

**Annual General Meeting**  
**DRAFT MINUTES**  
**2.30pm, 9th December 2016, Perth Station Hotel.**

1. Welcome

Amanda Burgauer welcomed all to the third Annual General Meeting of Scottish Rural Action.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Anne Simpson, Michael Simpson, Martin Dorchester, Cllr Charlie Nicolson, Rebecca Dawes, Gordon Methven, Ann Packard, Carole Paterson, Rona Insch, Lee Haxton, Faith Harding, Anne Winther, Andi Holmes, Sheena Boyd, Carol Hutton, Maggie Gordon, Claudia Beamish MSP and Elaine McGregor.

3. Minutes of 2016 AGM

Minutes of the AGM Friday 4th March 2016 were circulated. Jackie Brierton requested that her status as an 'observer' be amended to 'member'. Grace Craigie proposed acceptance of the minutes as a true record of the AGM and Paul Melling seconded.

4. Chairs report

Amanda Burgauer gave her report as Chair:

We agreed at the last AGM to try and synchronise the AGM with the Scottish Rural Parliament, therefore the AGM is being held only nine months after the last AGM today move the AGM towards an autumn date. AGMs must happen 9-15 months after the last one so today is the earliest it could be.

We propose that the next AGM be held in September 2017 which will give us three months' flexibility to hold the AGM in 2018 at the Rural Parliament.

Amanda was delighted to become Chair in March 2016 and has found it a very exciting year as we have managed to achieve a lot, including the Rural Parliament. She was delighted that the Rural Parliament was held in Brechin and at the support from Angus Council and Caledonian MacBrayne which made it a memorable event. Amanda thanked the Brechin Liaison Group for all their help. The Brechin Community Campus was superb for the event.

Working Groups were set up this year to focus on different areas including broadband and connectivity and local democracy which included the board and people from across rural Scotland. For example, the broadband report included 30 community groups and individuals and made five recommendations to Scottish Government. Scottish Government have agreed to all five recommendations, including a conference next year involving stakeholders.

Scottish Rural Action now understand better what we are here for; we are trying to be a loud voice for rural people and communities. We also now have a position statement on a range of issues - our Manifesto for rural Scotland. People at the Rural Parliament prioritised land, broadband and mobile phone signal, business and local democracy and governance. We will also be taking transport forwards due to the opportunity to input into the development of the National Transport Strategy for Scotland. The Working Groups for these will be set up at the next board meeting. If you would like to get involved or know someone who would please get in touch with us.

It is also time for people to step down from the board. Gordon Methven and Kris Chapman were co-opted by the board and therefore both have to step down. Kris decided not to re-stand due to time

constraints and Gordon did stand in the election. Maggie Gordon was co-opted during the first year of Scottish Rural Action and gave us a real knowledge of organic farming and LEADER. Maggie couldn't be here today so we express our sincere thanks and she will be very much missed. Niall Smith is also stepping down as he is emigrating and Sue Beer stepped down earlier this year due to other commitments. We thank Niall and Sue for all their help and wish them the best.

#### 5. Financial report and accounts of 2015

Amanda Burgauer reported to the meeting in her role as Chair of the Finance sub-committee. Draft account statements were circulated. We are waiting for the signed copy. We handed the accounts to Wyllie and Bisset in May and only got the accounts two weeks ago. Therefore, we are looking for recommendations for another accountant. Members advised they would like us to have a rural accountant and were asked to please send any suggestions to Fran. We are applying for charitable status so will need to submit to both Companies House and OSCR.

Jane also suggested that we challenge the price of the accounts with Wyllie and Bisset. This was agreed. A member asked where the grants received came from. Emma explained that the main income was from Scottish Government. Awards for All and Voluntary Action Fund grants will show in next year's accounts. Our first set of accounts were from October 2013-March 2015. We don't require the same level of income for the year without a Rural Parliament.

In terms of funding for 2017 onwards, Scottish Government want to do an external evaluation of our work. We are waiting for more details of this. For the interim period, they have committed funding for 3 months which provides us with funding until June 2017. It was always anticipated that the funding from Scottish Government would decrease over time. We are starting to apply for additional funding going forwards. The charitable status will help us with this. We have 5 funding applications in progress and will let members know what happens with this.

We need to think about how to be sustainable without a grant from Scottish Government and need 3 months' reserves for security for staff.

A member asked what the figure allocated to advertising in the accounts was spent on. This was spent on press advertising, attendance at the Royal Highland Show and The Gathering, other event attendance and publicity materials such as pens, banners etc. It is difficult to measure how effective attending these events are.

It was agreed to adopt the accounts with the reviewal of the high cost of the accountancy fees. These will be available on the website. Members who would like to have them emailed or posted to them should let Fran know.

#### 6. Appointment of accountant

There were no objections to the board of directors of Scottish Rural Action appointing a new accountant once quotes had been assessed.

#### 7. Appointment of directors

Emma Cooper reported to the meeting as the Returning Officer for the election of directors of Scottish Rural Action. The current directors are Amanda Burgauer, Vanessa Halhead, Maggie Gordon, Gordon Methven, Kris Chapman, Alison Macleod, Niall Smith, Sandy Brunton, Rebecca Dawes. Retiring today are Maggie Gordon, Niall Smith, Gordon Methven and Kris Chapman leaving three places on the board of Directors and room for three people to be co-opted.

Eight people were nominated by the membership as directors. These were Lee Haxton, Dr Stephen Bird, Gordon Methven, Gordon Harrison, Faith Harding, Anne Simpson, Simon Brooke and Mary Williams Edgar. These were a broad spread of age, gender and location. There were 420 members eligible to vote and 78 voted (19%). The low turnout will be examined for future years with the aim of increasing this.

The three successful candidates were Dr Stephen Bird, Faith Harding and Lee Haxton. Faith and Lee were very sorry that they couldn't be here today.

Directors need to step down every 3 years and one third need to step down every year. The next AGM will be held on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2017. This will be a one day event which will be interesting and useful based on our five key areas of work. The election will begin in May to allow extra time.

Stephen was invited to say a few words:

Thank you very much. I have worked as a single handed GP in South Uist since April 2012. I trained at St Andrews and then Manchester and spent some time in the Marines. General Practice is a small business and I therefore have an interest from that point of view including how rural communities function on the islands and connectivity on all levels. Scotland is epitomised by its rural areas which is an important part of what makes Scotland what it is. I am happy to be taught and directed in my role as director.

Emma Cooper asked if there were any objections to the appointment of the three nominated people. No objections were lodged. The three nominated people were duly elected to the board of Directors.

#### 8. AOCB

Amanda Burgauer asked if any member had any other business related to the Annual General Meeting to raise.

Amanda Burgauer proposed that the board be allowed to appoint additional directors in addition to the three who can be co-opted to the board to enable a bigger group of directors and due to the risk of losing the experience of a lot of the board when a third step down each year. Amanda pointed out the parts of the constitution section 52, 57, 58 which state this is possible.

Members looked at the potential future structures for SRA and the current use of the working groups. A council of management was suggested which would be made up of individuals and would reduce the workload placed on the board.

There was a vote on whether the board could appoint more directors. The majority voted in favour of empowering the directors to appoint four additional directors onto the board and to be able to co-opt a further three directors if necessary.

No further business was raised.