

West Lothian Local Access Forum

5th Meeting

Tuesday 23 January 2024

3:00pm to 5.00pm

Sutherland Building Beecraigs Country Park

Decision Record

	Item	Summary of Item / Decision Taken	Action to be Taken	By Whom
1	Welcome and apologies	<p>The Meeting commenced at the Sutherland Building at 3:05pm</p> <p>A welcome was extended to the Members of West Lothian's Local Access Forum ('the Forum' or 'the LAF') in attendance</p> <p>IN ATTENDANCE: Gordon Allan Michael Eagers Sandy Edgars Malcolm Hill Jamie Smart (Chair) Clr Alison Adamson Clr Tom Conn</p> <p>Hannah Patterson (Corr.) Ross Walker (Corr.) – first half of meeting only</p> <p>West Lothian Council: Tony Mason – Access Ranger Beverly Stirling - Ranger Services Manager Tracey Smith - Ranger</p> <p>APOLOGIES RECEIVED: Sammy Saunders Jo Young Pippa Pleven</p>	NONE	
2	Quorum	<p>The Meeting was declared to be quorate in accordance with para 8.1 of the Standing Orders of the Forum which requires one third of the membership to be in attendance</p>	NONE	
3	Approval of Minutes of previous meetings	<p>The Minutes of the Meeting of 3 October 2023 were unanimously confirmed</p>	Minutes to be uploaded to the LAF webpage	TM
4	Action Points arising from meeting of 3 October 2023: 1. Privacy Notices 2. WL LAF webpage & bios	<p>1. Privacy Notices were circulated dealing with (a) personal information of LAF members shared with WLC and (b) in relation to the personal information of external parties to an access dispute where consent had been granted to a referral of the dispute to the LAF for advice; and</p> <p>A data sharing agreement was also circulated. Its purpose was to regulate the confidentiality and timetable for destruction of personal information belonging</p>	<p>The Privacy Notices to be uploaded to the LAF webpages</p> <p>Advice to be sought whether the Data Sharing Agreement needs signed by LAF members and/or</p>	<p>TM</p> <p>TM</p>

		<p>to third parties where shared by WLC with the LAF in relation to an access dispute referred to the LAF for advice</p> <p>2. The LAF webpages on the WLC site had been generally updated to include recruitment of the new Access User representative</p>	<p>whether it was sufficient that its terms can be accepted electronically.</p> <p>The LAF webpage will continue to be updated and expanded as necessary</p>	TM
5	Recruitment of new Member to LAF representing Access Users - update	<p>TM provided an update on the ongoing recruitment of an Access User representative following the resignation of the previous incumbent. Focus for recruitment was on the LAF webpages and by Facebook campaign</p> <p>Various other options were discussed to facilitate the recruitment to the vacancy including looking at re-classifying members where a clear overlap of interests was identified</p>	A closing date for applications is set for 21 February 2024 and further updates will follow.	TM
6	<p>Report of LAF Subgroup re</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOAC in the Classroom • Control of Dogs 	<p>MH for the subgroup reported this was ongoing</p> <p>It was agreed by the LAF that once the Subgroup had reached its findings/recommendations draft letters would be circulated by the Subgroup to the LAF by email for approval</p> <p>The remit was extended to include in the case of 'SOAC in the Classroom' the preparation of draft letters to be sent to the NAF, to the Scottish Ministers and also the Director of Education</p> <p>The Members of the Subgroup are: Malcolm Hill, Gordon Allan and Sammy Saunders</p>	Letters to be drafted and circulated to the Forum for approval	subgroup
7	LAF Workplan Discussion for 2024:	<p>There was an open discussion on the LAF workplan for 2024. Options could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core paths plan • Advising on the draft Active Travel Plan 2024-28 • Advising on the Local Development Plan 2 • Training Opportunities • Liaison with Neighbouring LAFs/Sustrans/John Muir Society re link paths and cross-border issues • Annual conference 	Chair and TM to pull together a workplan and report back to the LAF	Chair / TM
8	WLPARC	<p>Ross Walker of Police Scotland gave a brief historical background on the WLPARC (West Lothian Partnership Against Rural Crime)</p> <p>The WLPARC is a non-statutory multi-agency partnership set up in 2020 during the pandemic predominantly to coordinate action in relation to criminal and anti-social activity but the WLPARC role had subsequently extended to be an effective and proactive information sharing network on countryside issues generally. It was working well and had aided multi-agency networking and communication</p> <p>Representation on the WLPARC includes Police Scotland, West Lothian Council, the Scottish Fire and</p>	NONE	

		Rescue Service, British Horse Society, National Farmers Union Scotland, the Woodland Trust and Forest and Land Scotland		
9	WLC Access Issues report 2023	<p>TM gave a summary of the main Access Enquiries/Complaints/Issues in 2023</p> <p>See Appendix for a full report</p> <p>Access-related issues should be reported as follows:</p> <p>Core Paths and Rights of Way Issues - West Lothian Council https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/34250/Core-Paths-and-Rights-of-Way-Issues</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Make a Complaint - West Lothian Council https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/45309/Make-a-Complaint</p>	NONE	
10	ScotWays Annual Report 2023	<p>ScotWays Annual Report was circulated without comment</p> <p>A copy of the report is contained in the Appendix</p>	NONE	
11	National Access Forum (NAF) matters	<p>TM advised that the NAF had not met since the last LAF meeting but likely topics under discussion at their next meeting in February 2024 were expected to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidance on access in the Pentlands the legal position on liability for third party promotion of paths Updated e-MTB guidance Educational users and 'charges' for outdoor access Updates on the Land Reform Bill and the Agriculture and Rural Communities (Scotland) Bill <p>https://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot/act-and-access-code/national-access-forum</p>	TM to circulate the February 2024 NAF meeting papers once available for distribution	TM
12	<p>Training Event:</p> <p>Online LAF workshop - Scottish Outdoor Recreation Alliance (SORA)</p>	<p>For those Members of the LAF who were unable to attend the event, a recording of the workshop is available at:</p> <p>https://scotways-my.sharepoint.com/:v:/p/neil_birch/EWt7A5O1YZNDjK-mApqtP20BW1By8Av8vBuOnP4F2AKioQ</p> <p>By way of background SORA is an informal grouping of outdoor recreational bodies whose objectives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a forum for structured discussion and networking between organisations representing outdoor recreation interests seeking to positively influence whoever necessary at national level to enable individuals to exercise their legal rights of access 	TM will circulate from time-to-time any SORA papers received	TM

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identifying existing and potential issues or concerns of mutual interest developing, where appropriate, a cohesive approach or response to issues, opportunities and consultations of mutual interest/concern strengthening and providing a stronger united voice for organisations representing outdoor recreation <p>SORA members include the British Horse Society Scotland, Cycling UK Scotland, Developing Mountain Biking in Scotland, Mountaineering Scotland, Ramblers Scotland, Scottish Canoe Association, Scottish Sports Association and ScotWays</p>		
13	SOAN Annual Conference 2023	<p>TM attended the SOAN Annual Conference in November 2023 and had distributed the presentation papers. Topics under discussion included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement on Paths Funding for community path projects Ian Findlay Path Fund Community path groups from a volunteer's perspective Mapping Scotland's paths in partnership with communities Core paths reviews <p>and could form the basis for a future training event at an upcoming LAF meeting(s)</p>	Members to consider topics for future training possibilities	ALL
14	Active Travel Plan 2023-27 Update	<p>A discussion of the draft Active Travel Plan 2023-28 had been expected to form a large part of this meeting but the draft plan had yet to be released and is now expected to be available for comment in mid-February 2024</p>	Draft Plan to be circulated once available. An interim LAF meeting may be convened to enable the LAF to consider and frame comments	TM
15	The Woodland Trust - Wilderness Path Planning permission and project process	<p>Hannah Patterson of the Woodland Trust gave a short presentation on the issues that arose when developing the path network at The Wilderness, Livingston (Grid reference: NT039652)</p> <p>An informal path had developed due to a new residential development to the west and issues such as desire lines, assessing dangers to users, the purpose of the path (an off-road route to the local primary school), grant availability, upgrade options and developer contributions needed addressed as also the need to obtain planning consent</p> <p>HP commented that she had been unaware of the planning consent and the planning conditions attached (notifications had gone to the Woodland Trust head office) and she would welcome a way of finding out about local applications affecting Woodland Trust sites</p>	<p>NONE</p> <p>See Item 16 below</p>	
16	Any Other Business	<p>New Planning Applications.</p> <p>The Forum were of the view (and having noted HP's experience in identifying relevant planning applications) that they should as a</p>	Forum to review new planning applications	ALL

		<p>Forum actively monitor and comment, as necessary, on relevant planning applications</p> <p>To assist in the review of new planning applications, TM agreed to investigate the possibility of extending the distribution list of the WLC Internal Planning Weekly List to the LAF as this List presents new applications in a user-friendly way</p> <p>Linlithgow Cycle Lanes Jamie Smart raised the issue of the cycle lane bollards which remained in place in Linlithgow but which JS understood were to be removed. Cllr TC advised that he was aware of this but that there was a process and agreed timetable for removal of the bollard. TC also agreed that traffic calming or cycle lane works must take account of wide agricultural vehicles which may have no choice in the route they have to take.</p>	<p>TM to investigate extending the distribution list of the WLC Internal Planning Weekly List to the LAF</p> <p>TC to investigate and to request that NFUS are added as consultees with the Roads Service.</p>	<p>TM</p> <p>TC</p>
17	Date of next meeting(s) & Close	<p>It was unanimously resolved that the next Forum meeting would be held on 23 April 2024 at 2pm and would be a face-to-face meeting to be convened at the Sutherland Building, Beecraigs Country Park</p> <p>The meeting closed at 5:05pm</p>	<p>Next meeting: 23 April 2024 @ 2pm</p> <p>If any Member has any item that they wish added to the Agenda could these be brought to the attention of the Chair or the Access Ranger well in advance of the meeting</p>	<p>ALL</p>

WLC Access Report 2023 – ITEM 9

In 2023 there were 100 new access-related issues of a nature that needed more than a quick call or short conversation to resolve. By way of comparison there were 56 issues logged in 2022. 2023 was the first full year that WLC has had an access ranger in recent times and the increase may in part be down to more active logging of issues.

These 100 issues were logged under various headings as follows:

signage	2
obstruction	41
Information request	23
hazard	15
path condition	6
irresponsible access (inc vehicles)	8
access – other	5

The vast majority of issues are obstruction/hazards which accounting for 41% of the total. This is slightly lower than last year.

Obstructions are not confined to fences or locked gates but also include serious fly tipping (4%). Hazards (15%) by comparison are mainly decaying infrastructure, fallen trees or flooding and the like. Where these impact on budgets this is an increasing challenge given financial cuts. There has also been a large number of complaints about the problematic access to Linn Jaw particularly as the bridge over the Linnhous burn no longer exists. The cost to replace the of bridge is however considerable.

Path Condition complaints (6%) are largely erosion-related and the low level of these appears to be testament to the good work carried out by the Ranger and Open Space teams generally and also many private landowners and organisations. The 2003 Act while creating access rights did not contain a requirement for either the Council or any private landowners to maintain these paths.

Signage (2%) relates to both deterrent signage and also missing signage and continues have low levels of reporting.

In 2023 there was a jump in logged complaints relating to irresponsible access from 5 to 8 but in percentage terms this is unchanged. The more significant of these complaints continue to be about motorised trail bikes on private land. This remains a headache given the over-reaching statutory requirement that in general a landowner should not prevent or deter non-motorised access. Updated national guidance on e-bikes/E-MTBs is awaited from NAF and will hopefully be helpful. Irresponsible access complaints also included unnecessarily climbing fences, inappropriate fires, stone throwing at livestock, dogs not under control.

Information Requests (23%) are increasing and are welcome as this indicates that members of the public are in greater numbers enquiring about access rights and this becomes an opportunity to talk about the Scottish Outdoor Access Code. One of the Forum's roles is to provide advice 'on matters having to do with the exercise of access rights'.

Other Access issues are where statutory access rights apply so the issue is not directly path related.

There have been no referrals in 2023 of any access dispute to the LAF.

The LAF has a statutory role to offer advice to help resolve access issues. The 2003 Act however provides (at section 25(2)(b)) that the LAF advice can only be given where there is an offer of help and an acceptance. Where a referral is requested informed consent is therefore required. Where the Council look to share data with the LAF then GDPR needs addressed. In order to deal with GDPR issues, Privacy Notices and a Data Sharing Agreement to ensure confidentiality and a robust process for deletion of data once the dispute has been resolved or should consent be withdrawn have been or will be put in place.

Finally where any member of the LAF does wish to log an access related complaint they should use the complaint process on the WLC website as full reporting of issues will help WLC (and the LAF) better monitor access-related issues:

[Core Paths and Rights of Way Issues - West Lothian Council](https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/34250/Core-Paths-and-Rights-of-Way-Issues)

<https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/34250/Core-Paths-and-Rights-of-Way-Issues>

[Make a Complaint - West Lothian Council](https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/45309/Make-a-Complaint)

<https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/45309/Make-a-Complaint>

ScotWays Annual Report 2023 – ITEM 10



Annual Report 2023



www.scotways.com

Chair's report

I took over as Chair of ScotWays in May after John Elliot stepped down. The past year has been challenging for staff and board members as we introduced our new organisational strategy. Our finances are not as robust as we would like. As well as the challenges of rising costs faced by so many at present, we also have had the expense of seeking additional legal advice because of the actions of Network Rail at Dalwhinnie and elsewhere in Scotland as regards public access. I would like to thank all staff and volunteer directors for their commitment, passion and hard work, and also all our wonderful volunteers who do so much work for us. We couldn't operate without you!

In January there were celebrations to mark 20 years since the passing of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. That legislation was a



great achievement for Scotland, but has led some to think that there is nothing left to do. Now we have access rights, they ask, why do we need ScotWays? The answer is in the number of access breaches recorded by local authorities and National Parks; in 'big' cases such as Dalwhinnie, Levenmouth, Glenborrodale and the Radical Road at Salisbury Crags; and in the level of misunderstanding of rights and responsibilities by landowners and members of the public. There is still a great need for the expertise, historical records and knowledge held by ScotWays to preserve and defend our precious rights of way and general access rights. So, finally, many thanks to you, our members, who support us and help to make our work possible.

Katharine Taylor

Directors' report

The Directors present their report and the accounts for the year ended 30 June 2023. The financial statements comply with the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005, the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended), the Companies Act 2006, the Articles of Association, and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

OBJECTIVES

The charitable objective of the Society is "the preservation, defence, restoration and acquisition, for the public benefit, of public rights of access in Scotland, including public rights of way and related amenity".

The Society is the independent charity which upholds public access in Scotland. Originally founded in 1845, then incorporating in 1946, it combines three main roles: expert authority and adviser on the law of access; custodian and manager of the national resource of information

about access routes and rights; and practical guardian and advocate of public access on the ground, in town and country, across Scotland.

ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The ScotWays Strategic Framework for the next five years was finalised after feedback from members at our AGM in November 2022. The strategy is available on our website. We aim to increase our capacity to promote and defend public access, build strong relationships with policy makers and politicians, develop new projects, improve our resilience in changing times, and raise the profile of the Society and of public access rights.

Our four sub-committees – Communications, Finance, Legal and Access, and Operations – which all comprise staff and board members, monitor progress, and enable us to meet the long-term outcomes set out in the strategy.

We have three main strategic areas.

RAISING THE PROFILE OF RESPONSIBLE PUBLIC ACCESS TO LAND AND INLAND WATER

To do this, we need to work with government and its agencies to influence policies and practices that protect and improve access rights, and to collaborate with other outdoor interest groups.

In the past year, we have participated in various access groups – including the Scottish Outdoor Access Network (SOAN), the Scottish Outdoor Recreation Alliance (SORA) and the National Access Forum (NAF). There has been discussion of the appropriate terminology to use when discussing the exercising of access rights: access users or access takers, right to roam or right of responsible access? The NAF subsequently decided that it was not within its remit to discuss such semantics. However, those who were involved in developing the Scottish Outdoor Access Code feel that the precise use of language is critical to understanding. This is a debate which may re-emerge.

Last year, we submitted a response to National Planning Framework 4, asking what was being done to raise awareness of rights of way in the planning process, which was ignored. We produced notes for our website to raise awareness of the issue and

will lobby Parliament, along with other organisations, when relevant planning issues arise.

In January, we joined many others at the Scottish Parliament to celebrate 20 years since the passing of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. In April, a staff member and a director participated in a 'round table' event at the Scottish Parliament, hosted by Edward Mountain MSP which considered whether there was a need to update the Scottish Outdoor Access Code. (ScotWays' view is that the framework is still fit for purpose but that consistent resources are required to ensure education and enforcement.)

We have also contributed comments on access issues to various publications during the year including *The Ferret*, *The Courier*, *Press and Journal* and the *Badenoch and Strathspey Herald*. Our social media has also been active and we have seen a steady increase in followers on both Facebook and Twitter (now X). Our signpost photos for #FingerpostFriday on Twitter proved particularly appealing, regularly attracting over 1,500 interactions per photo.

PROTECTING AND PROMOTING OUTDOOR ACCESS RIGHTS AND ASSOCIATED AMENITY

We are improving how we update and maintain the Catalogue of Rights of Way (CROW). The Society is reliant on the data in CROW to fund its operations, so its reliability is vital. To improve the functioning of and access to CROW, staff have been occupied implementing a new software system called CAMS Pro. This is a web-based system which will enable staff and volunteers to work on it remotely. It has proved to be a complex process, but the new system should be fully operational by the autumn and staff and volunteers trained to use it by the end of the year.

Our three part-time members of staff who deal primarily with access enquiries continue to provide a cost-effective searches service for information on rights of way for solicitors and the public. The total number of searches is down slightly at 1,198, compared with 1,261 in 2021/22. This equates to an average of 100 solicitor enquiries

a month (these searches are paid for and are the source of most of our income). There was a monthly average of 69 enquiries from the public and others. Significant amongst these have been queries about railway crossings due to the re-opening of the Levermouth line in Fife and the Ben Alder level crossing closure at Dalwhinnie. We provide responses to public enquiries as a free service.

One of our key objectives is to act upon obstructions and threats which contravene current outdoor access legislation, particularly those that are of national significance and/or potentially undermine the legal basis of access rights. The closure of the railway crossing at Dalwhinnie, part of a right of way, is just such a case. Our ongoing questionnaire exercise was launched in 2022 to gather additional evidence of the route's use over decades by walkers, cyclists and equestrians. We continue to work with The Highland Council, Cairngorms National Park Authority, Ramblers Scotland, the local community and others to try to make Network Rail reinstate public access. We have taken significant legal advice to ensure that we are acting on a sound basis.

Our involvement has continued with Glenborrodale where a landowner is trying to block access and at the Radical Road in Holyrood Park which was closed in 2018 by Historic Environment Scotland due to occasional rock falls. Despite planning permission being refused in 2020, a new planning application has been made to build a golf course at Coul Links, so we have continued to make representations about the threat to public access on the dunes. The common feature of all these cases is that resolving them takes a very long time and a lot of tenacity on the part of ScotWays and other agencies.

We have also responded to consultations on Land Reform in a Net Zero Nation, on Scotland's third National Park, proposals for a new Agriculture Bill, a proposed Ownerless Property Transfer Scheme, and (as a member of SORA) on Scotland's Forestry Grant Scheme consultation. We keep an eye on Local Development Plans, commenting as necessary, as well as responding to planning

applications which affect public access, both for individual properties and large developments. We continue to comment on wind farms and other energy developments to ensure public access is taken into account.

Sadly, for budgetary reasons, a number of local authorities no longer have access officers in post, and not all authorities are ScotWays members. As part of its charitable objectives, ScotWays actively supports all local authorities in their efforts to uphold public access in line with their legal duties, irrespective of whether or not they pay their subscriptions. Indeed, those unfortunate council areas without access officers are often those in most need of assistance!

Our programme to maintain and replace ScotWays' path signage continues apace, with over 100 volunteers surveying and recording our signposts across Scotland. We are digitising our old signpost information and volunteers have now scanned roughly two thirds of the volume of paperwork in the office signposting files. We have a total of 6,695 recorded signs (up from 5,222 in 2022), while 1,985 remain to be assessed at the end of June (down from 3,176 in 2022). Our survey is now 70 per cent complete and has identified many ScotWays signs that were not previously recorded. As a result of the signpost survey results, 30 signs have been replaced or upgraded this year.

Following a Board decision during the year to make a £4,000 contribution from us which represents the balance of ScotWays' Donald Bennet Memorial Fund, Atholl Estates are now undertaking repairs to the Bedford Memorial Bridge at the Falls of Tarf in Glen Tilt. Materials were transported to the site by helicopter in July and the repairs will be completed over the summer and early autumn.

Ken, the ScotWays Knowledge Base, is proving popular. We have reviewed all the existing frequently asked questions (FAQs) and



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are steadily adding new pages covering topics ranging from the history of access rights to the interaction of development and outdoor access.

We are on course for publication of the sixth edition of *Scottish Hill Tracks* in 2024. 138 volunteers have completed the route surveys and our volunteer editors have edited the route descriptions of all 350 routes. Attention has turned to sourcing the photos needed to illustrate the routes. Several volunteers have started to organise photos taken by SHT surveyors and a call has gone out for good quality images to illustrate the new edition.



The Members Walks Survey circulated at the last AGM showed there was demand for a walks programme and that those who went on the walks really enjoyed them, but that most members did not participate! Nine walks were planned for 2023, but three walks were cancelled because of low numbers and a fourth called off as the walk leader was injured. Due to the amount of staff time it takes to organise walks, together with low uptake, we have decided to reduce the number of walks offered in 2024.

In 2022, we submitted a bid for a Scottish Mountaineering Trust Diamond Grant to develop a network of 'Scottish Cross Country Routes' but were unsuccessful. The funds were awarded to Mountaineering Scotland and the Outdoor Access Trust for Scotland for their joint project to raise awareness of the urgent need for investment in the repair and maintenance of informal mountain paths across Scotland. The results were announced in November 2022 at the Dundee Mountain Film Festival, where we had a stall and sponsored a film. ScotWays is greatly supportive of the excellent 'It's Up To Us' savemountainpaths.scot project. We still hope to develop the cross-country network concept in some format a later date.

ENSURING THE RESILIENCE OF SCOTWAYS

How we communicate with our members is very important. We have introduced a new contact management system called Infoodle to help us manage membership and volunteer contact information. It has been a major task to implement, but we expect it to improve our efficiency, minimising human error by linking membership applications and subscriptions directly to Infoodle. It will improve how we contact our members, even in due course allowing members to update their own contact details.

As Ordnance Survey has changed its systems, we are investigating the best way to replace our OS mapping without incurring excessive licensing fees.

As a very small charity, we rely heavily on volunteers to help us achieve our aims, so are delighted to have been able to welcome many new volunteers to help with surveys for signs and Scottish Hill Tracks routes. We have also enlisted volunteers to assist in the distribution of our leaflets to reach new audiences.

Two directors resigned during the year, leaving the Board a bit depleted. We have appealed to our members and volunteer base for new directors and are heartened to have received a number of applications from well-qualified people. We hope to welcome new directors to the Board in the next few months.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

We are grateful for all subscriptions and donations received. This year we received several substantial donations, two of £5K, one specifically for signposting, the other unrestricted, and two others of £2K and £1K.

The Society recorded a deficit of £39,293 (2022: deficit £55,115) for the year. This includes a deficit of £40,967 (2022: deficit £59,337) on unrestricted reserves and a surplus of £1,674 (2022: £4,222) on restricted reserves. The overall deficit is the result of investment losses – both realised and on year-end valuation – being factored into the accounts, as required by accounting standards. The running, or "trading", position is a deficit of £20,200 (2022:

deficit 1,415). As at 30 June 2023, the Society had total reserves of £526,590 (2022: £565,883), including £504,901 (2022: £544,770) general funds, £8,174 (2022: £9,272) designated reserves and £13,515 (2022: 11,841) restricted funds. Further detail on the financial performance of the charity can be found in the Statement of Financial Activities, Balance Sheet and supporting notes.

This is the fourth year that the Society has run at a slight loss. While we have financial reserves that will allow us to continue operating for several years to come, the directors are aware of the need to ensure that our operations are as effective and efficient as possible, and to find new income streams.

RESERVES POLICY

The general fund represents the free reserves of the Society. General fund not tied up in fixed assets amounted to £298,740 (2022: £436,283). The Board considers it appropriate to hold the equivalent of 12 months' budgeted expenditure, around £220,000. The directors acknowledge that current reserves are in excess of that requirement. As the Society continues to modernise and increase its activities and profile for the benefit of the public, the Board considers the current level of reserves satisfactory in funding operating deficits in fulfilment of the Society's objectives. More detail on the designated funds is set out in Note 16 of the full accounts.

RISK MANAGEMENT

In these uncertain times the identification, management and mitigation of risk has been at the forefront of the Society's activities. It underlies the work of the Board with sub-committees and of the staff. In line with our risk policy, our risk register is formally reviewed at the September Board meeting after active consideration by the Finance sub-committee.

INVESTMENT POLICY

The Society maintains an investment portfolio. This year the Board agreed that it should be managed on a discretionary basis by Investec Wealth and Investment

Limited. The investment objective is to maintain the real value of the portfolio over time, as well as provide an income. The value of the portfolio at 30 June 2023 was £316,996, a decline of 6.5% over the year, but with an estimated annual income of £10,000.

GRANTS AWARDED POLICY

ScotWays small grants scheme is aimed at community-based and access-related projects which might otherwise not proceed. Grants are awarded for up to 50 per cent of the project budget and within a range of £500 to £1,500. Assessment of applications is made by a director-led committee whose criteria include public benefit and the ability of an organisation to deliver the project. Applicant organisations must be members of ScotWays. At the discretion of the Board, the Society may also contribute to larger projects which benefit public access and meet its charitable objectives. This year we gave further support to Aboyne Paths and Tracks Group to help install a noticeboard showing local paths.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

Our future plans are based upon the priorities identified in our five-year Strategic Framework and the board will be carefully monitoring progress against our objectives. ScotWays is the keeper of historic and current information on rights of way and outdoor access law. To maintain our position as the recognised authority on access issues, we need to ensure that our data is accurate and up-to-date, and our retrieval systems fast and efficient. To this end, we are in the process of recruiting an Information Officer to manage the collection, recording and retrieval of all our data. This is a new role and we hope to have someone in post by November 2023.

As noted above, we have invested much money and staff time on improving our IT systems over the past year. We continue working with the developers of CAMS Pro to move our route and infrastructure records to it. The developers are working on a new version, so we are fortunate to be able to discuss with them many functions essential to our work and how to set them up to be as useful as possible to us.



We will continue to add information and guidance on our website, particularly to 'Ken, the ScotWays Knowledge Base', which holds much information on access rights, past cases and answers to FAQs – useful to access authorities, solicitors, developers and members of the public alike.

The closure of the Ben Alder level crossing at Dalwhinnie is a matter of national importance and, if it comes to a court case, the ruling will set precedent for any future threats to access rights due to closures of railway crossings. We will continue to prioritise action on this issue, which may involve additional fundraising.

As part of our work with the Scottish Outdoor Recreational Alliance (SORA), an online event for Local Access Forum (LAF) members is planned for autumn 2023. We hope this will support LAFs to be more effective, and improve our contact with representatives on all LAFs, regardless of whether the individuals are members of ScotWays, other organisations, or none.

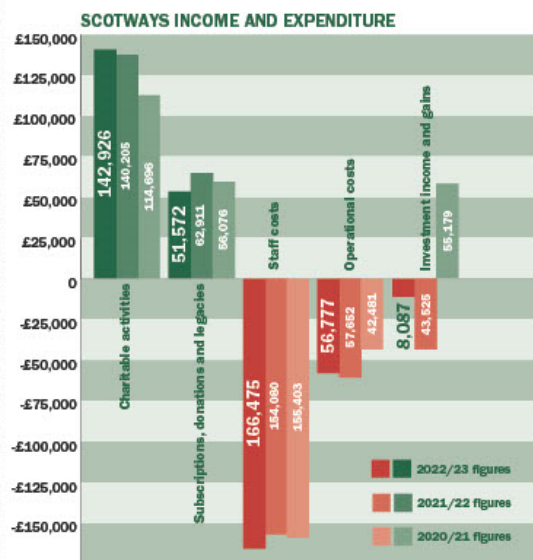
Over 2023/24 we will build

on the work done surveying signposts. Our budget for the year commits £10,000 towards their repair and replacement. We will train and support volunteers to carry out much of the work, but a complete replacement will still cost £300, so we will therefore seek additional funding from supporters to expand the scheme. We are extremely grateful for a generous £5,000 donation from The E M Whittome 2013 Charitable Trust, received in November 2022, to be used specifically for replacing and refurbishing signs.

The scanning of signpost records by volunteers should be completed by the end of 2023. In the meantime, other volunteers will be working to extract the relevant aspects of the history of each sign and record the information in such a way that it can be readily imported into CAMS Pro.

Promotion work will start in the next few months for the new edition of *Scottish Hill Tracks*, which is due to be published in Spring 2024. The reduced number of guided walks we offer next summer will all feature *Scottish Hill Tracks* routes to help publicise the new edition of the book and introduce more people to some great walks.

Continued on page 6



We held a very successful Volunteers' Day in Stirling in July 2023 at which there was lively discussion, and we provided training and sought volunteer input on a range of tasks with which we need help. We aim to build on the clear enthusiasm and engagement of all those who participated, as well as those volunteers who were unable to attend.

An important element of our five-year strategy is to generate a significant change in the impact of the Society. We need to increase our engagement with politicians and other influencers, and maintain a proactive watching brief on court cases relating to access. Due to lack of capacity, these areas have not received enough attention recently, so this is something we plan to address.

In addition to our organisational strategy for the next five years, we set some Short-term Actions for the period to July 2023. These included establishing an action plan for 2023/24, a communications plan, improving the IT systems necessary to support our work, developing a programme for maintaining our route and signpost records, and increasing our volunteer capacity. As can be seen from the above report, we have achieved or made good progress with most of these. Areas that remain challenging are implementing a performance and development programme for staff, and completing a full review of our governance and leadership model to ensure that we are operating as effectively as possible. We will continue to try to increase management capacity to progress these areas as they are necessary for the long-term future of the organisation.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT GOVERNING DOCUMENT

The Scottish Rights Way and Access Society is a company limited by guarantee (SC024243) and a registered charity (SC015460) governed by its Articles of Association. Each member of the Society has undertaken to contribute an amount not exceeding £1 towards any deficit arising in the event of the Society being wound up. Directors of the Society are also charity trustees for the purposes

of charity law and directors for the purposes of company law and are listed on page 15. The Articles of Association provide that any director who has held office for a period of three years since their last appointment shall retire from office and may seek re-appointment. Directors may not seek re-appointment if they have held office for a continuous period of nine years. The Directors are appointed by the members at the annual general meeting and the Chair is appointed by the Directors from among their number.

Katharine Taylor was appointed Chair in May 2023.

Dorothy Breckenridge was appointed at the AGM together with the five directors co-opted during the year. Unfortunately, both Peter Hildrew and John Onslow decided to step down from the Board during the year. Both made valuable contributions to the Board during their time in office, and John in particular led work on the new strategic plan. We are grateful to them both for what they have brought to the Board, and for their continuing involvement with ScotWays as volunteers.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND MANAGEMENT

The Directors meet five times a year and in addition each is a member of one or more sub-committees. Day-to-day running of the Society is the responsibility of the Chief Operating Officer, Richard Barron, and National Secretary, Alison Riddell, supported by other staff and volunteers.

STATEMENT OF DIRECTORS' RESPONSIBILITIES

The directors are responsible for preparing the Report of the Directors and the financial statements in accordance with the applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice). Company law requires the directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of the affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including income and expenditure, for the financial year.

In preparing those financial statements, the directors are

required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The directors are responsible for maintaining proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006, the Charities & Trustees Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended). The directors are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019) and in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small entities.

This report was approved by the board of directors on 12 September 2023.

Katharine Taylor
Chair



Independent Examiner's Statement

to the Trustees of The Scottish Rights
of Way and Access Society

I HAVE have examined the summarised accounts of The Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society set out on pages 8 to 9.

This report is made to the directors, as a body, in accordance with the terms of my engagement dated 21 April 2021. My work has been undertaken to enable me to report as set out below and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law I do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the directors, as a body, for my work or for this report.

RESPECTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TRUSTEES AND THE INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the summarised accounts in accordance with applicable United Kingdom law and the recommendations of the charities SORP.

My responsibility is to report to you on the consistency of the summarised financial statements within the Annual Report with the full annual financial statements.

This statement has been prepared for and only for the charity's Trustees as a body and for no other purpose. I do not accept or assume responsibility for any other purpose or to any other person to whom this statement is shown or into whose hands it may come save where expressly agreed by my prior consent in writing.

BASIS OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

My examination is carried out in accordance with Regulation 11 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended). An examination includes 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 seeking 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 in the view given by the accounts.

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S STATEMENT

The summarised financial statements are consistent with the full financial statements of The Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society for the year ended 30 June 2023.

Kevin Cattanach CA
12 September 2023

Summary Financial Statements

The summarised accounts set out on pages 8 to 9 are not the statutory accounts, but comprise an extract of the information in the full accounts. The full accounts were approved by the Board on 12 September 2023, and the Independent Examiner's report on the full accounts raised no concerns.

Copies of the full report and accounts

can be obtained from the Registered Office: 24 Annandale Street, Edinburgh EH7 4AN or from our website, www.scotways.com.

The full accounts will be submitted to the Office of the Scottish Charities Regulator in the near future.

Katharine Taylor, Chair
12 September 2023

NEWS IN BRIEF

SUBSCRIBE ONLINE FOR MORE NEWS

The latest edition of our e-newsletter, *Stravaig*, went out in October. If you did not receive it but have received it previously, perhaps you forgot to resubscribe. In the July issue, we said that we were switching production from Mailchimp to our new contact management system, Infodile. Mailchimp only required an email address but Infodile requires a name as well. As a result, we may not have been able to transfer your email address.

If you would still like to receive *Stravaig*, and keep up to date with happenings in the world of outdoor access, please resubscribe at scotways.com/sign-up-to-e-newsletter

THE RADICAL ROAD: PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE?



The Radical Road in Edinburgh's Holyrood Park has been a much-loved walking route since 1822. In 2018, Historic Environment Scotland (HES) closed the route due to fears of rockfall. A free public meeting organised by the Edinburgh Geological Society, Ramblers Scotland, The Cockburn Association, Mountaineering Scotland and ScotWays, to explore the history and use of the Radical Road, and its importance to local people and visitors, walkers, geologists, climbers and historians. It will be an opportunity to find out about HES's Strategic Plan for Holyrood Park, and to discuss what further action can be taken to persuade HES to reopen the Radical Road. Sunday 3 December, the Binks Hall, Greyfriars Charteris Centre, 138/140 Pleasance, Edinburgh, EH8 9RR. Doors open 1:30pm, meeting starts at 2pm.

PHOTOGRAPH: RICHARD BARRON

Abstract of accounts for the year ended 30 June 2023

Statement of Financial Activities
(incorporating the income and expenditure account)
for the year ended 30 June 2023

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Income from:					
Donations and legacies	1	46,572	5,000	51,572	62,911
Charitable activities		142,926	-	142,926	140,205
Investments		11,006	-	11,006	10,175
Total Income		200,504	5,000	205,504	213,291
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds		(2,452)	-	(2,452)	(1,394)
Charitable activities		(219,926)	(3,326)	(223,252)	(213,312)
Total Expenditure		(222,378)	(3,326)	(225,704)	(214,706)
Realised (losses)/ gains on investments		(1,993)	-	(1,993)	(4,013)
Unrealised (losses)/ gains on investments		(17,100)	-	(17,100)	(49,687)
Net income/(expenditure)		(40,967)	1,674	(39,293)	(55,115)
Transfers between funds		-	-	-	-
Net movement in funds		(40,967)	1,674	(39,293)	(55,115)
Funds brought forward at 1 July 2022		554,042	11,841	565,883	620,998
Funds carried forward at 30 June 2023		513,075	13,515	526,590	565,883

Balance sheet as at 30 June 2023

	2023 £	2023 £	2022 £	2022 £
Fixed assets				
Tangible assets		106,161		108,487
Investments at valuation		316,996		338,945
		<u>423,157</u>		<u>447,432</u>
Current assets				
Stock	1,844		1,326	
Debtors	32,827		36,518	
Cash in bank and at hand	95,621		110,186	
	<u>130,292</u>		<u>148,030</u>	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	<u>(26,859)</u>		<u>(29,579)</u>	
Net current assets		103,433		118,451
Total assets less current liabilities		<u>526,590</u>		<u>565,883</u>
Reserves				
Unrestricted funds				
- General	504,901		544,770	
- Revaluation		-	-	
- Designated	8,174		9,272	
	<u>513,075</u>		<u>554,042</u>	
Restricted funds		13,515		11,841
		<u>526,590</u>		<u>565,883</u>

These financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Board on 12 September 2023.
John Elliot, Director

Notes:

1. Donations and legacies

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Annual subscriptions	16,939	-	16,939	17,738
Life subscriptions	800	-	800	900
Corporate subscriptions	2,992	-	2,992	2,762
Local authority subscriptions	7,600	-	7,600	1,000
Donations	12,816	5,000	17,816	21,135
Bequests and legacies	-	-	-	14,152
Gift aid	5,425	-	5,425	5,224
	<u>46,572</u>	<u>5,000</u>	<u>51,572</u>	<u>62,911</u>

In 2022, all income from donations and legacies was split, £57,109 unrestricted and £5,802 restricted.

Volunteer achievements

Neil Birch reviews another busy year for signposts, walks and many other activities



PHOTOGRAPH NEIL BIRCH



PHOTOGRAPH JOHN RAY

Members walk in the Pentland Hills heading to Carlops

IN LAST year's annual report, we reported on the resumption of a number of volunteering activities that had been put on hold during the pandemic. During 2022-23, these activities continued and more activities resumed. We're very grateful to all 240 of our registered volunteers, and all contributions are valuable, whether you've done a lot or a little.

SIGNPOSTING

Signpost maintenance and installation picked up significant pace, with several experienced volunteers undertaking signposting tasks themselves and some new volunteers working with Access Officer (Outreach) Neil Birch. A few signs were also installed on our behalf by partners, particularly The Highland Council and the Cairngorms National Park. In total, 49 signs and waymarks were installed during 2022-23.

- 30 Replacement signs
- 6 New signs
- 13 Waymarks
- 90 Total signposting problems resolved.

Our ongoing effort to verify and consolidate our signpost records with a field survey took a great leap forward: the proportion of signposts that have been recently surveyed increased from 39 per cent to 65 per cent. This excludes a substantial number of signpost surveys

that have been undertaken but not yet recorded.

At the end of June 2023, our records show nearly 3,300 signs that bear ScotWays' name, including those we installed in partnership with local authorities and local paths groups.

Their conditions were as follows:

- 65% Surveyed recently
- 33% Excellent
- 46% OK
- 11% Needs repair
- 10% Missing.

Based on these statistics, we set a target to repair 37 signs during 2023-24 and, at the time of writing, we are making very good progress towards this target! In July 2023, we delivered a practical training session to 13 volunteers and we've been putting volunteers in touch with others in their area to work together on signpost repairs.

During 2022 and into 2023, many volunteers uploaded their own signpost

surveys directly into CROW via a web map platform, and a dedicated team of volunteers uploaded surveys submitted by other volunteers. However, this required a substantial amount of staff time to approve and complete the recording of each survey. In spring 2023, we paused the upload facility to allow for work on upgrading the software behind CROW and, as a result, there is now a substantial number of submitted signpost surveys awaiting recording into CROW. The CROW upgrade will allow more volunteers to upload signpost surveys directly – whether their own, or those undertaken by other volunteers – and in future it will be possible for some of the moderation to be done by volunteers.

In 2022, we started a new project to digitise our signposting archives, making the history of our signposts more accessible to hybrid-working staff, and to enable us to grant access to volunteers in future. Approximately half of the paper

The Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society



signposting records were scanned by June 2023, and this information has been invaluable on many occasions, for example to better understand what has happened to some missing signs.

SCOTTISH HILL TRACKS

During 2022-23, we completed resurveying the 344 routes in the current (2011) edition of *Scottish Hill Tracks*, as well as all their variants and six new routes in Harris and Lewis, bringing the Western Isles into *Scottish Hill Tracks* for the first time. This brought to a close a project that had started in 2019, before being interrupted by the pandemic. As well as updating the text descriptions for each route, surveyors provided a great suite of photographs for many of the routes. A small team of editors worked meticulously through all the survey reports, cross-checking where routes had been surveyed by more than one volunteer and with other

Annual Report 2023

information sources. Each route was plotted from scratch from 1:25,000 OS maps. These route lines will be added to the Catalogue of Rights of Way and will be used to produce the small-scale route overview maps in the book and could be made available more widely in the future. At the time of writing, the text for the new edition has been completed and attention is now turning to the photographs, maps, indices and promotion of the new edition. Publication is scheduled for the first half of 2024, a hundred years after the precursor to the present book, *Hill Paths in Scotland*, was published by Walter Smith.

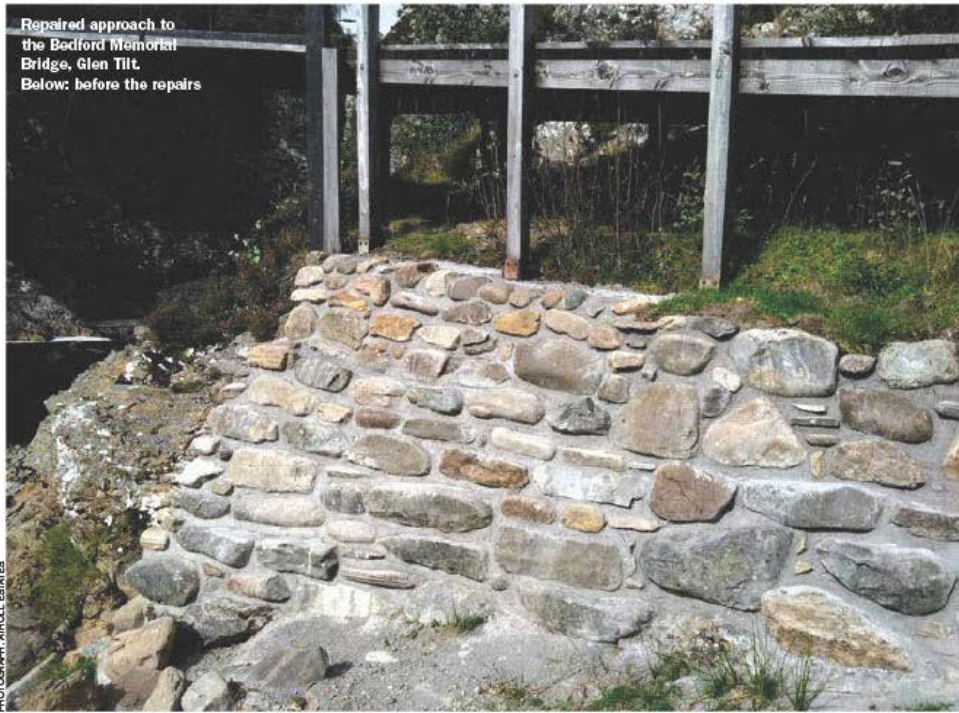
MEMBERS' WALKS PROGRAMME

The 2022 walks programme was a success, with seven walks taking place with group sizes of between four and seven (in addition to leaders). A further two walks were cancelled, mainly due to low numbers of bookings. Over the



winter of 2022-23, we conducted a survey about the walks programme, with 56 members responding; 97 per cent of whom said we should offer a programme of walks. We organised our 2023 programme with a good range of walks across a range of difficulty levels and locations. We altered the booking process to combine the booking and registration forms and to accept payment by card and bank transfer in addition to cheque. Unfortunately, participation numbers have dropped further in 2023, with four walks having to be cancelled due to low numbers. We still propose to run a walks programme in 2024, and we hope that offering a smaller selection of walks on, and inspired by, the routes in *Scottish Hill Tracks*, and allowing members to invite a non-member friend as a guest, might attract a new cohort of participants.

Continued on page 12



Repaired approach to the Bedford Memorial Bridge, Glen Tilt. Below: before the repairs

PHOTOGRAPH: ATHOLL ESTATES

VOLUNTEER DEVELOPMENT

ScotWays' volunteering activities continued to rebound following the pandemic, with a whole variety of activities taking place and a substantial new intake of volunteers, especially those who were keen to resurvey the routes in *Scottish Hill Tracks*. The completion of surveying the SHT routes brought us to something of a crossroads, and staff and directors felt it would be important to involve volunteers in helping ScotWays work towards its new Strategic Framework. During spring 2022, we planned a volunteer day which took place in Stirling in July. The purpose was to let volunteers meet each other, collaborate, and share experiences and ideas about how ScotWays could develop volunteering. We also took the opportunity to offer a small selection of in-person training opportunities.

An enormous range of suggestions was made, which we will consider and implement where possible over the coming years. One 'quick win', which we were very happy to implement, was to form informal local groups of volunteers who have opted in to being in direct contact with each other. If these are successful, then there's no limit to how much they might develop in the future.



“This is yet another modest piece of ongoing maintenance to the bridge that ScotWays and the landowner, Atholl Estates, have undertaken over its long life”

Communication with volunteers has evolved: the volunteer newsletter now goes out every 2-3 months, including a range of updates about what ScotWays has been up to alongside more specific requests for assistance. The newsletter is now distributed through our new CRM system, Infoodle, which will allow further refinement of communications in future.

BEDFORD MEMORIAL BRIDGE REPAIRS

If you've travelled through Glen Tilt in recent years, you almost certainly crossed the suspension bridge at the Falls of Tarf and you might have been thankful for its assistance keeping your feet dry, or – if the Tarf was in spate – for being able to cross the river at all. It's less likely you noticed the timber walkway that spans an awkward rock step at the east end of the bridge, or that the stone foundations of the walkway were starting to be washed out. We're very grateful to the ScotWays member who reported this damage in 2020, allowing us to work with Atholl Estates to organise a pre-emptive repair, to which ScotWays has contributed up to £4,000 from the Donald Bennet Memorial Fund (the remote location required materials to be flown in by helicopter). This is yet another modest piece of ongoing maintenance to the bridge that ScotWays and the landowner, Atholl Estates, have undertaken over its long life: ScotWays commissioned the bridge in 1886, a few years after 18-year-old John Francis Bedford was swept to his death by the flooded Tarf while following the historic right of way.

Neil Birch

The Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society

Join us for our hybrid Annual General Meeting 2023

The Society's Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday 18 November 2023 at 2.30pm at The Merchants House of Glasgow, 7 West George Street, Glasgow G2 1BA. Following feedback from last year, we have reverted to an afternoon meeting with the availability of a soup and sandwich lunch beforehand.

The meeting will be again held in hybrid format. If you would like to attend in person, directors and staff would be delighted to meet you. If you are unable to join us in person, do join us by Zoom. Lunch will be at 12.30pm and only be

available for those who have pre-booked. As we need to confirm numbers for catering, you should do this by Friday 3 November. It will cost £12 per head.

Whether you intend to come in person, join us for lunch or attend the AGM online, please register. You can do this through our website www.scotways.com/AGM2023. Here you will find full details about the AGM along with all supporting papers. If you are unable to book online and would like to join us for lunch, please send a cheque payable to 'ScotWays' to the office. The formal notice and agenda appears

below. Copies of the minutes of the 2022 AGM and the accounts to 30 June 2023 can be found on our website: www.scotways.com/AGM2023. If you would like a printed copy, please contact the office and we will send it to you.

We recommend that you travel to the AGM by public transport as the venue is just opposite Queen Street Station. If you choose to drive, remember Glasgow's Low Emission Zone is now operational so you may need to pay a charge depending upon your type of car. Find out more at the Glasgow LEZ page www.glasgow.gov.uk/LEZ

Annual General Meeting agenda 2023

The Society's Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday 18 November 2023 at 2.30pm at The Merchants House of Glasgow, 7 West George Street, Glasgow G2 1BA.

GUEST SPEAKER

At 1.45pm, prior to the formal business, **Kevin Lafferty**, chief executive officer of Paths for All, will speak on the work of Paths for All, the charity which champions everyday walking for a happier, healthier and greener Scotland.

FORMAL BUSINESS

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the AGM November 2022
3. To receive the Report of the Directors
4. To receive the accounts
5. To reappoint the Directors:
Katharine Taylor, Stephan Hennig, Helene Mauchlen and Tim Simons have each completed a three year term of office as director but are eligible for re-election, having served fewer than three terms.

6. In addition to those standing for re-appointment, the Directors recommend the appointment of:
 - **Jonathan Birny**
 - **David Dixon**
 7. To appoint the Independent Examiner of the Accounts
 8. ScotWays in action – what we've been doing, what we plan to do and how you can get involved
 9. Any Other Competent Business
- Members are reminded that they may appoint a proxy to vote on their behalf if they are unable to attend the meeting. Contact the office for a proxy form if necessary, or download one from the website.

We're online!

Our Twitter, (now known as X) and Facebook figures continue to grow



4,885

X followers
(up 4.5%)



2,662

Facebook followers
(up 10.9%)

Annual Report 2023

Our mission

Our mission is to assert and promote legitimate and responsible outdoor access rights in Scotland

VALUES

We represent outdoor public access interests in Scotland by:

- Being reliable and trusted
- Working to maintain a balance of interests in access matters
- Maintaining a deep and current knowledge base
- Cooperating with others in preserving and improving access rights.

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Corporate members 2022/23

COMMUNITY COUNCILS

A: Ardgay & District Community Council
B: Balfron Community Council
 Benholm & Johnshaven Community Council
 Bennachie Community Council
 Blackford Community Council
 Broughty Ferry Community Council
C: Caithness West Community Council
 Cambuskenneth Community Council
 Carlups Community Council
 Catrine Community Council
 Chryston Community Council
 Cove & Altens Community Council
 Culross Community Council
D: Dunpender Community Council
E: Echt & Skene Community Council
 Elderslie Community Council
G: Gifford Community Council
H: Harthill & Eastfield Community Council
 Heldon Community Council
I: Inchinnan Community Council
K: Kirkliston Community Council
 Kirriemuir Landward East Community Council
 Kirriemuir Landward West Community Council
L: Letham & District Community Council
 Lilliesleaf, Ashkirk & Midlem Community Council
M: Monkland Glen Community Council
 Muirtown Community Council
 Musselburgh & Inveresk Community Council
N: Newport, Wormit & Forgan Community Council
 North Queensferry Community Council
P: Polmalse Community Council
R: Royal Burgh of Cupar Community Council
 Royal Burgh of Falkland & Newton of Falkland Community Council
S: Strathard Community Council
 Strathblane Community Council
 Symington Community Council
T: Tayport Community Council
W: West Lochfyne Community Council

OTHER SUPPORTER ORGANISATIONS

A: Aboyne Paths & Tracks Group
 All Year Ramblers Club

B: Banffshire Field Club
 Biggar & District Community Heritage
 Border Bothies Association
C: Caimgorm Club
 Central Tweeddale Paths
 Cloch Mountaineering Club
 Craigencait Rural Community Trust
 Crieff & Strathearn Drovers Tryst
 Cults Hillwalking Club
D: Dunblane Development Trust
 Dunblane Rambling Club
 Duncanrig Rambling Club
E: East Kilbride Mountaineering Club
 Edinburgh & Forth C H A Club
F: Ferranti Mountaineering Club
 Fife Mountaineering Club
 Fife Walking Club
 Forfar & District Hill Walking Club
 Friends of the Pentlands
 Friends of the River Almond Walkway
G: Gatliff Hebridean Hostels Trust
 Glasgow Glenmore Club
 Glasgow Health Culture Rambling Club

Glenrothes Hillwalkers Club
K: Kyle & Carrick Civic Society
L: LP22 Geriatric Walking Club
 Lumphanan Paths Group
M: Markinch Heritage Group
 Midweek Walking Group
 Moray Mountaineering Club
N: Northern Pilgrims' Way Group
O: Ochils Mountaineering Club
P: Paisley Hillwalking Club
 Paths for All
 Peebles Gutterbluids Society
R: Ramblers Scotland
S: Scottish Borders Hill Walking Club
 SPOKES
 SRUC Oatridge Campus
 Stirling Hillwalking Club
 Strathaven Climbing Club
T: Tarland Development Group
 The Long Distance Walkers Association
U: United Clyde Angling Protective Association
W: Wilson's Walkers



PHOTOGRAPH BY REINHOLD BARON

The Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society



Our staff visiting the paths around Melrose. Left to right: Lynda Grant, Karen Lowrie, Alison Riddell, Neil Birch, Neil Feggans, Eleisha Fahy and behind the camera, Richard Barron.

PHOTOGRAPH: RICHARD BARRON

SCOTTISH RIGHTS OF WAY AND ACCESS SOCIETY (SCOTWAYS)

HON. VICE PRESIDENTS

Bob Aitken
George Menzies

DIRECTORS

Alistair Anderson (Fife)
Dorothy Breckenridge (Stirling)
Hannah Downie (Edinburgh)
John Elliot (Edinburgh)
Stephan Hennig (Clackmannanshire)
Linda Johnson (Glenoe)
David Langworth (Borders)
Helene Mauchlen (Perthshire)
Tim Simons (Edinburgh)
Katharine Taylor (Chair) (Edinburgh)

STAFF

National Secretary and Treasurer: Alison Riddell
Chief Operating Officer: Richard Barron
Senior Access Officer: Eleisha Fahy
Access Officers: Neil Feggans
Lynda Grant
Karen Lowrie
Neil Birch

Access Officer (Outreach):

HONORARY ADVISERS

David Dixon
John Mackay
George Menzies

A company limited by guarantee. Company registration number SC024243
Charity registration number: SC015460

Registered Office: 24 Annandale Street Edinburgh EH7 4AN
Telephone: 0131 558 1222

info@scotways.com

www.scotways.com

OBJECTS OF THE SOCIETY

The preservation, defence, restoration and acquisition, for the public benefit, of public rights of access in Scotland including public rights of way, and related amenity.

*Photograph: towards Loch Paddock from Beinn Udlamain
by Richard Barron*



The Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society

