Balmaha facilities. It was also encouraging substantial funding was secured for the Bracklinn Falls car park upgrade linked to the re-opening of the Bracklinn Falls and the creation of a circular footpath as part of the ambitious Callander Landscape project. These much need investments are long overdue.

(iv) Pylon Visual Impact Project-Luss Glens

During the past year slow progress has been made with the Luss Glens project as part of the VIEW and VISTA initiative being led by the major energy companies to minimise the impact of pylon and related infrastructure in the National Park. In 2016 Scottish and Southern Energy and SP Energy Networks 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 eventually are due to form part of a 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.

A handful of projects have been identified to go forward as part of funding bids and it is encouraging that a scheme being promoted by the Friends and Helensburgh and District Access Trust in partnership with Luss Estates to open up Luss Glens for a new walking route has been identified as a priority with detailed design progressing. Any funds secured would be used to take stretches of the Three Lochs Way through the

Luss Glens and onwards to Arrochar away from under pylon lines as part of a wider West Loch Lomond access initiative. The scheme received a setback when an important link between the head of Luss Glens and Arrochar was deemed to be a non-starter due to the presence of eagles. An alternative option following an elevated route between Inverbeg and Tarbet was identified and is currently being assessed by landscape and path consultants. We hope this strategically important access project can still proceed despite this latest setback.

(v) Litter Management

Following the discussion at the 2018 AGM we stepped up our campaign for a better and more coordinated litter management regime in the National Park. We issued a hard-hitting statement with a suggested 5 point action plan which was picked up extensively in the national and local press. This continued to be a hot topic for the Friends throughout 2018. In visitor honeypot locations such as Luss, Balmaha and Callander, the arrangements for litter clearing at busy weekends was simply inadequate and it was evident services were being poorly coordinated and resourced by public agencies. There also continued to be ongoing litter management problems due to the lack of litter bin provision at key visitor honeypot locations and inconsistencies in approach to the provision of litter bins beside busy trunk roads through Scotland's two National Parks. Throughout the entire stretch of the A9 in the Cairngorms National Park there are litter bins in most lay-bys, while there are none in lay-bys along the A82 north of Duck Bay 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 successfully lobbied for the inclusion of better litter management as a top priority in the new 5 year Partnership Plan that was launched in 2018.

Pilot Eco Transport Services Bid

As a follow on from the Friends very successful two-year eco-tourism initiative, a funding bid was submitted to the SPEN Green Economy Fund to support local partners with the delivery of a £300,000 project that involved the introduction of two innovative eco bus and boat transport services in different parts of the National Park.

The Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park is the most heavily visited countryside destination in Scotland with four million visitors each year with around 90% of them arriving by car and contributing to traffic congestion and high levels of carbon emissions in some of the more popular areas.

This project aimed to test alternative travel methods; reduce reliance on car-based travel; reduce carbon emissions; improve countryside access opportunities for a wider spectrum of the population with better transport connectivity, contribute to better visitor management and enhance the overall visitor experience while raising visitor awareness of environmental issues and climate change challenges.

It was proposed to pilot two different types of electric bus and eco-friendly boat services with two local partners-The Sir Walter Scott Steamship Company and Sandy Fraser of the Oak Tree Inn, both long time business supporters and participants in the Friends of OUR park visitor giving scheme.

Sadly The outcome of the funding bid should be known shortly but the project has already come through a stage 1 assessment process which resulted in 100 projects being whittled down

to 40. A £700,000 bid from the National Park's Countryside Trust for an electric bike initiative in the Trossachs also made it through stage 1.

(Word count 522 plus photos of solar boat and an electric bus or the Ambleside shuttle)

Providing Support for Projects

(i) Tom Weir's Rest, Balmaha

Following the successful public launch of the Tom Weir Statue in late December 2014 at Balmaha Bay we have continued to work closely with the Tom Weir Memorial Group and Sandy Fraser of the Oak Tree Inn to maintain Tom Weir's Rest. We have also financially supported some of the neighbouring village green enhancement works which made major progress in 2017 with the installation of story boards and landscape features that tie in with the design at Tom Weir's Rest.

The site has attracted over 500,000 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 the donation posts installed in May 2016 having generated over £5,000 to cover the costs of site maintenance and statue insurance.

(ii) Lauder Monument and Viewpoint

There was a large turnout of people at a special gathering on Friday 28th December to commemorate the 102nd anniversary of the death of Captain John Lauder who was shot and killed by a sniper in France during the First World War and to mark the completion of a 3 year project to restore the Lauder Monument at Invernoaden in Argyll that was originally unveiled in 1921 by world famous entertainer Sir Harry Lauder in memory of his son.

The £25,000 project, which was coordinated by the Friends, involved the creation of a new 8 space car park, along with a new path link, upgrading an existing steep path with stone steps and safety railings and installing two story boards and advance signs. As part of the project the impressive red sandstone monument was also carefully cleaned with the removal of moss and other vegetation that had accumulated over the last 30 years.

Funding was secured from the Argyll & Bute and South Ayrshire Landfill Trusts and the balance of the funding came from the Friends of OUR park visitor giving scheme which raises thousands of pounds annually from visitors with the help of many tourism businesses throughout the National Park. Hundreds of hours of labour were generously provided by volunteers including Friends Trustees and Mountains and the People staff who were determined to ensure the project was completed on time.

Local youngsters contributed to the commemorative event with a series of original drawings depicting the tragic Lauder story adorning the ornate railings around the monument and poignant letter and poetry readings as well as musical tributes on the bagpipes including the famous tune Battle of the Somme. Harry Lauder's poem in memory of his son, as well as Captain John Lauder's last letter home to his fiancée were read out by local youngsters Gabriella Montgomery and Pippa MacLennan.

There was also a wreath laying by Major Donald MacLaughlan and a rededication of the monument by Rev Dr. Robin Mackenzie followed by the unveiling of a new storyboard

beside the monument by local MSP, Mike Russell who gave an interesting insight to the war memorial movement based on research from his time as a broadcaster. To close the event there was a special rendition of Harry Lauder's famous song '*Keep right on to the end of the road*' which he wrote in memory of his son.

Sir Harry Lauder purchased nearby Invernaden House and the 14,000 acre Glenbranter Estate as an engagement present for his son John and his bride to be, Mildred Thomson, in November 1916 but, sadly, a month later John was tragically killed before they were married and able to enjoy family life in this special part of the National Park which was eventually sold to the Forestry Commission to form part of the Argyll Forest Park-the first Forest Park created in Great Britain.

(iii) Glamping in the National Park

In the Autumn we organised two successful glamping business workshops in the National Park. The two events, held in Balloch and Callander, were well attended and received by participants who were all seriously interested in developing much needed glamping accommodation in the area. Following up from the workshops, we released a free digital version of our introductory Glamping Business Guide, which were distributed at the events. This guide was written primarily by renowned glamping expert Kate Morel, who is an industry specialist and author, speaker and business advisor in the sector, and is essential reading for anyone interested in starting a glamping business.

Encouragingly there are now a number of glamping site developments in the pipeline and two planning applications for clusters of glamping pods at the southern end of Loch Lomond were recently approved. Others are under consideration in the Trossachs and Cowal and should help make up for the deficit in budget and medium-priced accommodation for couples and families linked to demand to re-connect with nature.

These seminars were part of a two year eco-tourism project led by the Friends with funding support from Scottish Enterprise. This was an important element of a wider Collaborating for Success initiative with the Park Authority and Love Loch Lomond Destination Group. Our work on the eco-tourism project was ably led by Jared Bowers, our part-time Eco Tourism Manager. Our eco-tourism initiative was designed to encourage more tourism businesses to capitalise more on the eco credentials of the National Park by developing new tourism products.

(iv) Friends of OUR park Visitor Giving Scheme

During 2018 a sum of £14,500 was raised in donations from visitors via the visitor giving scheme to support over a dozen projects throughout the National Park.

The number of businesses 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 but a welcome addition has been Cameron House Resort who remained committed to the scheme despite a major fire at the hotel in December 2017. 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.

The income raised from visitors donations was used to support the following projects: Arrochar and Tarbet Community Development Trust for a walks leaflet (£800); Ardroy

Outdoor Education Centre Building Appeal (£5,000 over two years); Enchantment of the Trossachs (£600); Cormonochan Woodlands contemplation shelter (£200) and new footpath (£500); Clyde Sea Lochs Trail leaflet (£200); Loch Lomond Steamship Company (£2000); Loch Tarsan Disabled Access car park (£800); Callander Summerfest (£400); Cowalfest (£300); Tom Weir's Rest, Balmaha (£1,780); Mountains and the People (£2,500); Callander Landscape Partnership (£500) and Callander Jazz Festival (£300).

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/opt in 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 Lochend Chalets.

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 at on West Loch Lomondside and Loch Lubnaiside by our staff with support from the National Park Authority, Forest Holidays and Luss Estates. Tasks undertaken on these days included the removal of trees and bushes to open up views of Loch Lomond and litter clearance.

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 £250,000 has now been raised with over 120 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.

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 news release on litter in the National Park and our suggested 5-point action plan was well picked up in the national and regional press with, for example, the Daily Mail carrying a full-page feature on this. The theft of digger buckets in the run up to the completion of the Lauder Monument restoration and access project in December generated extensive publicity, including a live interview with the Chairman on BBC Radio Scotland's flagship Newsdrive programme. Project grant awards, glamping seminars organised by the Friends and other "back to basics" visitor management campaigning issues generated significant publicity too.

The completion of the two-year Lauder Monument restoration and access improvement project and the associated commemorative event organised on the 102nd anniversary of the death of Cpt John Lauder were particular highlights in 2018. We had a very successful 'Meet the Friends' stand at Luss Highland Games in July. Our sunset cruise on Loch Lomond in August, which we organised for a fourth 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. The new international children's day celebration event on Loch Katrine in the summer was a great success with hundreds turning out to enjoy sails on the Steamship Sir Walter Scott accompanied by music provided pupils from McLaren High School. We made a donation to the school's music instrument fund after the event as did the Steamship Sir Walter Scott Trust.

Offices and Staffing

Andrew Galloway stepped down from his role of part-time Support Officer in June to take up newspaper reporting role in Helensburgh. Andrew spent more time on PR activities and generally assisting the Chairman with the smooth running of the Friends and we wished him well in his new post. Late in the summer on an interim basis Marie Harvey from the Community Partnership stepped in one day a week to help with a range of support functions and she has done a sterling job for the friends in the limited time she has been with us. We are looking to recruit someone new to this role in June 2019.

Jared Bowers, our part-time Ecotourism Project Manager has done a great job 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. He took up a new post as Manager of Brodick Castle and Country Park on Arran in the latter part of 2019 but he will continue to work for the friends for a three month period one day a week supporting the further development of the Friends of OUR park scheme.

Office costs are largely met by the National Park Authority as an 'in kind' contribution to the Friends. 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, Marie and Jared 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 were no changes to our Board of Trustees during 2018 following the recruitment of Paul Saunders from Drymen the previous year whose PR and marketing skills have proved will be a great asset to the Friends. Sadly, Philip Norris from the Cowal area is stepping down at this year's AGM and he will be a great loss. He has served the Cowal area with distinction and his musical talents were put to good use during the Lauder Cowal Connections programme and at one of the Friends Xmas events at Ross Priory.

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

	2018	2017
Income		
Membership	1,643	1,859
Donations /Appeals	1,641	609
Gift Aid	-	-
Business supporters	4,800	5,100
Voice Advertising	3,485	5,870
Project Funding:		
Scottish Enterprise	20,083	19,470
OUR Park Business Donations	14,565	16,258
Other grants	5,000	-
Events		
AGM	170	270
Christmas Event	433	583
Loch Lomond Cruise	550	572
Other events	589	325
Merchandising	530	424
HMRC	-	-
Bank interest	26	5
Tom Weir Statue	2,741	2,431
Love Loch Lomond	-	-
<u>Income TOTAL</u>	<u>56,257</u>	<u>53,776</u>

Expenditure	2018	2017
Salaries and on-costs	5,920	10,488
HMRC	0	171
Travel & Expenses	10	212
Office Costs	1,008	4,164
Voice	7,969	7,756
Projects:		
Friends of OUR park	8,090	13,632
Website Redevelopment	540	540
Ecotourism project	16,569	25,281
Lauder Project	15,209	-
Tom Weir Rest	3,042	2,653
Events		
AGM & awards	972	912
Christmas Event	467	984
Loch Lomond Cruise	680	630
Other events	309	229
Two Lochs Tour	-	29
Marketing	-	330
SCVO membership etc	533	697
<u>Expenditure TOTAL</u>	<u>61,348</u>	<u>68,710</u>
<u>Income TOTAL</u>	<u>56,257</u>	<u>53,776</u>
Net deficit in year	-5,091	-14,934
Cash reconciliation		
Balance brought forward	32,260	47,194
Net deficit for year	-5,091	-14,934
Cash in bank	27,169	32,260

Friends of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs

Statement of Assets & Liabilities as at 31st. December, 2018

	31/12/17	31/12/18
Current assets:		
Bank:		
Combined balance at year end	£32,260	£27,169
Capital:	£32,260	£27,169

James B Fraser (Chairman)

Tom Wallace (Treasurer)

WM Hassall (Independent Examiner)

15th May 2019

Notes/

Notes to the accounts

Year ended 31 December 2018

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 2018 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, 2018 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.



William M. Hassall,
Helensburgh.

10th. May, 2019