

**The Southern Uplands Partnership  
Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on  
Wednesday 17 November 2021 at 2.30 pm  
Online, Zoom Platform**

**Members Present**

Jayne Ashley	South of Scotland Enterprise
Philip Ashmole	
Duncan Davidson	Tweedsmuir Community Company
John Esslemont	Trustee
Catherine Francis	South of Scotland Enterprise
Leys Geddes	Visit Moffat
Stuart Graham	NatureScot
David Henderson-Howat	Lamancha, Newlands and Kirkurd Community Council
Crispin Hill	NatureScot
Dame Barbara Kelly	
Marion Littler	
Sarah Macdonald	Trustee
Chris Miles	Trustee (Convenor)
Joan Mitchell	Trustee
Lesley Muirden	
John Ogilvie	Forestry and Land Scotland
Claire Pencak	Trustee
Simon Pilpel	South Lanarkshire Council
Tracey Roan	Scottish Land and Estates
Dave Roberts	Trustee
Mark Rowley	Trustee (Scottish Borders Council)
David Steel	Gatehouse Development Initiative
Emily Taylor	Trustee
Marion Thomson	Member
Nicola Toneri	
Will Williams	Trustee

**Staff Present**

Sheila Adams	SUP Finance and Office Manager
Nic Coombey	SUP PLACE Project Officer (Speaker)
Emily Cropton	SUP Destination Tweed Connecting Threads project
Katy Ewing	SUP Project Officer
Darren Flint	SUP Project Officer
Barnaby Fryer	SUP / Loch Ken Trust
Donald Greig	SUP Talla Hartfell Wild Land Area Initiative
Pip Tabor	SUP Partnership Manager

**In Attendance**

Jane Buchanan-Dunlop	
McNabb Laurie	DGC Galloway Glens Landscape Partnership
Neil Murray	Scottish Forestry
Morag Paterson	Speaker

**1. Welcome and Apologies**

Dr Chris Miles, Convenor, welcomed everyone to the online meeting and advised that the session was being recorded.

Apologies were received from:

Susan Barker	Member
Cat Barlow	SUP South of Scotland Golden Eagle Project Manager
Cllr Katie Hagmann	Trustee
John Thomas	Member

## 2. Approval of Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting of 17 November 2020

The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of 17 November 2020 were agreed as a true record and were moved for approval by Mr Donald Greig and seconded by Mr Barnaby Fryer.

There were no Matters Arising.

## 3. Report by the Convenor on the Activities of the Partnership

Dr Miles referred to the Annual Report, which had been issued electronically with the meeting papers, and is available in hard copy from Pip Tabor or Sheila Adams. The document was not read at the meeting to allow more time for speakers and discussion. Dr Miles highlighted the very busy year, in which the Company's financial situation had improved, which was remarkable in the circumstances. The organisation supports 16 jobs. A separate trading arm, Southern Uplands Partnership Services Ltd, was set up in October 2019, which had generated a profit in the last financial year, which is paid back to SUP, the parent charity. SUP has improved and increased its social media presence and more people are now talking about SUP. Dr Miles invited anyone who had suggestions, comments or questions on the report or in general, to contact Pip Tabor by email ([piptabor@sup.org.uk](mailto:piptabor@sup.org.uk)).

## 4. Report of the Auditor / Independent Financial Examiner and Receiving of the Annual Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2021

The Auditor's Report was included in the Accounts and a detailed Audit Report had been provided to Trustees. The Accounts had been discussed in detail at the Board meeting earlier in the day. Ms Sheila Adams explained that as the income of the trading subsidiary, Southern Uplands Partnership Services Ltd (SUPS Ltd), was over £100k, an audit was required of this Company, as well as the parent charity, Southern Uplands Partnership (SUP), which had turnover of £775.5k. SUP Services Ltd had its own set of accounts and consolidated group accounts had been produced for SUP.

Restricted projects showed an overspend of £25k but this was due to timing of grants and claims as all projects are fully funded and would be balanced on completion. Unrestricted funds relate to the core operation of SUP as a charity, which are becoming increasingly difficult to obtain but are crucial to the operation of the organisation as without it SUP would not be able to operate or have the ability to deliver any projects. SUP had made a surplus of £16,750 in the financial year, which added to a profit from SUP Services Ltd of £22,919, gave SUP a total unrestricted surplus of £39,669, which was particularly pleasing in such a difficult year with Covid restrictions. This increased the unrestricted reserve to £164,288, which was a very healthy financial position.

The Accounts for 2020/21 were formally approved by Directors and proposed as such by Ms Claire Pencak and seconded by Mr John Esslemont.

Dr Miles thanked Mr Tabor and Ms Adams for their hard work during the year but noted the need to increase staffing resources as they are both working beyond capacity.

## 5. Retiral, Re-election and Election of Trustees

There are vacancies on the Board and Dr Miles encouraged anyone who may be interested to contact himself or Mr Tabor for more information on what is involved and offered the opportunity of attending a Board meeting as an observer to find out more. Mr Tabor expressed his gratitude to the Trustees for their contributions to the Board.

There were no Trustees due to retire from the Board.  
The following Trustees had completed one three-year term and were standing for a second term.

All had indicated their willingness to serve a second three-year term and this was approved by members – proposed by Dr Will Williams, seconded by Mr Philip Ashmole – Cllr Katie Hagmann; Ms Sarah Macdonald; Dr Joan Mitchell; Prof Dave Roberts; Cllr Mark Rowley.

## **6. Appointment of Auditors / Independent Financial Examiners**

It was proposed that the current arrangements with JRW Group as Company Accountants and Auditors, are retained for the forthcoming financial year, which was approved – proposed by Dr Emily Taylor, seconded by Ms Sarah Macdonald.

## **7. Any Other Business**

Mr Fryer advised that James Stuart of One Planet Consulting is undertaking work on the way forward for Loch Ken Trust and he would share the document when completed, expected to be by the end of the year.

Following the formal business of the AGM, Mr Tabor introduced the Guest Speakers as Ms Morag Paterson and Mr Nic Coombey.

Informative and inspiring presentations were given by Ms Paterson on 'Communities and Forestry Plans' and Mr Coombey on 'PLACE (People, Land, Art, Culture, Environment) in the Biosphere project'.

Topics raised in questions and observations from the audience included:

- Examples of Forest Plans being significantly modified as a result of community consultation.
- Examples of Forestry Companies making a good example without being challenged by communities.
- Finding ways of increasing community understanding.
- To what extent do Scottish Forestry staff have direction to suggest alternatives.
- Role of Local Authorities.
- Influence of COP discussions.
- Need for 'balance' in forestry sector.
- Windfarms – divisive but do bring community benefits.
- Biodiversity and Climate Crisis.
- What can SUP do to help discussion and help equip communities.
  
- Share good case studies from right across Scotland.
- Scottish Land Commission's Land Rights and Responsibilities protocol on community engagement – encouraging best practice.
- Field Names project on Landward – summarised in booklet, available on request.
- Share best practice and extend across southern Scotland.
- Films and blogs available on Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere website.
- Would have liked to have done more on Covenanters; Pubs and Inns; flora.
- What would have been done differently if doing project again.
- Mapping community capacity.

Mr Tabor thanked Ms Paterson and Mr Coombey for the stimulating and encouraging talks.

Dr Miles thanked everyone who had attended and input to the meeting for supporting SUP and asked that people continue to support SUP.

The meeting closed at 4.30 pm.