

Cruach Mhor Windfarm Trust

Minute of the meeting held on Wednesday 14th May 2025 at 4.25pm in the Colintrave Village Hall.

1. Sederunt:

Alex McNaughton (Chair) , Charles Dixon Spain, Michael Russell, Ros McKenna, James Hamilton, Andrew MacVicar (Trustees), Amy Groom (Secretary),

Apologies - Amy Aitken (Scottish Power Renewables)

2. Minute of the Meeting of 18th March 2025

Adopted.

3. Matters Arising from the Minute:

a) Scottish Power Renewables Audit

Three projects were examined by SPR,. Owing to gaps in the documentation provided by the previous Secretary / Treasurer much of the information had to be sourced from past emails and other places. A large amount of information was required and the meeting thanked MR for undertaking the work.

The audit concluded that there was no evidence or intent of wrongdoing and also noted that improvements in transparency had been made during 2024. Mr Eaglesham had made an objection to the audit findings and had indicated to the Secretary and SPR that he would attend the AGM to question the accounts but he was not present.

The Trust noted that SPR now regarded the matter as closed and agreed that the Trust would also take the same position.

4. Elections

a) New Trustees

The three new Trustees were welcomed. They had been elected following the process mandated by Argyll & Bute Council. Four nominations for three places had been received but one person had withdrawn before the final deadline.

b) Chair

After discussion it was agreed that an existing Trustee with previous experience should take the role. MR was elected as Chair on the basis that AG takes on some Treasurer work, including becoming a signatory for online banking .

5. Financial Statement

a) Financial position

£11,700 in the main account, just over £10,000 in 95 day notice account and circa £50 in the 3rd account.

Overview of accounts - it was agreed last year to set up an interest bearing savings account. In January 2025 it was found there were two savings accounts established by the previous Secretary/Treasurer , one with no notice requirement and one with a 95 day notice period which contained the majority of funds. This had not been explicitly authorised and had created considerable difficulty. There was now £10,200 left in the 95 day notice account after the Trust was able to access the remaining funds in early May. It was agreed to place £10,000 per year in this account as a reserve fund. The circa £45,000 (index linked) annual benefit payment is expected shortly.

b) Outstanding calls on funds

The CGDT will be discussed later in the meeting with the applications.

It was agreed to pay the former Secretary / Treasurer the sum equal to £200 index linked per annum (set at a meeting in February 2020), as approved at the last Trust meeting, on the condition that he provides all remaining documentation, does not use any information he has gained in his previous role and has no further call upon the Trust. Previously not all recipients of grants had reported on the outcome of their funded projects. This would now need to be enforced .

6. Applications received

a) Argyll Fisheries Trust

The AFT received funding in the previous year, and now sought £2,500. They had substantial matched funding. There was discussion around the details of the application and the intended works to repair the banks at upper reaches of the river Ruel, with the intention of improving the health of the river and improving fish stocks. Application approved.

b) Individual applying to qualify as a local driving instructor

Interest declared by JH. Application for £7,000 with some match funding, towards qualifications and car purchase in order to start a business giving driving lessons. The first £1,000 is a career grant so this was automatically approved.

There was a discussion about policy towards supporting business in the area and the need to have a clear and consistent policy on the matter. Issues raised included the possibility of an upper funding limit, payment in stages, making any contribution dependent on match funding, the use of deposits or loans for capital assets with the possibility of the remainder being financed instead of making a capital outlay, and the necessity of seeing a business plan.

It was felt the service proposed would be a valuable one to the community and, alongside the £1,000 career grant, the Trust wish to support the applicant dependent on more information being provided in the form of a business plan, with costings, timescales (e.g. to schedule any payment to assist with car purchase). Other funds in the area (Nick Ferguson and SJ Noble) require at the least a business plan for their grant applications. Offer to arrange a meeting between the applicant, CDS and RM, to further discuss the application.

c) Dunoon School Hostel Parent Partnership

£1,500 sought in three £500 installments over three academic years, towards teacher-led supported study for students at the hostel on weeknights. They have approached other trusts for funding in proportion to the number of pupils benefitting. Agreed to support and pay the £500 for 2025/26.

d) Colintraive Village Hall

RM declared an interest. £1,330 application for gazebos to use at outdoor events, approved in full.

e) Kilmodan Primary School Parent's Council

Interest declared by AG. Funds sought for playground maintenance and improvements. Agreed to fund the full £1,500.

f) Kilmodan Primary School

Application for contribution towards P5-7 trip to London with students organising logistics. Match funding provided by student led fund-raising, £1,500 approved out of the £1,700 sought.

g) ColGlen Shinty Club

Interest declared by AM. Funding of £900 sought to send three under-18 players to the annual development camp in Perth. Application approved.

At this point a total of £9,230 grants had been approved. This would leave around £2,000 in the account and around £35,000 (after £10,000 reserve) for the rest of the year once the SPR monies were received.

h) Colintrave & Glendaruel Development Trust (x2)

One application to contract a forest ranger to assist in maintaining access to the Stronafian Community Forest, £18,910 sought in 2025/26 and £19,666 the following year, total £38,576. A second application for £5,460 to support a role focused on fundraising applications.

An enquiry was also received from the CGDT Treasurer regarding nearly £14,000 outstanding from a previous grant.

The CGDT have received funding in previous years, and in 2024/5 were recipients of almost 50% of the SPR grant to the Trust. It had already been suggested to them the outstanding funds may not be met in full following a review in Autumn 2024, and that the Trust would also seek to move to project based funding.

It is recognised that the CGDT have administration, grant funding development and forest maintenance outgoings. However payments are now making up a considerable proportion of the CMWFT overall funding and there seems to be little match funding or any clearly articulated business case, particularly for the forest plan.

Accordingly the Trust was unanimous in its view that it could not support the two new applications. However it would make a payment of £5,000 as the final contribution to the staffing costs, in completion of the award made three years ago. This was less than had been expected by CGDT but was felt to be the maximum possible at this time.

The Trustees wish to arrange a meeting with the CGDT to discuss the new applications and the best way to move forward. It was noted that the two applications would have a start date in August 2025 and are spread over two years. However even at that time the applications would make up a large proportion of the Trust's funds.

Discussion then took place around the need to be open and transparent about what is considered for funding, especially for private individuals and businesses. All agreed a clear set of criteria were needed.

In the last year the Trust offered a loan for the first time to the GVH for a deposit on solar panels. Trustees did not wish to be over-specific but they did want to see some effort to raise match funding particularly for larger applications. It might be that the Trust should establish a *de minimus* amount below which match funding would not be required. It was agreed to discuss these and other issues with AA at the next meeting.

7. Correspondence from former Secretary / Treasurer

Covered earlier in the meeting.

8. AOCB

a) Re-powering

Outcome of the tender as yet unknown. Contact between CDS and a person in Forestry and Land Scotland but they will not discuss it and there is no news forthcoming via official channels. It is felt that the Trust and the local community knew what was expected in terms of community benefit and who would be responsible for paying it. A private landowner who did not consult the community on a lease out for tender with these community implications would be publicly criticised and a public sector organisation should be no different, yet there has been no discussion with the local community.

b) Correspondence

Various comments and complaints received in an email from a member of the public. The CGCC are seeking guidance from A&B Council regarding the volume and content of similar correspondence from the same individual, and in the meantime using an initial response to enquiries before discussing any such correspondence at the next meeting so that further replies can be minuted. MR to respond in this instance.

c) Councilor attendance

There has not been a response from Cllr Sinclair to correspondence nor apologies or attendance at meetings, AG to enquire about future attendance.

The Council play a significant role in the CMWFT, especially with re-powering, and have provided our Deed of Trust. Our structure - a separate grant-giving body (the CMWFT) and development body (the CGDT) has served well by separating grant-giving activity from the administration of community projects. The Trust would want this to continue after re-powering by the Council which needed to be aware of this, via their nominee on the Board.

9. DONM

Set for 6pm on Wednesday 27th August 2025 at Glendaruel Village Hall. AA's attendance now confirmed.