

THE DAVA WAY ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting held 19th May 2025

Venue: Royal British Legion, Sanquhar Road, Forres, IV36 1DG.

Meeting Opened: 19:00

Item	Minute	Action By
1	<u>Welcome:</u> Neil Sinclair chaired the meeting and welcomed members. NS noted for the minute that the DWA BoT meeting scheduled for 13/05/25 was postponed as it would not have been quorate.	
2	<u>Present:</u> Malcolm Campbell (MC), Neil Sinclair (NS), Paul Barron (PB), Pete Mitchell (PM), Tim Heaps (TH), Trevor Thornley (TT). <u>Apologies:</u> Michael J Sutherland (MS), Robbie Roberts (RR).	
3	<u>Minutes of the previous meeting held on 15th April 2025</u> The minutes of the previous Dava Way Association (DWA) BoT meeting were read and accepted without change. Proposed: PM Seconded: NS	
4	<u>Matters Arising from the previous meeting</u>	
4.1	Ref 4.1: Action held over. MC will arrange a “Thank You” event for key Altyre Estate staff, to be held at the Altyre Sawmill once the Ghost Train Walk (GTW) has been held.	MC
4.2	Ref 5.8: (See Item 5.8 below)	
4.3	Ref 7.3.1.1: (See Item 7.2.1.1 below)	
4.4	Ref 7.3.1.2: (See Item 7.2.1.2 below)	
4.5	Ref 7.3.2: (See Item 7.3.4 below)	
4.6	Ref 7.3.3: (See Item 7.3.5 below)	
4.7	Ref 7.3.4: (See Item 7.3.7 below)	
4.8	Ref 7.3.5: (See Item 7.2.6 below)	
4.9	Ref 7.3.6: (See Item 7.2.5 below)	
4.10	Ref 7.4.1: (See Item 7.4.1 below)	
4.11	Ref 7.4.2: (See Item 7.4.2 below)	
4.12	Ref 7.4.3: (See Item 7.4.3 below)	
4.13	Ref 7.5.1.1: (See Item 7.5.1.1 below)	
4.14	Ref 7.5.1.2: (See Item 7.5.1.2 below)	
4.15	Ref 8.1.1: (See Item 8.1.1 below)	
4.16	Ref 8.2.1: (See Item 8.2.1 below)	
4.17	Ref 8.2.2: (See Item 8.2.2 below)	
4.18	Ref 8.2.3: (See Item 8.2.3 below)	
4.19	Ref 8.2.4: (See Item 8.2.4 below)	
4.20	Ref 8.3.1.1: (See Item 8.3.1.1 below)	
4.21	Ref 8.3.1.2: (See Item 8.3.1.2 below)	
4.22	Ref 8.3.1.3: (See Item 8.3.1.4 below)	
4.23	Ref 8.3.1.4: (See Item 8.3.1.5 below)	
4.24	Ref 8.3.2.1: (See Item 8.3.2.1 below)	

4.25	Ref 8.3.2.2:	(See Item 8.3.2.2 below)	
4.26	Ref 8.3.4:	(See Item 8.3.3 below)	
4.27	Ref 8.3.5:	(See Item 8.3.4 below)	
4.28	Ref 8.3.6:	(See Item 8.3.5 below)	
4.29	Ref 8.3.7:	(See Item 8.3.6 below)	
4.30	Ref 9.1.2:	(See Item 9.1.2 below)	
4.31	Ref 10.1.1:	(See Item 10.1.1 below)	
4.32	Ref 10.1.2:	(See Item 10.1.2 below)	
4.33	Ref 12.2.2:	(See Item 12.2.2 below)	
5	<u>Treasurer's Report</u>		
5.1	PB reported that a balance of £12,613.85 is in the DWA account. Unrestricted Funds: £ 12,613.85 Restricted Funds: £ Nil PB reported that the project funds of £84.25 from Places Called Home and £1,876.44 from Money for Moray have now been spent and the improvements to the Dallas Dhu Ramp have been completed.		
5.2	Significant Income: £ 2,275.74 from Ticket Tailor; GTW ticket/mug sales. £ 546.18 from HMRC; Gift Aid.		
5.3	Significant Expenditure: £ 459.11 to Nixon Hire; GTW Portaloo hire. £ 107.18 to Leiths; quarry material. £ 1,642.00 to Michael Morrison; Dallas Dhu ramp fence installation. £ 190.52 to Keith Builders Merchants; timber for information boards. £ 134.56 to MacGregors Industrial Supplies; galvanized gate posts.		
5.4	Anticipated Expenditure (from DWA funds): £ 1,160.00 to Kineil Coaches; GTW coaches. £ 450.00 to Scotia Medical Group; GTW first aid cover. £ 40.00 to Leiths; sub-base. £ 60.00 to MacGregors Industrial Supplies; rough-cutter parts.		
5.5	Anticipated Income (from external funding): £ Nil		
5.6	Anticipated Expenditure (covered by external funding): £ Nil		
5.7	Donations via the GiveWP-Stripe process since last meeting: £ 25.00		
5.8	Ref 5.8: NS reported that he has purchased the materials to complete the manufacture of a replacement information board frame for Dallas Dhu (see Item 7.4.2 below. Action closed.		
6	<u>Correspondences</u>		
6.1	To the Secretary (Nothing to report)		
6.2	Other Correspondence (Nothing to report)		
7	<u>Dava Way Path Works and Equipment Maintenance</u>		
7.1	Unplanned Work Since Last Meeting		
7.1.1	17/04/25 TH reported that he has attempted to get the counter at Dunphail working accurately. The data is erratic and, having tested unit function, TH has concluded that the counter is unserviceable (see Item 7.5.1.1 below).		

7.1.2	17/04/25 PM Removed a ride-on mower wheel, had a puncture repaired, then refitted the wheel. He also bagged some surplus quarry dust.
7.1.3	21/04/25 to 24/04/25 Mike Morrison installed the new fencing at the Dallas Dhu ramp.
7.1.4	22/04/25 PB took the tool trailer to MacGregor Industrial Supplies in Elgin to collect some galvanized gateposts.
7.1.5	24/04/25 PM and PB replaced a rotted wooden hinge post at the Cowgreens boundary with a galvanized one.
7.1.6	25/04/25 PM completed adjustment of the Cowgreens boundary gate.
7.1.7	26/04/25 PM replaced a cracked light cluster lens on the tipping trailer.
7.1.8	29/04/25 PB investigated a problem with the rough cutter.
7.1.9	30/04/25 Paul Douglas carried out grass cutting from south of the Mannachie Ramp out to the south end of the Rafford Embankment.
7.1.10	12/05/25 PM and PB carried out a more in-depth investigation of a problem with the rough cutter (see Item 7.5.2 below).
7.1.11	16/05/25 PM and PB completed the quarry dust surfacing at the Dallas Dhu ramp and used some excess sub-base to smooth over some protruding tree roots by the chicane south of Dallas Dhu. It was noted that the memorial bench south of the chicane is broken (see Item 7.3.6 below).
7.2	Planned Work Since Last Meeting
7.2.1	Ref 7.3.1.1: PM reported that the following works were carried out by 7 volunteers, completing a total of 55 hours of work at the full work party held 19/04/25: Longley Cutting Progressed drainage improvements; an additional 180 metres of ditch cleared and 8 tonnes of arising removed. Action closed.
7.2.2	Ref 7.3.1.2: MC reported that he notified the relevant estate manager(s) of the works to be carried out. Action closed.
7.2.3	PM reported that the following works were carried out by 13 volunteers, completing a total of 70 hours of work at the full work party held 10/05/25: Dallas Dhu Ramp - Improvements progressed to near completion; path surface widened and smoothed with quarry material. - Fencing painted. Longley Cutting - Further arisings from April work party removed.
7.2.4	MC reported that he notified the relevant estate manager(s) of the works to be carried out.
7.2.5	Ref 7.3.6: NS reported that he, MC and PM surveyed the DW pedestrian bypass at Dava on 25/04/25. Action closed.
7.2.6	Ref 7.3.5: NS reported that on 28/04/25 pupils from Grantown Grammar carried out works to improve the current DW pedestrian bypass around the Dava settlement, as part of the Junior Environmental Ranger Scheme run by the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA). The pupils were later presented with their John Muir Discovery Awards at the CNPA HQ in Grantown-on-Spey. Action closed.
7.3	Priorities for Next Work Party and Mini Work Parties
7.3.1	PM proposed that the following works be considered priorities for the full work party to be held 14/06/25: Various locations - Grass cutting. - Essential undergrowth cutback; minimise to safeguard nesting birds.

7.3.1.1	Agreed unanimously. PM will make the necessary arrangements.	PM
7.3.1.2	MC will notify the relevant estate manager(s) of the works to be carried out.	MC
7.3.2	PM proposed that the following works be considered priorities for mini work parties to be held when possible: • Mannachie Ramp – remove rotted fingerpost, prepare base, and reinstall using galvanised base. • South of Dragoon Crossing – adjust misaligned clatter post. • Dava Pedestrian Bypass – cover installed pipes with sub-base, apply quarry dust topping and install headwalls. • Various locations – install bunds to direct rainwater off path, to prevent the water running down ruts and causing further erosion. Agreed unanimously.	
7.3.2.1	PM will make the necessary arrangements.	PM
7.3.2.2	MC will notify the relevant estate manager(s) of the works to be carried out.	MC
7.3.3	PB reported that he has received an estimate of £300 for a half day inspection/fix to clear the drainage pipe blockage in the cutting south of the Sluggan Burn. The trees above the affected pipe section will need to be removed, and some trees preventing access to the contractor's vehicle will need to be 'pruned' back. PB proposed that these works should go ahead. Agreed unanimously.	
7.3.3.1	PB will liaise with the contractor and provide MC with a date for the works.	PB
7.3.3.2	PB will liaise with Greg MacAulay regarding removal/pruning of trees and provide MC with details of the works and a date for them to be carried out.	PB
7.3.3.3	MC will notify the relevant estate manager(s) of the works to be carried out.	MC
7.3.4	Ref 7.3.2: Action held over. PB will contact the relevant estate manager and request an on-site meeting to discuss options to resolve the flooding issues that have resulted in erosion of the path surface between Balvair and Dunphail. Dependent on the adjacent ditches having been cleared.	PB
7.3.5	Ref 7.3.3: Action held over. PM or NS will treat the oak benches with teak oil when possible.	PM/NS
7.3.6	PB reported that the memorial bench south of the chicane south of Dallas Dhu is damaged beyond repair. He has already contacted the original donor, and the donor is willing to subsidise the purchase of a replacement.	
7.3.6.1	TH volunteered to obtain quotes for a suitable replacement.	TH
7.3.6.2	PB will arrange a mini work party to remove the broken bench, recover the memorial plate and install a new bench.	PB
7.3.7	Ref 7.3.4: Action held over. NS will inspect the damage to the nose of the Redcoat sculpture and see what can be done to repair it.	NS
7.4	Signage	
7.4.1	Ref 7.4.1: Action held over. PB will tabulate a bill of materials and obtain a total cost for fixing waymarker signs to lamp posts and street signs, to replace the wooden waymarker posts between the Tolbooth and Mannachie Avenue.	PB
7.4.2	Ref 7.4.2: NS reported that he has manufactured a new information board frame to the standard design and has installed it at the Dallas Dhu Ramp (see Item 5.8 above). Action closed.	
7.4.3	Ref 7.4.3: Action held over. NS will manufacture a new information board frame to the standard design and arrange for its installation adjacent to the Dullicht Bridge.	NS

7.5	Tooling and Equipment	
7.5.1	Preparations for installation of RadioBeam People and Bicycle Counter (RBBP) at the crossing south of Dallas Dhu:	
7.5.1.1	Ref 7.5.1.1: TH repeated his conclusion that the counter installed at Dunphail is unserviceable. The type of counter installed there, and proposed for installation at the crossing, is very expensive to purchase and maintain. TH noted that TT recently discovered an article providing a link to details of how smaller organisations could manufacture their own counters at a fraction of the cost of commercial ones. TT noted that the devices described in the article are the one described by DWA volunteer Bailee Allen, but their manufacture would require input from a person or persons familiar with electronics and microcontroller programming. NS confirmed that he has experience with electronics and would be able to build the devices, and TH confirmed that he could program them. TH proposed that the DWA set aside the purchase of commercial counters and attempt to develop their own one. Agreed unanimously. Action closed.	
7.5.1.2	Ref 7.5.1.2: MC will contact DWA volunteer Bailee Allen to ask if she has a sample counter of the type used with the National Parks Service and ask if she would be willing to share her experience of developing and using the devices.	MC
7.5.1.3	TH and NS will form a DWA subcommittee, hopefully with input from Bailee, to manufacture and test a DWA counter as a project.	TH/NS
7.5.2	PB reported that the rough cutter is currently undergoing major in-house repairs. The reverse gear would not disengage, and it was not possible to tension the drive belt sufficiently to prevent it repeatedly jumping off the drive pulley. PB and PM have stripped the rough cutter down to investigate. Cracks in the chassis were discovered adjacent to two mounting points, allowing the chassis to flex. It is hoped that these cracks can be welded and strengthening plates added to improve chassis rigidity. An incorrectly oriented mounting bolt was also found, which was interfering with the operation of the gear lever. Arrangements have been made for the welding to be carried out, and several spare parts have been ordered. PB and PM will complete the repairs to the rough cutter.	PB/PM
8	Project Reports	
8.1	Dallas Dhu Access Ramp Improvement Project Ref 8.1.1: PM reported that the ramp improvement works have been completed. Action closed.	
8.2	Dava Bypass Project	
8.2.1	Ref 8.2.1: Action held over. PB will update Dave McLeod of Station House, Dava.	PB
8.2.2	Ref 8.2.2: Action held over. PB will contact Mike Dickson of Station Cottage, Dava to discuss private water supplies and protection measures.	PB
8.2.3	Ref 8.2.3: Action held over. PB will seek specialist advice from Paths for All re path design constraints regarding private water supplies.	PB
8.2.4	Ref 8.2.4: Action held over. PB will form a DWA subcommittee with MC, NS and TT to decide what improvements to the DW should be requested to ensure that the DWA gain maximum benefit from the constraints placed on the developer. PB will confirm with MC and NS what works have already been discussed by them with the Ourack Wind Farm developer and obtain details of any future meetings that they have arranged with the developer. NB: There are three planning constraints for works affecting the DWA - Constraint 23. The development of an Outdoor Access Plan to secure public access rights during and after wind farm development.	PB

	Constraint 24. The development of a scheme to improve and enhance the Dava Way. Constraint 28. The development of a scheme for the provision of off-site road works at Castle Grant, including full details of the works affecting the Dava Way.	
8.2.5	Under direction from PB, MC will contact the Ourack Wind Farm developer to arrange a meeting with the DWA subcommittee.	MC
8.3	Ghost Train Walk 2025	
8.3.1	PB reported that all 180 full price tickets have been sold.	
8.3.1.1	Ref 8.3.1.1: TH reported that he reduced the tickets available on Ticket Tailor; 180 full tickets and 20 tickets for fundraisers. Action closed.	
8.3.1.2	Ref 8.3.1.2: PB reported that he reduced the bus/coach booking to 200 seats. Action closed.	
8.3.1.3	PB will confirm the expected capacity of the allocated buses/coaches to determine if there is scope to sell a small number of additional tickets.	PB
8.3.1.4	Ref 8.3.1.3: PB reported that he has informed Scotia Medical about the reduced first aid cover requirement. Action closed.	
8.3.1.5	Ref 8.3.1.4: MC reported that, with the target ticket sales reached, there is no need to advertise the GTW more widely. Action closed.	
8.3.2	TT repeated his concerns about the confirmed availability of volunteers to carry out the many tasks in support of the GTW event.	
8.3.2.1	Ref 8.3.2.1: Action held over. PM will contact the DWA Volunteers to ascertain how many are willing to commit to helping at the GTW event.	PM
8.3.2.2	Ref 8.3.2.2: Action held over. PM will post an appeal on the DWA Facebook group for volunteers to help at the GTW event.	PM
8.3.2.3	PM asked MC to provide him with details of the volunteer positions/duties remaining to be filled.	MC
8.3.3	Ref 8.3.4: Action transferred. NS reported that he is making a finish arch.	NS
8.3.4	Ref 8.3.5: MC reported that he has received no response from the Osprey Trust, so it is assumed that the DWA cannot use their minibus for the GTW event. Action closed.	
8.3.5	Ref 8.3.6: PM confirmed that the DWA can use the Finnerne Development Trust minibus for the GTW event. TH will shortly carry out driver induction. Action closed.	
8.3.6	Ref 8.3.7: Action held over. MC will act as point-of-contact with the Explorer Scouts while RR is on his pilgrimage, then RR will commence detailed planning for the 'spooky entertainment' on his return.	MC/RR
9	<u>Health and Safety</u>	
9.1	First Aid Kits	
9.1.1	The DWA first aid kits are held by MC, PB and PM. The completeness and serviceability of each kit was confirmed.	
9.1.2	Ref 9.1.2. Action held over. PB reported that he has contacted Scotia Medical, but it may be the end of September before they can provide the DWA with an Emergency First Aid at Work course and assessment. PB will monitor progress.	PB
9.2	Injury Reports and Incidents (Nothing to report)	

10	<u>Business Planning</u>	
10.1	DWA Strategic Business Planning	
10.1.1	Ref 10.1.1: Action held over. DWA Trustees to read and comment on the revised DWA Strategic Business Plan and draft budget forecast covering the potential projects to be carried out 2024-2025.	All
10.1.2	Ref 10.1.2: Action held over. MC and MS will update the DWA Strategic Business Plan to include a funding strategy to meet the budget forecast.	MC/MS
10.2	Trustee Membership and Supporter Roles (Nothing to report)	
10.3	Succession Planning (Nothing to report)	
11	<u>Funding</u> (Nothing to report)	
12	<u>Social Media and Publicity</u>	
12.1	DWA Website (Nothing to report)	
12.2	DWA Facebook Group	
12.2.1	PM reported that the Friends of the Dava Way Facebook group now has 2,142 members.	
12.2.2	Ref 12.2.2: Action held over. PM will post an advert on the DWA Facebook group for a volunteer DWA Social Media Manager.	PM
12.3	Local, Regional and National Publications (Nothing to report)	
12.4	External Websites and Social Media. (Nothing to report)	
13	<u>AOCB</u> (Nothing to report)	
14	Date of the Next Meeting: 19:00 10/06/25, at the Royal British Legion, Sanquhar Road, Forres, IV36 1DG.	

Meeting Closed: 21:15



Neil Sinclair
Chairman
Dava Way Association