

## Friends of the Pentlands

### Trustees Annual Report for the year to 31 December 2016

Friends of the Pentlands is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation  
SC035514

Charity's principal address: 8 Laverockdale Park, Edinburgh, EH13 0QE

#### Charity Trustees during the year ended 31 December 2016

Chair	John Surtees (from 12 <sup>th</sup> May 2016)
Chairman	Mike White (until 12 <sup>th</sup> May 2016)
Vice-Chair	Hamish Clark (from 22 <sup>nd</sup> June 2016)
Vice-Chairman	John Stirling (until 22 <sup>nd</sup> June 2016)
Treasurer	Malcolm Patrick
Secretary	John Stirling
Membership Secretary	Rod Greenwell
	Allan Ainslie
	Margaret Granger
	Neil Macaulay
	Donna Partridge
	Caroline Sanderson
	David Syme
	Esmee Yuille

#### STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE, AND MANAGEMENT

The Charity is an all-volunteer incorporated association governed by a Constitution which is approved by the membership. Trustees must be members of the Charity and are elected by the members at the AGM, or appointed by the board of trustees, in accordance with the terms of the Constitution. Members who are appointed by the board must stand down at the next AGM but are eligible for election at that AGM.

On appointment, trustees are provided with full information regarding the history and objectives of the Charity and encouraged to develop the knowledge, the duties and responsibilities expected of them. The trustees mitigate exposure to any risks which are assessed, at least, annually.

#### PURPOSES AND ACTIVITIES

The purposes of the Charity are, by charitable means, to promote the conservation, protection and enhancement of the physical and natural environment of the Pentland Hills and surrounding countryside. In furtherance of which the Charity shall seek:

- To protect and enhance the natural beauty and upland character of the Pentland Hills its waters and surrounding countryside. Declaring that "the Pentlands" shall mean the Pentland Hills and surrounding countryside.
- To protect and enhance the natural and cultural heritage and features of public amenity within this area.
- To encourage respect for the quality of life of those who live and work within this area.
- To carry out environmental projects that enhance public access and biodiversity.
- To encourage high standards of design in all work undertaken within this area.
- To provide an annual programme of activities to foster the enjoyment of healthy exercise, an appreciation of the environment and social and cultural history.
- To promote the forming of appropriate planning policies, compatible with these purposes, through the considered long term development plan process and their effective and consistent implementation.
- To stimulate public interest in these purposes by means of publications, meetings, exhibitions, appeals and other forms of publicity.
- To co-operate with other bodies to promote the foregoing purposes.

The Charity's main activities during 2016 were:

- The organisation of walks and talks.
- Environmental projects - including care and maintenance of past projects and paths
- The monitoring of planning applications.
- Commenting at the consultation stage on planning guidance.
- Raising public awareness of the Charity's purposes via its website, Facebook, newsletters, publications, and articles in others' magazines.
- Fund raising for project work.
- Co-operation with the Natural Heritage Service, Local Authorities, the Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society, land owners and land managers.

## **ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE**

During 2016 members contributed 6,175 hours of volunteers' time in supporting a wide range of activities undertaken by the Charity. Some £5,859 has been spent on various projects including environmental projects.

- Members participated in 10 walks and two talks.
- Both talks and several walks were open to members of the public. Some walks had an educational theme, e.g. cultural history, while others were simply to encourage the enjoyment of the countryside.

- Held an Access for All Event over two days, based at the Harlaw Visitor Centre, for people with varying levels of disabilities including wheel chair users. Around 60 people took part in the two days.
- Held more than 57 work days, some in conjunction with the Natural Heritage Service. The work days included path maintenance, path creation, maintenance of 5 mini-arboreta (Trees of Scotland) and the planting of trees etc. Several work days have been held in conjunction with the Balerno Ramblers (Group Members), and Lloyds Group(Corporate Members).
- A regular programme of work mornings maintaining the Harlaw Visitor Centre wild life garden and at the Hillend Steading, Ski Road, Edinburgh. The Hillend Steading has been made available to the organisation by Midlothian Council.
- Litter picking was undertaken on 30 occasions, as part of a regular programme, mainly at the “honey-pot” areas of Bonaly and Dreghorn and by visits to other areas in and bordering the Pentland Hills
- Two editions of the Pentland Post were issued and the Organisation's website updated. Articles were also contributed to the Pentland Beacon, and the Currie and Balerno News.
- 9 talks were given to community groups about the Charity's work.
- Held 4 Tea and Cakes days which raised £1,538 this allows the Friends to undertake several small conservation projects.
- This was the sixth successive year that we have assisted pupils from Woodlands Special School in working towards their John Muir Award.
- This year saw a revamp of the Website and the organisation's Facebook page.
- Our volunteers' skills in dry stone walling continue to improve and culminated in a course that saw a large section of dry stone wall brought down by a river flooding being restored.
- Initiated a programme of propagation of Juniper cuttings working with Dean Park Primary, Braidburn, Woodlands, St Josephs, and St Mathew's Schools with the aim to plant out young Junipers in the Pentland Hills in years to come
- Successful in obtaining a grant of £12,000 in the Tesco Bags of Help initiative. The monies will allow the Friends to undertake various works around Harlaw Wildlife Garden working with pupils from several local schools.
- Completed the preparation of a second book entitled Wild Wood Legacy by Member Martyn Baguley for publication in January 2017.
- A watching brief was maintained on several planning applications for wind farms within the Pentland Hills. Objections were lodged to proposed developments at several locations in and near the Pentland Hills
- Membership, which is open to all who support the Charity's objects, stood at 387 members as at 31 December 2016.

## FINANCIAL REVIEW

The results for the year to 31 December 2016 accompany this report.

The funds of the Charity as at 31 Dec 2016 were £16,278. This represents an increase of £1,200 compared to the funds at the start of the financial year.

The trustees believe that to support the work of the Charity and to be able to continue their work in the Pentlands, the reserve funds should be between £10,000 and £15,000. That will enable funds to be used for small projects where no external funding is available as well as being able to top-up any grant funding for specific projects.