



The Laggan Forest Trust

Laggan Forest Office
Strathmashie, Laggan, Inverness-shire, PH20 1BU
Tel: 01528 544366 Email: support@lagganforest.com

CHAIR'S REPORT

ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

Charitable activities

The Trust is currently in a stable financial position and has taken a pragmatic view with respect to holding modest and appropriate contingency reserves at the year-end. The final year of funding from the Scottish Government Strengthening Communities Fund has allowed us to continue to employ 2 members of staff, one full time, the other part-time. Key to the prioritized activities has been to ensure that visitors to the Forest Centre, be it via Open Days with our Partners, with our volunteers, the Mountain Bike trails or passing tourist traffic understand the natural environment in which they are in and are supplied with the relevant leaflets to enjoy both access and information about the Strathmashie Forest and its environment.

Activities over the past year

There has been a varied programme of activities over the past year – all supporting our overall charitable aims. These activities included joint events with the Cairngorms National Park in running a Nature Weekend, Open Days with Forest Enterprise and the Centre continuing to host two major events in the National Mountain Bike calendar, which exposed the many participants to our overall aims. Members from the local community supported a number of these events with their active participation and contribution. Additionally during the year the Orienteering course which was re-laid through part of the forest was enjoyed by many participants – young and old - with many of the natural assets of the Forest and its wildlife exposed to new families.

In February 2017, a new set of Trustees was elected to the Board with an appropriate balance of community members' capabilities very evident in Forestry, the environment and business. In addition to member trustees, one other trustee was co-opted to the board to broaden the skill and knowledge base of the Board. We also gratefully acknowledge the contribution that SNH volunteers were able to provide, to assist us in a number of projects around the Forest centre. We continue to benefit from the knowledge and experience of those very familiar with the Forest and Natural Heritage and we look forward to continuing that close working relationship. The Centre and its Cafe continues to be supported and is staffed separately part-time by residents the community and region.

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A charitable company limited by guarantee. Company No: SC189325 Charity No: SC029029
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The Trust took the decision to delay replanting of that part of the forest which it owns into 2018 or 2019 with the agreement of Scottish Woodlands, who have also facilitated a small grant to assist that re-planting which will comprise an appropriate mix of different trees – conifers and broadleaf - to enhance the overall appearance long term appearance of the area. Forest Enterprise continue to harvest the Achduchil & Feagour forests, parts of which house the mountain bike trails and we maintain regular contact with Forestry to ensure the paths and trails throughout are maintained and accessible to all.

It remains our on-going aim to ensure that all our trails and walks are open to the community members and visitors alike and we rely on our Partnership with the Forestry Commission, local businesses and volunteers to help deliver a positive experience of the forest environment.

Conclusion

It has been a constructive year with direction and support for our activities given by our community members and the public at large. We remain grateful to our funders, employees, volunteers and trustee directors for their unstinting support and trust that they will continue to support our aims in the future.

All are to be thanked for their significant efforts in enhancing the objectives of the Trust, and its relationships with our critical partners (Forest Enterprise, Cairngorms National Park Authority, Scottish Natural Heritage) as well as formulating revised plans for the coming years. At the AGM of the Trust, members provided unanimous support for the Trust to explore a potential Forest acquisition process under the Community Asset Transfer Scheme (CATS) notified to us by Forest Enterprise. This was consistent with our stated purposes and much planning for progressing this occurred throughout the year.

Looking to the future, The Trust will continue to explore how it can expand the understanding of our natural forest environment with additional facilities for children and families around the Centre as well as undertake a feasibility study for future expansion of the Trust's portfolio.

C.S.Morgan

Chair

February 2018

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