

# THE DAVA WAY ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the Annual Members Meeting (AMM) held 5<sup>th</sup> November 2019

Venue: Forres Lawn Tennis Club, Albert Street, Forres, Moray, IV36 1PR

Meeting Opened: 19:30

Item	Minute	Action By
1	<p><u>Welcome:</u> The Dava Way Association (DWA) Chair (Neil Sinclair) chaired the meeting and welcomed those present. He encouraged any non-members to engage fully in any discussions but reminded them that they could not vote on any proposals made.</p>	
2	<p><u>Present:</u> <b>DWA Members</b>            Alex Ross, David Binney, Greg McAulay, Howard Davenport, Malcolm Campbell, Michael Sutherland, Neil Sinclair, Norman Thomson, Paul Barron, Pete Mitchell, Robbie Roberts, Trevor Thornley, Wilson Metcalfe.  <b>Guests</b>            (None)</p> <p><u>Apologies:</u> Doug Hartley, Jim McKay.</p>	
3	<p><u>Membership Invitation</u>            Neil Sinclair invited any non-members present to apply for membership by completing a DWA Membership Application form. He added that, under clause 13 of the DWA Constitution, the applications will be considered by the board at its next meeting. It was noted that all those present were members of the DWA.</p>	
4	<p><u>Review Approved Minutes from Previous AMM</u>            Neil Sinclair reported that the minutes from the previous AMM were approved by the DWA Board of Trustees at the board meeting held 11/12/18; ref clause 51 of the DWA Constitution. However, any errors or omissions may be noted in the minutes of this AMM.            The approved minutes of the previous AMM were read and no errors or omissions were noted.</p>	
5	<p><u>Matters Arising from Minutes of Previous AMM</u>            (There were no matters arising)</p>	
6 6.1	<p><u>Chair's Annual Report</u>            Neil Sinclair (DWA Chair) presented the following report; ref clause 29.1 of the DWA Constitution:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Good evening again and now I would like to take this opportunity to present the Chair's Report for the year ending 2019.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">This report covers the period up to April 2019 to coincide with our financial statement, which our Treasurer will cover next.</p>	

This is the part of the meeting that I often get accused of getting 'wrong'. Tonight's meeting is all about our previous financial state and operations up to April '19 so in real terms this is last year we are talking about.

So, I won't mention the very successful Ghost Train Walk we held this summer, or the successful bid for new plant and machinery, or the many many hours the volunteers spent maintaining one of Scotland's Great Trails. No, I won't mention any of these. What I will talk about is the many, many hours the trusty volunteers have spent maintaining one of Scotland's Great Trails.

If it wasn't for these volunteers 'Trip Advisor' couldn't report things like:

"The Dava Way is the most beautiful walking Route. I visited it cycling and it is just beautiful which passes through various little forests on the way."  
Avjav Parikh (Feb 18)

"Cycled part of the Dava Way for the first time. Excellent for getting off the beaten track, the scents, sounds and views are breath taking. Great for some 'me' time."  
Eatsoutalot (Sep18)

"Cycled from Dava Station to Grantown on Spey today. Beautiful day lots of people out on the track enjoying the good weather. I would say this section is the hardest because it's on farmland but the volunteers keep this path in amazing condition and well done for fixing the dragoon."  
Marion M611

Our footfall counter tripped over the 100,000 mark this summer so we must be doing something right.

All the organising that took place during this reporting period took a considerable amount of time and effort and for this I would like to thank Paul our Treasurer, Pete the Working Party Coordinator, Malcolm our Secretary and Project Manager, Trevor the Minutes Secretary, Robbie for helping me by being the Vice Chair, Norman for representing us at numerous meetings with likeminded parties, Doug for his HSE input and finally David for his help with our IT needs. Gentlemen thank you very much for all your hard work.

During this period, we continued to foster excellent links with Sustrans and SNH which enabled us to complete tasks such as the new ramp at Squirrelneuk and new fencing at Muir of Logie. Paul will provide the figures for these projects in a minute. At the end of April '18 we took delivery of our new chipper, funded by a grant from the Berry Burn Community Fund. Then we quickly arranged LANTRA training for members so that we could safely and correctly operate this machine.

This attitude towards safety prevails throughout the Association and we constantly reflect on and review our activities to promote a safe working environment for all our volunteers and the members of

	<p>public who use the footpath. For this attitude towards safety I thank all members who are constantly encouraging safe practices. Incidents are very few and far between and hopefully this is how it will remain.</p> <p>We have many plans for the future, some possibly taking us along new directions but as you will hear next, we are financially in a strong position and I believe the organisation is robust, but we will always welcome more help at committee level.</p> <p>I would like to finish my report for 18-19 with a big thanks to all who make my job easy and a very pleasant activity.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>	
6.2	Trevor Thornley thanked Neil Sinclair for his work as DWA Chair.	
7 7.1	<p><u>Treasurer's Annual Report</u></p> <p>The DWA Treasurer (Paul Barron) presented the following report:</p> <p>As a SCIO the members are required to consider our annual accounts for the financial year 18/19. Accordingly copies of the Trustees Annual Report incorporating our annual accounts starting on P5 have been circulated to all Trustees and further copies have been distributed around the room for consideration by our members. These annual Payment and Receipt accounts follow OSCR guidance and have been examined by our accountant Gordon Scott, CA and he is satisfied that our accounting records comply with the necessary legislation and regulations.</p> <p><b>DWA Finances Key Points</b></p> <p><u>Receipts/Income</u></p> <p>Total Annual Income for 18/19 was £12,686. This included a £9,183 restricted grant from Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) to undertake an improvement to the Dava Way to replace the steps at Squirrelneuk Bridge with a cycle friendly ramp.</p> <p>With written approval from Sustrans a balance of their restricted grant amounting to £798 for general improvements to the Dava Way in 17/18 carried forward was subsequently transferred to our general fund and has continued to be used for path surface improvements.</p> <p>Income receipts for fundraising activities during 17/18 included donations of £790 in advance for the June 19 Ghost Train Walk and income from participation in the Moray Walking Festival with receipts amounting to £458.</p> <p>Other significant income through donations totalled £1,847 including a HMRC Gift Aid contribution of £436 covering the 2018 calendar year.</p>	

Under our Gross Trading Receipt heading, sales of Dava Way Companion guidebooks produced an income of £408, and £23 was realised from cloth badge sales.

During the financial year the number of individuals that give regular monthly donations to the DWA increased to 7, and this provided us with a continued steady income stream to cover known general fund liabilities. If any other members are like minded to financially assist the DWA in this way, we would welcome this help from any other benefactors.

#### Payments/Expenditure

Total Expenditure over the financial year amounted to £15,181.

This expenditure included most significantly £10,183 to MacDonald Contracting on the work to improve the Dava Way at Squirrelneuk, made up of the SNH grant of £9,183 and a £1,000 contribution from our General Fund.

Other restricted grant expenditure included £595 directly from the Sustrans general improvements grant and £250 from a Johnston & Carmichael grant for tools, both carried forward from 17/18.

A total sum of £4,657 was spent on general day to day activities to maintain the Dava Way. This figure included £1,025 on trailer maintenance, public liability insurance payment of £376, woodchipper training of £720, Trustee's expenses of £806 and £142 on weed spray equipment.

Other expenditure included within expenses for fundraising activities was £408 on Moray Walking Festival expenses, and this included minibus hire and share of income with LDWA.

The DWA purchased no new significant assets during the 18/19 financial year. The 18/19 book value of our fixed assets after depreciation has therefore decreased from £6262 to £5,000. In accordance with our accounting policy any assets will continue to depreciate in value at 20% per annum.

At the comparative year ends 17/18 and 18/19 our General fund bank balance decreased from £9,966 to £9,114 and we held no funds against any restricted grants at current financial year end.

The trustees consider that this amount is still appropriate to allow them to continue to support the charitable activities of the DWA in the foreseeable future and have agreed that the healthier bank balance now available should be used either to support collaborative opportunities with other grant funding bodies or to replace/upgrade important items of equipment should the need arise.

Although this General Fund bank balance remains healthier this year, the Treasurer recommends that the prudent position to always

7.2	<p>maintain a minimum operating bank balance of £1000 should be sustained.</p> <p>Paul Barron invited questions from the floor. There were none.</p> <p>Paul Barron stated that, although the General Fund bank balance is healthier this year, he recommends that the prudent decision of the AGM of the Dava Way Association nine years ago to always maintain a Minimum Operating Balance (MOB) of £1000 should be sustained, if not increased. Following a discussion about the routine costs applicable to the running of the DWA, Robbie Roberts proposed that the MOB should be increased to £1,500. Agreed unanimously.</p>	
8 8.1 8.2 8.3	<p><u>Consideration of the Trustees Annual Report:</u></p> <p>Neil Sinclair quoted clause 29.2 of the DWA constitution, “The business of each AMM must include ... consideration of the annual accounts of the organisation”.</p> <p>Paul Barron read out and explained the various sections within the DWA Trustees Annual Report (TAR) that will be submitted to the Office of the Scottish Charities Regulator (OSCR).</p> <p>Wilson Metcalfe noted that a good portion of the Dava Way (DW) is in Highland and proposed that the text under ‘Charitable Purposes’ should reflect this. Paul Barron stated that the text was taken from clause 4 of the <a href="#">DWA Constitution</a> and suggested that DWA TAR be submitted in its current form, with any change to the content of the DWA Constitution discussed as a separate matter. Agreed unanimously. The DWA Secretary will submit the DWA TAR to the OSCR.</p> <p>David Binney asked if there were any other clauses in the constitution that should be reviewed.</p> <p>Paul Barron noted that the purpose of “...improving, maintaining and promoting the Dava Way as a long distance route and strategic link between Strathspey and the Moray Firth” was interpreted some time ago as seeking to upgrade the path to Sustrans standard and have the DW officially recognised as a <a href="#">National Cycle Network</a> (NCN) route. Paul suggested that the related purpose in the constitution could be amended to reflect this.</p> <p>David Binney noted the historical reluctance to promote the DW for use by cyclists and expressed his concern that focussing on the needs of cyclists may discourage some walkers.</p> <p>Malcolm Campbell stated that paths have, for some time, needed to promote shared use in order to gain funding.</p> <p>Robbie Roberts pointed out that use of the DW by walkers, cyclists, equestrians and users on mobility scooters is increasing, but the biggest increase has been in the ratio of cyclists to other users.</p> <p>Malcolm Campbell stated that the DW is attractive to Sustrans as it could provide a strategic route linking NCN in Speyside with NCN1 on the Moray coast at Forres. Malcolm reported that he has written to Sustrans to ask what would be required for the DW to be recognised as a NCN route. Sustrans have stated that the DW would need to be upgraded to Sustrans <a href="#">traffic-free routes and greenways</a> standard, most notably requiring the path to have some kind of <a href="#">sealed surface</a>.</p>	DWA Secretary

<p>8.4</p> <p>8.5</p> <p>8.6</p>	<p>Howard Davenport enquired what benefits there would be to recognition of the DW as an NCN route and what obligations would this place on the DWA.</p> <p>Trevor Thornley reiterated Malcolm Campbell’s statement that paths have, for some time, needed to promote shared use in order to gain funding. The focus of Transport Scotland policy has recently shifted towards <a href="#">Active Travel</a>, aiming to get more people to walk or cycle for short everyday journeys wherever possible, to improve health and the environment. Transport Scotland grant funds organisations for both infrastructure building and behaviour change interventions (such as mapping, signage and information on routes, cycle training, cycle loan schemes, led walks), to encourage more people to walk and cycle more often; see <a href="#">Transport Scotland funding opportunities</a>. These grant funded organisations include <a href="#">Paths for All</a>, <a href="#">Cycling Scotland</a>, <a href="#">Sustrans</a> and Local Authorities across Scotland.</p> <p>Wilson Metcalfe proposed that the DWA Trustees review the DWA Constitution and revise the wording under ‘Charitable Purposes’, to reflect current government policy and maximise funding opportunities. Agreed unanimously.</p> <p>The DWA Trustees will review the DWA Constitution and submit the draft document for discussion at a members’ meeting (see clause 111 of the DWA Constitution).</p> <p>Having obtained the agreement of the members, the DWA Secretary will obtain written consent from the OSCR for any alteration to clause 4 ‘Charitable Purposes’ of the DWA Constitution (see clause 112 of the DWA Constitution).</p> <p>Michael Sutherland proposed that the DWA Trustees should prepare a Strategic Plan for the development of the DW infrastructure, based on the ‘Charitable Purposes’ in the revised DWA Constitution. Agreed unanimously.</p> <p>The DWA Trustees will prepare a Strategic Plan for development of the DW infrastructure, based on the ‘Charitable Purposes’ in the revised DWA Constitution. Within this action, the DWA Trustees will consider the implications of the DW becoming a recognised NCN route and quantify the obligations that such recognition may require (e.g. service level agreements for maintenance and repair of the path surface, changes to legal liability, etc.).</p>	<p>DWA Trustees</p> <p>DWA Secretary</p> <p>DWA Trustees</p>
<p>9</p> <p>9.1</p>	<p><u>Review of Membership Fee Amount</u></p> <p>Paul Barron quoted clause 16 of the DWA constitution, “A membership subscription will be payable annually, the amount to be agreed at the AMM”. He stated that this amount is currently nil.</p> <p>Norman Thomson described a scheme for the collection of an annual membership fee from members of the Forres In Bloom organisation and suggested that the DWA may wish to do the same as a means of generating income.</p> <p>Trevor Thornley pointed out that this suggestion was discussed and declined at the previous AMM. Apart from voting rights at the AMM, membership of the DWA does not provide any tangible benefit to members and the administrative burden of collecting what would be a very small amount does not justify the effort required.</p> <p>Paul Barron proposed that the annual membership subscription amount payable should remain nil. Agreed unanimously.</p>	

9.2	Paul Barron added that individual/monthly donations are always welcome. Details of how to donate are available on the <a href="#">DWA website</a> .	
10	<u>Health and Safety</u> Neil Sinclair stated that clause 4 of the DWA Health and Safety Policy requires that health and safety is included as an agenda item at each AMM, when volunteers will be invited to raise issues or concerns.	
10.1	Neil Sinclair stated that the health and safety policy and practices of the DWA continue to evolve. A retired health and safety professional is advising the DWA on health and safety matters and assisting with the review of the DWA Health and Safety System. Appropriate training is always provided, for example the chipper training mentioned earlier.	
10.2	Trevor Thornley reported that there had been no health and safety incidents in the year 2018-2019.	
10.3	Trevor Thornley asked if anyone present had any health and safety related issues or concerns that they would like to raise. No issues or concerns were raised.	
10.4	Robbie Roberts stated that funding for further training may now be available from <a href="#">Scottish Forestry</a> through their <a href="#">Community Fund</a> . The DWA Secretary will add this as an agenda item for discussion at the next DWA Board of Trustees meeting.	DWA Secretary
11	<u>Current and Future Projects</u>	
11.1	<b>Partnership Working with Finnerne Development Trust</b> Neil Sinclair reported that the DWA Trustees have had several meetings with the <a href="#">Finnerne Development Trust</a> (FDT) to discuss partnership working on projects of benefit to both organisations. He provided a brief summary of the points discussed. Malcolm Campbell added that the DW provides a major 'trunk route' through Finnerne and is key to many of the projects outlined in the <a href="#">FDT Strategic Plan 2019-2023</a> .	
12	<u>AOCB</u> Neil Sinclair asked if anyone present had any other related business they would like to raise.	
12.1	Howard Davenport asked how many DWA members there are. Pete Mitchell responded that there are currently 27 DWA members, 30 volunteers and 405 members of the Facebook group <a href="#">Friends of the Dava Way</a> .	
12.2	Greg McAulay suggested that the DWA should add something to the various information boards along the DW to encourage donations from route users towards the cost of maintaining the route. Howard Davenport suggested that a QR code could be used to provide a link to the appropriate page on the DWA website. Pete Mitchell suggested that a link to the donations web page could be provided from the DWA Facebook group. The DWA Secretary will add an agenda item for discussion of these suggestions at the next DWA Board of Trustees meeting.	DWA Secretary
13	<u>Date of the Next Meeting</u> Neil Sinclair proposed that the next AMM should be held on 03/11/20. Agreed unanimously.	

14	<u>Resignation and Election/Re-election of Board Members</u>	
14.1	<p>The DWA board members all retired from office. Neil Sinclair noted Doug Hartley's wish not to be re-elected. The remainder offered themselves for re-election. Neil Sinclair asked if any other DWA members would like to stand for election. Michael Sutherland offered himself for election. The following members were duly elected/re-elected as board members:</p> <p>Malcolm Campbell, Michael Sutherland, Neil Sinclair, Norman Thomson, Paul Barron, Pete Mitchell, Robbie Roberts, Trevor Thornley</p>	
14.2	<p>Neil Sinclair announced that the next DWA Board of Trustees meeting would be held 19:00 19/11/19 at The Hub, 20 Tolbooth Street, Forres, Moray, IV36 1PH.</p>	

Meeting Closed: 20:50



Neil Sinclair  
Chairman  
Dava Way Association