

FRIENDS OF LOCH LOMOND & THE TROSSACHS

ANNUAL REPORT

For the YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2017



FRIENDS OF LOCH LOMOND & THE TROSSACHS

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FRIENDS OF LOCH LOMOND & THE TROSSACHS

Office Bearers etc.

Honorary President - Sir Malcolm Colquhoun Bart.

Honorary Vice-Presidents

William Petrie OBE DL
Lord John McFall of Alcluith

Office Bearers

George Boyd – Vice President
Mr James Fraser – Chairman
Mr John Urquhart – Vice-Chairman
Mr Tom Wallace -Treasurer

Executive Council

Dr Joyce Deans CBE
Mr Iain Stuart
Ms Sheila Winstone
Mr William Dalrymple
Mr Philip Norris
Mr Paul Saunders

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Royal Bank of Scotland, Colquhoun Square, Helensburgh

Independent Examiner

W.M. Hassall, 121 West Clyde Street, Helensburgh, G84 8ET.

Scottish Charities Registration Number: SC015389

FRIENDS OF LOCH LOMOND & THE TROSSACHS

Notice of Meeting

Notice is hereby given that the thirty-seventh Annual General Meeting of the Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs will be held at Ross Priory, Gartocharn on Tuesday 15th May 2018, at 7.30pm, for the transacting of the following business:

1. Receive apologies for absence.
2. To approve the minutes of the last AGM.
3. Receive the Chairman's Report.
4. Receive the Treasurer's Report and approve the Independently Examined Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2016.
5. To approve no increase in the Annual Membership fees
6. To re-appoint the office bearers and trustees and endorse other nominations.
 - (i) Existing Trustees seeking re-election:
 - James Fraser – Chairman
 - Mr John Urquhart –Vice-Chairman
 - Mr Tom Wallace - Treasurer
 - Dr Joyce Deans CBE
 - Mr Iain Stuart
 - Ms Sheila Winstone
 - Mr William Dalrymple
 - Mr Philip Norris
 - Mr Paul Saunders
7. Annual Awards including Volunteer of the Year, Business Supporter of the Year and the Hannah Stirling National Park Award
8. To transact any other competent business

After the AGM there will be interesting talks by Chris Martin of **Callander Youth Project** on the progress of the initiative, and Phil Thompson of **Ardroy Outdoor Education Centre**, which hosts 3,000 young people every year for activity breaks.

By order of the Executive Council

James Fraser
Chair

Tuesday, May 16 2017 at 7.30pm at Loch Lomond Arms Hotel, Luss

Chair: J Fraser (JF).

Committee Present: J Urquhart (JU); W Dalrymple (WD); T Wallace (TW); P Norris (PN).

In Attendance: J Anderson (JaA); R Anderson (RA); J Ashworth (JoA); V Ashworth (VA); S Bannerman (SB); A Bax (AnB); A Beveridge (AmB); J Beveridge (JoB); J Biddulph (JiB); J Bowers (JaB); M Brown (MB); A Campbell (AC); A Dance (AD); V Dance (VD); D Dewar (DD); D Fraser (DF); A Galloway (AG); C Gunn (CG); G Gunn (GG); A Hannan (AH); D Henderson (DH); A Kenneth (AlK); A Kerr (AnK) I McEachern (IMcE); Andy MacLeod (AnMacL); Avril MacLeod (AvMacL); W Nisbet (WN); P Palgrave (PP); A Pringle (AP); B Richards (BR); M Richards (MR); P Saunders (PS); S Saunders (SS); E Twaddle (ET); J Twaddle (JT); A Urquhart (AU); M Wilson (MW); R Wilson (RoW).

Apologies: A Clark (AC); J Deans (JD); S Fraser (SF); L Fraser-Gunn (LFG); M Haggarty (MH); W Hassall (WH); D McCowan (DMcC); D McDonald (DMcD); D Morris (DM); Major J Stuart (JS); R Stevenson (RS); G Watson (GW); R Weir (RhW); N Wells (NW); S Winstone (SW).

1. Welcome

JF welcomed those present to the meeting and thanked them for their attendance. He also expressed thanks to Luss Estates and the staff of the Loch Lomond Arms Hotel for their hospitality and assistance in staging the AGM

Three awards were then presented. Joe Twaddle received the Hannah Stirling National Park Award following his tireless work, commitment and outstanding service to the wellbeing of East Loch Lomond with Buchanan Community Council and East Loch Lomond Community Trust. The Volunteer of the Year Award went to John Beveridge for his work over 35 years on a voluntary basis to get the Maid of the Loch, which is based near Balloch, sailing again. Lastly, Paul Saunders accepted the Business Supporter of the Year Award having donated on a monthly basis to the Friends of OUR park project every month for over two years and also providing first class photography for use by the Friends over a number of years. All award winners suitably replied to the citations from the Chairman and this was followed by a photocall.

2. Minutes of last AGM

The minutes of the last AGM were approved with no queries arising. They were proposed by JoB and seconded by AD.

3. Chairman's Report

JF spoke to his Chairman's Report on charity's activity over the last year (tabled) and this was accompanied by a Powerpoint presentation highlighting some of the Friends projects and initiatives and a range of current topical issues. He started by paying tribute to Nick Pennington, formerly of the National Park Authority, who passed away in December 2016. He provided a brief overview of how the charity had worked to further the key aims of protecting and nurturing the special qualities of the National Park, promoting and celebrating the National Park's cultural heritage, and providing support to projects to make the National Park a better place for people and nature. Highlights of the past year included support for a total of 22 projects in the National Park; along with over 100 businesses being involved in the Friends of OUR park project and more than 100 volunteers taking part in Make a Difference Days and good levels of fundraising including support from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Campaigning and consultation issues covered in the presentation included ongoing plans for windfarms in the National Park, and the charrettes which have taken place over the past year in Balloch and Callander. Balmaha housing project was also covered along with car parking in Luss, which saw the Friends represented at the handing over of a petition to Argyll and Bute Council last year. Visitor management and camping and the VIEW/VISTA project were also covered, as well as the ongoing issue of litter in the National Park. Images were shown of overflowing bins in Balmaha and Luss which are becoming a regular sight in these areas. An update was also given on the Tom Weir's Rest site, along with the Tom Weir's Loch Lomond Wonderland booklet which was launched in 2016.

JF also highlighted the Friends' involvement in projects to recognise Sir Harry Lauder, including work being carried out at the monument at Glenbranter in honour of Sir Harry's son John, who passed away during World War I. JB was introduced as the Friends' new ecotourism project officer and excerpts were shown from recently published ecotourism factsheets. Also highlighted were the recent cheque presentations for grant awards and certificates being given to businesses to display their contribution to the Friends of OUR park project to visitors.

The Friends have continued to promote their activities, with two further copies of Voice magazine produced and a membership leaflet continuing to be in circulation at venues throughout the National Park. The extensive press coverage enjoyed by the Friends was also highlighted along with its website.

Members were informed of three events being staged by the Friends over the coming months – Luss Highland Games on Saturday, July 1; the Loch Lomond Sunset Cruise on Wednesday, August 16; and Christmas at Ross Priory on Sunday, November 26. They were also reminded that there will be a full and varied calendar of Harry Lauder events taking place over the remainder of 2017, with details having been given in previous edition of Voice.

In conclusion, JF thanked all Trustees and Friends staff for their efforts over the past 12 months and expressed sincere thanks to members for their continued support.

4. Accounts for 2016

The Chairman spoke briefly to the accounts and introduced TW as Friends' new Treasurer. He also made specific mention of the donation of £3,668 (\$5,000) given by a group of American golfers who visited Loch Lomond last year. Accounts were proposed

by RA and seconded by AU with no queries arising. The Chairman also thanked WH (who was absent on the night) for his work auditing of the accounts in his role as the independent auditor.

5. Membership fees

It was unanimously agreed that annual membership fees should remain the same - £20 for individual membership and £28 for family membership. This was proposed by AD and seconded by AU.

6. Re-appointment of office bearers

Retention of the list of the Board of Trustees, including GB as Vice-President, was proposed by VD and seconded by AU. This was unanimously approved.

JF also invited interest from anyone who wished to become a Trustee of the Friends.

7. Awards

These had already been presented earlier in the evening.

8. Any Other Business

VD recorded a vote of thanks to JF and Trustees for their work over the past year on behalf of the members.

9. Guest Speakers

There were two interesting talks, delivered firstly by JU on the islands of Loch Lomond, and then by DD on the Sir Harry Lauder celebrations taking place this year. Both were well-received by the audience and were followed by a brief exchange of questions and answers.

Chairman's Report

1. Introduction

It has been another very busy and successful year for the Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs as we have worked hard to make a difference through our campaigning, fundraising and volunteering efforts. In our role as the only independent conservation and heritage charity covering the National Park, and as a consequence of our limited staff, volunteer and financial resources, we have focused our efforts on a carefully selected number of priorities and actions in line with the agreed Strategy and Action which has recently been updated to take account of the 2018-2022 Park Partnership Plan.

We have made some good progress with projects and initiatives under the umbrella of our three main aims to:

- protect and nurture the National Park's special qualities;*
- promote and celebrate the National Park's rich and diverse natural and cultural heritage; and*
- provide support for projects to make the National Park a better place for people and nature.*

As in previous years, where appropriate, we have worked in partnership with the National Park Authority, Scottish Enterprise, the Community Partnership, local tourism groups such as Destination National Park and Love Loch Lomond, community councils, community development trusts, local project champions and others to further our aims.

Key to our continuing success have been the commitment, enthusiasm and hard work of our 2 part-time staff and our band of 9 trustees, the support from our membership and our group of volunteers who donate their time so generously, financial contributions and support in kind from our business and Friends of OUR Park supporters and public sector partners. This has again resulted in good levels of fundraising and volunteering in 2017 which, in turn, has meant we have been able to achieve much through initiatives such as Friends of OUR Park visitor giving scheme, Make a Difference Days, our Young Friends programme, our events programme and in particular, the delivery of an impressive Lauder Connections Celebration Programme in Cowal despite the setback of not securing Heritage Lottery funding support. We have also been able to financially support a record number of access, heritage, youth and conservation projects working with local groups and others throughout the National Park.

We continued to enjoy a good working relationship with the senior staff and members of the National Park Authority without compromising our independent stance on key issues. We also greatly appreciated the National Park Authority's 'in kind' support for the Friends of OUR Park voluntary visitor giving and volunteering initiative through the provision of office space and support services as well as sponsorship of some pages in our popular Voice magazine which is published twice a year.

2. Key Priorities

We continue to have a major focus on campaigning and fundraising to support a range of activities that are complementary to the work of the National Park Authority and others. We contributed to the consultation programme on the latest Partnership Plan and it was pleasing that the final adopted plan took on board a number of our detailed suggestions including threads of our 'back to basics' campaign. Our priorities and

supporting actions are set out in simple strategy summary sheet which can be viewed on the Friends website.

We have worked hard in 2017 to try and take forward practical initiatives under all five themes identified in the strategy summary which are *Windows on the Park; Celebrating Cultural Heritage; Nature Conservation; Protecting the Park's Special Qualities and Young Friends*. This builds on the work undertaken in previous years but there has been a greater emphasis on delivering more youth initiatives and capitalising on the Scottish Government's special theme years to showcase the rich natural and cultural heritage of the National Park more effectively.

Campaigning to protect the National Park's special qualities remained as a high priority with monitoring and the submission of comments on a number of planning applications. Volunteering activity and making representation on key issues including litter management and the major new Your Park camping proposals were also high on the agenda in 2017.

3. Funding

We were unsuccessful with a funding bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for our *Celebrating Lauder Connections with Cowal* project that involved supporting a series of community led events to coincide with the 100th anniversary of the death of Harry lauder's son, John in the first World War. The project also involved phased improvements to the Lauder Memorial and associated parking and paths. This setback did not deter us from supporting a very successful events programme in locations such as Strachur and Dunoon and this was funded with small grants for the Friends of OUR park visitor giving scheme. The creation of a new car park, a path link, advance signing, interpretation and restoration work at the Lauder Memorial are still a priority and recently we were delighted to receive to grant approvals of £5,000 each to enable this work to proceed in 2018.

The donation posts at the Tom Weir site in Balmaha are now generating a steady income of over £2,500 per year which is sufficient to cover the annual insurance cost and most of the annual site maintenance works which is topped up as required from the Friends of OUR park visitor giving scheme.

We continued to enjoy funding support from Scottish Enterprise for our eco-tourism initiative with £40,000 being provided over a two year period which is funding a part-time Project Officer post. The Project Officer is working closely with businesses to make more of the potential of the National Park and the Clyde Sea Lochs. Through the Friends of OUR park visitor giving scheme, with the help of local businesses, an encouraging £18,000 was raised in donations from visitors to support a range of projects throughout the National Park.

And finally, with generous donations businesses through the business supporters scheme and individual members linked to annual membership subscriptions, it has been possible to continue funding our core activities including retaining the services of a part-time Support Officer.

4. Protecting the Park's Special Qualities

(i) *Planning*

We have continued to monitor planning applications in and around the National Park and fortunately more developers are recognising the National Park is a special place with better quality and less contentious planning applications coming forward. This has also been helped by the success of the National Park Authority's pre-application process and the more participative local development plan and community 'charrette' consultation exercises which means there is more of a consensus around future planning for the area.

We made representations on a number of planning applications during the past year and also had useful pre-application discussions with the developers who have recently submitted an outline planning application for a £40 million leisure development on west Riverside, Balloch. We supported several planning applications for hotel extensions in Balloch and Rowardennan and plans for much needed low cost housing in Balmaha. We are pleased applications for low cost housing in Balmaha and Drymen were eventually approved and it is encouraging to see schemes currently progressing well in both Callander and Succoth to address social housing needs in the National Park.

We decided not to submit observations on the revised plans for the Cononish Goldmine in Tyndrum as the scheme had originally received planning permission and we considered the revised plans were an improvement on the previously flawed plans with the removal of the large tailings dam which is now being replaced by mounds of waste moulded to blend in with the surrounding landscape. Strangely, in the report to the Park Authority the planners accepted that what was proposed would be in breach of the local development plan policies for the 17 year duration of the mining works but there were longer term benefits to be gained by approving the application which Park Board members duly did unanimously.

(ii) *Community Planning*

Balloch-We continued to take a close interest the LIVE in Balloch initiative coordinated by the Park Authority and West Dunbartonshire Council with support from the Scottish Government and Scottish Enterprise. We expressed some reservations about the proposed townscape scheme which failed to adequately address the concerns of village traders with the potential loss of short stay car parking. We maintained strong liaison links with Balloch & Haldane Community Council on this scheme and the emerging leisure plans for West Riverside. We supported the Community Council's wish to secure the well-lit riverside promenade which was a strong feature of the Balloch Charrette a couple of years ago.

Callander- We provided a strong letter of support for the Callander Landscape project which recently received approval from the Heritage Lottery Fund for £1.5 million and have agreed to make a small contribution to this initiative over a 3 year period as part of an effort to make more of Callander as the 'Outdoor Capital of the National Park'. It is hoped the project will help re-position Callander which has been losing out to other destinations in Scotland over recent times due to a lack of investment.

Luss- We have strongly supported the Community Council and Luss Estates in their efforts to persuade Argyll and Bute Council to adopt a more sensible and workable package of traffic management proposals to ensure the heart of the village is more

appealing with less conflict with traffic. We have supported the revised proposals developed by the local community and were disappointed that the Council intends to press ahead with their original proposals that does little to alleviate the traffic flow and parking problems in Luss. We also supported a joint initiative by local businesses and the local community to encourage public agencies to improve various aspects of visitor management in the village and particularly around Luss Pier where anti-social behaviour was a recurring problem on hot sunny days. Litter was also a major issue over busy periods with inadequate litter clearance arrangements in place.

Arrochar-We continue to be represented on the strategic group that has been set up by the Community Council and is chaired by Jackie Baillie MSP to address some longstanding issues in and around the village that can only be with by more effective inter-agency working. Issues being addressed by the group include litter management at the head of Loch Long, the future development of the former pier area, the creation of better quality public realm areas in the village and tidying up the derelict torpedo range site where development of a leisure resort has stalled. Some steady progress is being made by the group and hopefully with the recent emergence of a new national tourism infrastructure fund for areas suffering from visitor pressures will mean that some funds can be secured to tackle issues such as inadequate parking for the thousands of walkers attracted to the area to enjoy the Arrochar Alps.

(iii) Camping and the Your Park Initiative

Following a period of extensive consultation and the National Park Authority's camping byelaw and management proposals were approved in 2016 by the Minister for the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform, Dr Aileen McLeod. The proposals were duly implemented in 2017 and involved a massive investment of staff time and funding by the National Park Authority. They included the introduction of new byelaws in camping management zones along corridors beside the National Park's busiest lochshores and cover the period March –September each year.

The byelaws were linked with the provision of much needed new camping facilities and the introduction of a camping permit scheme in lochshore management zones. This follows on from the success of the pilot no camping and no drinking byelaws on East Loch Lomond over the past five years which has helped transform the visitor experience and has led to more families being attracted back to the area.

The proposals were strongly supported by local communities while the Friends and the Scottish Campaign for National Parks broadly supported them but stressed the need to address camping shortages throughout the National Park and not just simply in the new management zones. We provided constructive input two camping stakeholders meetings held by the National Park Authority and we have met with representatives of the National Park to discuss practical implementation issues.

We expressed strong concerns about the inadequate arrangements for campervans in the management zones alongside the busy A82 and at popular pull over areas such as Tarbet and Inveruglas car parks. We were pleased there was a relaxation in arrangements during summer 2017 which alleviated our concerns. There are still shortcomings in the booking arrangements with the requirement to book permit spaces in advance and the inadequacy of on-site payment methods when such a high proportion of campers and campervanners simply turn up as 'chance trade' and given the inadequacy of mobile signals in some parts of the National Park to make bookings online. We welcomed the investment by the Park Authority in new camp sites at Loch Chon and Loch Achray and have been involved in helping to deliver a new campsite

near Trossachs Pier which is being operated by the Steamship Sir Walter Scott Trading Company. The Loch Chon facility was well used last year though there have been some teething problems with adequacy of water supplies and the quality of some of the camping pitches. The new Loch Achray campsite is due to come on stream in June 2018.

Inevitably due to the scale of the Your Park camping initiative there have been a number of challenges in implementing the scheme and ensuring it is well understood by the public. There is still confusion surrounding what is meant by camping management zone signs and a huge amount of ranger resource has been deployed to patrol the new camping management zones and to interact with visitors. The take up of permits has been quite encouraging despite the prolonged spells of poor weather in 2017. Issues such as displacement have emerged in areas just outside the management zones and it will be interesting to see how the scheme stands up to what will be a much better season weatherwise in 2018.

(iv) Pylon Visual Impact Project-Luss Glens

During the past year good progress has been made with our priority Luss Glens project as part of the VIEW and VISTA initiative being led by the major energy companies in the past year to minimise the impact of pylon and related infrastructure in the National Park. In 2016 Scottish and Southern Energy and SP Energy Networks joined forces to employ landscape specialists LUC to review the visual impact of existing wirescape in the National Park and to work with local stakeholders to come forward with a series of costed measures to reduce the visual impact of pylon lines. These proposals eventually are due to form part of a funding bid to energy regulator Ofgem who are administering a £500 million fund that is available on a UK wide basis to mitigate or positively enhance the visual impact of pre-existing transmission infrastructure located in nationally designated landscapes, including National Parks and National Scenic Areas.

A handful of projects have been identified to go forward as part of funding bids but it is very encouraging that a scheme being promoted by the Friends and HADAT in partnership with Luss Estates to open up Luss Glens for a new walking route has been identified as the top priority with detailed design work underway. Any funds secured would be used to take stretches of the Three Lochs Way through the Luss Glens and onwards to Arrochar away from under pylon lines as part of a wider West Loch Lomond access initiative.

(v) Litter Management

This was a very hot topic for the Friends in 2017 with record levels of litter complaints and even the Chief Executive of the National Park admitting this was the worst year he could remember for litter problems. In visitor honeypot locations such as Luss, Balmaha and Callander, the arrangements for litter clearing at busy weekends was simply inadequate and it was evident services were being poorly coordinated and resourced by public agencies.

We continued to campaign for a better and more coordinated litter management regime in the National Park and in particular alongside the busy trunk routes passing through the National Park where there are ongoing litter management problems due to the lack of litter bin provision and at key visitor honeypot locations. We are still at a loss to understand why throughout the entire stretch of the A9 in the Cairngorms National Park there are litter bins in most lay-bys, while there are none in lay-bys along the A82 north of Balloch in the Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park. Local authorities and others are also being actively encouraged to improve the litter clearance arrangements

along this busy stretch of the A82 and we have successfully lobbied for the inclusion of better litter management in the new 5 year Partnership Plan that was launched earlier this year.

We stepped up our public relations activities on this issue and achieved extensive coverage in the local and national media linked to the publication of some survey results by Keep Scotland Beautiful that concluded Scotland was one of the dirtiest countries in the western world.

Providing Support for Projects

(i) Tom Weir's Rest, Balmaha

Following the successful public launch of the Tom Weir Statue in late December 2014 at Balmaha Bay we have continued to work closely with the Tom Weir Memorial Group and Sandy Fraser of the Oak Tree Inn to maintain Tom Weir's Rest. We have also financially supported some of the neighbouring village green enhancement works which made major progress in 2017 with the installation of story boards and landscape features that tie in with the design at Tom Weir's Rest.

The site has also attracted over 300,000 visitors since the statue was unveiled and is proving to be one of Loch Lomond's top tourist attractions. Future arrangements for maintaining the site are also now being well supported by visitors with the donation posts installed in May 2016 having generated over £5,000 to cover the costs of site maintenance and statue insurance.

(ii) Lauder Memorial and Viewpoint

Following the success of the Tom Weir project we decided to tackle another badly neglected site at Invernaden in Argyll Forest Park. In 2016 the main path to a stunning viewpoint and memorial built to honour John Lauder, the son of famous Scots entertainer Harry Lauder, was greatly improved in time for the 100th anniversary of his death in World War 1 on 28th December 1916, aged just 25. This was the first phase of an initiative led by the Friends to celebrate the Lauder connection with Cowal.

A series of events and activities were organised by local communities in Cowal to celebrate the Lauder connections with funding support from the Friends. We stepped in to fund a memorable community concert in Strachur, walks as part of Cowalfest and an exhibition in the Castle Museum, Dunoon which were all a great success.

We had hoped to progress a new path link, the creation of a small car park, advance signing and monument restoration works in 2017 but this received a setback when the Heritage Lottery Fund refused our funding application due to pressure on their funds for cultural projects. However, we subsequently pursued alternative funding sources and were pleased to receive confirmation recently of two landfill tax grants of £5,000 each which should enable most of the work to proceed in the second half of 2018 by which time planning consent should hopefully be granted.

This project is being supported by Forestry Commission Scotland, the local landowner, John Montgomery and the Community Council. The Mountains and the People project team are also assisting with the improvement scheme with the provision of labour and expertise to undertake some of the work.

(iii) Friends of OUR Park

At the start of the year with funding support from Scottish Enterprise as part of a Collaborating for Success initiative with the Park Authority and Love Loch Lomond Destination Group we successfully recruited Jared Bowers as our part-time Eco Tourism Manager. Jared is in post for two years and has responsibility for rolling out our eco-tourism initiative which is designed to encourage more tourism businesses to capitalise more on the eco credentials of the National Park by developing new tourism products. He is also responsible for strengthening participation in the friends of OUR park visitor giving scheme. During 2017 a sum of £18,000 was raised in donations from visitors via the visitor giving scheme to support over 20 projects throughout the National Park.

The number of businesses (100) actively involved in the visitor voluntary donation scheme and associated 'Make a Difference' volunteering programmes to support conservation, heritage and access projects throughout the National Park has remained fairly stable during the past year. Most of the focus has been on encouraging some of the existing businesses to become more actively involved in fundraising and releasing staff for the very successful Make a Difference volunteering days.

The income raised from visitors donations was used to support the following 25 projects: Red Squirrel interpretation, Balmaha (£500), Balloch Castle Learning Pack (£500), Lauder memorial Project (£777); Cowalfest (£300); Tom Weir's Rest, Balmaha (£1,780); Callander Summerfest (£400); Cormonachan Woodlands Drainage (£500); Mountains and the People (£2,500); Loch Tarsan Disabled Access (£800); Community Partnership Healthy Walking Gathering (£100); Trossachs Mobility (£500); Balmaha Village Green (£1,500); Cruise Loch Lomond Educational Pack (£250); Friends Display panels at Loch Katrine (£1,257); Scottish Campaign for National Parks (£250); BLISS Trail Signing (£1,000); Callander Landscape Partnership (£1,500); Loch Lomond Film Flyover Project (£1,000); Crianlarich Play Area (£500); Luss Highland Games Equipment (£1,125); Lauder Connections Events (£1,692); Callander Highland Games (3150); Arrochar Community Hydro (£1,000); The Enchantment of the Trossachs Booklet (£600); and Maid of the Loch Appeal (£2,000).

The voluntary visitor donation element of Friends of OUR Park continues to be an important source of funds to support access, conservation and heritage projects. The most successful fundraising technique used by businesses has been the use of opt out/opt in visitor donation opportunities linked to accommodation and food bills. Our most successful fundraisers using this technique are Lodge on Loch Lomond Hotel, the Inn on Loch Lomond Hotel, the Oak Tree Inn, Monachyle Mhor Country House Hotel, Loch Lomond Arms Hotel and Lochend Chalets.

An encouraging number of people from different walks of life are now involved in volunteering with the Friends and staff from a wider range of businesses took part in 'Make a Difference Days' organised at on West Loch Lomondside and loch Lubnaigside by our staff with support from the National Park Authority, Forest Holidays and Luss Estates. Tasks undertaken on these days included the removal of trees and bushes to open up views of Loch Lomond and litter clearance.

The scheme now involves 100 businesses and tens of thousands of individuals making personal contributions to help look after and improve the area every year. Encouragingly, over £220,000 has now been raised with over 100 projects being supported. Thousands of volunteer hours have also been generously given by

individuals and businesses to help with conservation and environmental improvement tasks in the National Park.

Promoting and Celebrating the National Park

We continued to produce the popular Voice magazine twice a year and have tried to keep the content relevant and topical to raise awareness of the special qualities of the Park, the Friends activities and current issues. As a result of a good level of advertising support and sponsorship it was possible to produce two 28 page editions of Voice with print runs of 5,000 copies. The magazine was widely distributed to members and others and we further strengthened the distribution of copies to visitors via a growing number of tourism businesses and other outlets throughout the National Park. The magazine continues to fulfil a useful purpose in the absence of the National Park Authority's own magazine and we received very positive feedback from many quarters on the quality and content of Voice.

We also continued to raise the profile of the Friends and used the media to good effect to highlight some of our work and a range of campaigning issues. We issued 25 press releases during the past year and they were picked up well by the local and national media. The Lauder Connections celebrations and litter campaigning activities received extensive media coverage locally and nationally. Project grant awards and campaigning issues such as visitor management issues in Luss generated significant publicity too.

The success of the Lauder Connections celebration events organised by local communities with sponsorship support from the Friends was a particular highlight in 2017. We had a very successful 'Meet the Friends' stand at Luss Highland Games in July. Our sunset cruise on Loch Lomond in August, which we organised for a third year in a row with the Lennox Literary Society, was again well supported and enjoyed by the 90 people in attendance. The annual Christmas event hosted by Dr Joyce Deans at Ross Priory was also a great success with 50 members and Friends supporters in attendance.

Offices and Staffing

Andrew Galloway continued in the role of Support Officer and the office is generally manned by him between 9.30am and 4pm Tuesday-Friday. Andrew spent more time on PR activities and generally assisting the Chairman with the smooth running of the Friends and we wish him well with his new post with a local newspaper which he takes up at the end of May 2018. We also wish him well with his wedding due to take place later in the year.

In December 2016 we recruited Jared Bowers as our new part-time Ecotourism Project Manager and he normally works Tuesday-Thursday. His role has been to focus more on stimulating interest in, and action by the trade in ecotourism activities and the development of new ecotourism products to capitalise more on the special heritage qualities of the National Park and the Clyde Sea Lochs.

Office costs are largely met by the National Park Authority as an 'in kind' contribution to the Friends. The support of the National Park Authority in providing office accommodation is greatly appreciated as this frees up some of our limited resources for priority activities.

I would like to place on record my thanks to Andrew and Jared for all their efforts and hard work on behalf of the Friends during what has been an exceptionally busy year.

Our Trustees and Thanks

There was only one change to our Board of Trustees during 2017 with the recruitment of Paul Saunders from Drymen whose PR and marketing skills will be a great asset to the Friends.

A total of 5 bi-monthly meetings of the Trustees and 4 meetings of Sub-Committees were held courtesy of Strathclyde University at Ross Priory in 2015. We are grateful to the University for continuing to provide meeting space and refreshments free of charge via Trustee Joyce Deans who has been closely involved with the University for a number of years and who has a courtyard at Ross Priory named in her honour.

The Board of Trustees have worked closely with partners to ensure the Friends continue to flourish and contribute in a positive way to the future well-being of the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park area.

We look forward to continuing to make a positive contribution working for the benefit of people and nature as the only truly independent conservation and heritage charity for the area covered by Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park. In concluding, I wish to thank my fellow trustees, staff, our auditor Bill Hassle, our members and business supporters and various public sector partners, and in particular the National Park Authority and Scottish Enterprise, for all their support, commitment and encouragement during the past year which has proved to be very productive as we strived to make a real difference.

James Fraser
Chairman

Financial Report and Accounts

	2017	2016
Income		
Membership	1,859	1,991
Donations /Appeals	609	4,184
Gift Aid	-	4,681
Business supporters	5,100	4,700
Voice Advertising	5,870	5,058
Project Funding:		
National Park Authority	-	3,000
Scottish Enterprise	19,470	-
OUR Park Business Donations	16,258	19,823
Events		
AGM	270	240
Christmas Event	583	663
Kiltwalk	-	465
Other events	325	500
Loch Lomond Cruise	572	572
Merchandising	424	422
HMRC	-	3,205
Bank interest	5	25
Tom Weir Statue	2,431	8,079
Love Loch Lomond	-	-
<u>Income TOTAL</u>	<u>53,776</u>	<u>57,608</u>

Expenditure	2017	2016
Salaries and on-costs	10,488	20,100
HMRC	171	927
Travel & Expenses	212	591
Office Costs	4,164	4,713
Voice	7,756	7,564
Projects:		
Friends of OUR park	13,632	15,408
Website Redevelopment	540	540
Ecotourism	25,281	-
Tom Weir Statue	2,653	20,137
Events		
AGM	912	706
Annual Study Visit	229	-
Christmas Event	984	462
Loch Lomond Cruise	630	600
Two Lochs Tour	29	148
Marketing	330	-
SCVO membership etc	697	695
<u>Expenditure TOTAL</u>	<u>68,710</u>	<u>69,943</u>
<u>Income TOTAL</u>	<u>53,776</u>	
<u>Net deficit in year</u>	<u>-14,934</u>	
Cash reconciliation		
Balance brought forward	47,194	
Net deficit for year	-14,934	
Cash in bank	32,260	

Friends of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs

Statement of Assets & Liabilities as at 31st. December, 2017

	31/12/17	31/12/16
Current assets:		
Bank:		
Combined balance at year end	£32,260	£43,942
Capital:	£32,260	£43,942

James B Fraser (Chairman)

Tom Wallace (Treasurer)

WM Hassall (Independent Examiner)

15th May 2018

Notes/

Notes to the accounts

Year ended 31 December 2017

Nature and purpose of funds

The aims of Friends of Loch Lomond & the Trossachs "the charity" are:

- To cherish, protect and enhance the natural beauty, amenity and character of Loch Lomond, its islands and the surrounding countryside.
- To protect and encourage the preservation, conservation and improvement of features of public amenity or historic interest within the above area.
- To promote and encourage an energetic and consistent implementation of good planning policies appropriate to the above area and consistent with these objects.
- To stimulate public interest in these objects by means of publications, meetings, exhibitions, appeals and other forms of publicity.
- To co-operate with other bodies to promote the foregoing objects.

Executive Council

None of the trustees received any remuneration in the year.

There were no transactions with trustees and connected persons in the year.

Other information

At 31 December 2017 there was no outstanding capital expenditure approved or committed.

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE FRIENDS OF
LOCH LOMOND AND THE TROSSACHS NATIONAL PARK

I report on the accounts of the charity for the period ended 31st December, 2017 which are set out in the accompanying documents.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The Charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the Charities and Trustees Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006. The Charity trustees consider that the audit requirement of Regulation 10(1) (a) to (c) of the Accounts Regulations does not apply. It is my responsibility to examine the accounts as required under section 44(1)(c) of the Act and to state whether certain matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's statement

My examination is carried out in accordance with Regulation 11 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006. An examination included 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 seeks 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 on the views given by the accounts.


Independent examiner's statement

In the course of my examination no matter has come to my attention

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with Section 44(1)(a) of the 2005 Act and Regulation 4 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations, and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with Regulation 8 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations

have not been met, or

2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.


William M. Hassall,
Helensburgh.

29th. April, 2018