

Scottish Rural Action Annual General Meeting (AGM) Minutes

Date	16 02 2023
Location	By zoom
In attendance	26 members were recorded as present, and the AGM was deemed quorate An additional 21 individuals were present for the networking and information sharing element of the AGM
Apologies	Apologies were received from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brian Cameron • Alistair Prior • Catherine Idle • Fiona Kier • Cameron Smith • Sue Bell • Janet Moxley • Anne Cook
Minutes of previous meeting	Approved via online SurveyMonkey survey in two weeks prior to AGM (26 members responded to survey) – the same survey invited members to approve the Kelvin Partnership as SRA’s accountants and to vote on the appointment of Directors.
Matters arising	None

Agenda

Item & summary of discussions	Action Points
<p>1. Welcome and roundup of year, incorporating Chair’s report</p> <p>Theona Morrison, SRA Chair, gave members an overview of Scottish Rural Action’s (SRA’s) activities within the reporting period and up to the present day.</p> <p>The formal element of the Chair’s report covered the period to March 2021. Due to the pandemic and the pressures of delivering the 4th Scottish Rural & Islands Parliament as a first-time online event in March 2021, the Board acknowledges its reporting period covers two financial years ago, rather than the last financial year. This is acceptable to OSCR. However, views will be sought from members as to whether it should be remedied with a proposed EGM to approve the YE2022 accounts, perhaps to coincide with SRA’s 10th anniversary in October 2023. This means that the next AGM will report on the YE2023.</p> <p>In the reporting period, SRA milestones included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Co-option of Brian Cameron (Moray) as Director, appointment of Barbara Grieve as Research & Finance Officer and appointment of Esme Leitch as Communications & Engagement Officer; - Appointment of Innes Morgan as SRA’s Youth consultant; - Launch of Covid -19 information portal and a new SRA website; - Increased engagement through social media and regular newsletters; 	-

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Two major national surveys into the impact of the pandemic on rural and island communities; qualitative research through SRA’s Local Reference Group and regional (online) meetings with communities all contributing to shaping the Scottish Government response to Covid-19 and recovery; - Delivery of the Scottish Rural & Islands Parliament (SRIP) in March 2021 which saw over 1,500 people and 100 organisations participate. <p>SRA is particularly grateful to the Scottish Government, Scottish Rural Network and Impact Funding Partners for their continued support; to the Scottish Islands Federation for their commitment to co-Secretariat the SRIP and to South of Scotland Enterprise for sponsoring the SRIP.</p> <p>It was noted that SRA operates on a staff team of 2.5 FTE and focuses on building partnerships and capacity in wider networks to deliver all its work including the Scottish Rural & Islands Parliament. In the financial YE2022 and up to the present day, SRA has delivered multiple networking events to build a rural movement in Scotland and has added capacity to emerging networks around rural transport, community-led tourism, equalities and community-led local development. It has produced multiple briefings on planning, economic development and the levelling up agenda and has delivered grassroots consultation responses to both Scottish Government and UK Government calls for evidence. It has coordinated Scotland’s participation in the 2022 European Rural Parliament. 2023 will see SRA join forces with the Scottish Islands Federation (SIF) to co-Secretariat the 5th Scottish Rural & Islands Parliament.</p> <p>Thank you was extended to Barbara Grieve, SRA’s Research & Finance Officer who left the organisation after five years of working with us to join the NHS.</p>	
<p>2. Networking and Information Sharing</p> <p>The theme of the networking and information sharing session was “Village Halls and Community Spaces” which is also the theme of the Scottish Rural & Islands Parliament. Notes from this session may be accessed through the link below:</p> <p>https://www.sra.scot/news-blog/event-community-spaces-and-village-halls</p>	
<p>3. Finance Report and Appointment of Accountants</p> <p>Sheena Boyd, SRA Treasurer presented on SRA’s accounts for the YE2021.</p> <p>Members questioned why the reserves had fallen in the reporting year. It was responded that SRA’s Board calculates reserves based on 6 months annual running costs, therefore they do tend to fluctuate from year to year.</p> <p>Members unanimously approved the accounts by zoom poll.</p> <p>The re-appointment of the Kelvin Partnership had been approved by a members’ survey prior to the AGM (the same survey invited votes on the Minutes of the last AGM and on the appointment of Directors).</p> <p>Members queried the re-appointment of the Kelvin Partnership as SRA’s accountants, pointing out it was good practice to put the accounting function out to tender on a regular basis. It was responded that this year, with the departure of Barbara Grieve who administered SRA’s finances, it was deemed sensible to keep arrangements as stable as possible until a new Finance Officer may be appointed.</p> <p>An action point for SRA’s Board is to put the accounting function out to tender in 2023/24. Some members suggested accounting firms to be included in the tender exercise.</p>	<p>SRA Board to put accounting function out to tender in 2023</p>

<p>4. Appointment of Directors</p> <p>Theona Morrison, SRA’s Chair, started by thanking Gordon Harrison (Scottish Borders) for his contribution to SRA’s Board over many years.</p> <p>She then went on to confirm that members had already voted by SurveyMonkey survey to appoint the following Directors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brendan O’Hanrahan (Highlands) • Ann McGuinness (South Lanarkshire) • Aimee Spence (Argyll & Bute) • Sjoerd Tel (Cairngorms) <p>She also confirmed the re-appointment of the following Directors (also voted on through SurveyMonkey):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theona Morrison (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) • Brian Cameron (Moray) • Kim Dams (Dumfries & Galloway) <p>The following Directors remain on the Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alistair Prior (Angus) • Derek Logie (East Lothian) • Peter Kennedy (Aberdeenshire) • Sheena Boyd (East Ayrshire/Dumfries & Galloway) <p>It was noted that the maximum number of Board members is fifteen and members are invited to seek co-option between AGMs.</p> <p>SRA’s Honorary President, Vanessa Halhead, remains in tenure for just under two years.</p> <p>Theona thanked all Directors and the Honorary President for their commitment and work but noted the biggest thanks goes to SRA’s membership who have supported the organisations for 10 years!</p>	
<p>5. Points from members</p> <p>Members agreed that it was sensible to hold an EGM to approve the YE2022 accounts (TBC but possibly in October 2023) and thereafter be in a position to align each AGM with the most proximal financial year. It was requested by members that AGMs take place in the year the reporting period has ended in. The next AGM is therefore likely to be in December 2023 and will report on the YE2023.</p>	<p>EGM in October 2023 (TBC) to approve YE2022 accounts</p> <p>AGM to be held in 2023 to approve YE2023 accounts</p>
<p>6. Close from Honorary President</p> <p>Proceedings were closed by the Honorary President who invited members to keep taking an active role in the organisation and to spread the word about membership. If you are not already, you can sign up to be a member here: https://www.sra.scot/form/sra-membership</p>	