



ANNUAL GENERAL METING

**Monday 30th September 2019
7pm Edinkillie Community Hall**

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Introduction

May I start my Report by reiterating my welcome and thanks you to all for attending this inaugural Annual General Meeting of the FDT.

Strictly speaking the scope of a Chairman's Report would normally cover the 12-month period since the previous AGM and as covered by the annual accounting period, which for FDT is the end of May.

However, as this is our inaugural AGM and we have also taken some significant steps forward since the end of May 2019, I will - if I may - bring you up to date to more or less the present day, as this will form an important yardstick for monitoring our progress against our strategic objectives alongside the expectations of our members and the FINDERNE community as a whole, from hereon in.

Indeed, I would like to think that we will look back on this first AGM as a significant, and indeed celebratory, milestone as we step out into an exciting and hugely positive journey forward in bringing to fruition our vision for the future of FINDERNE.

I've therefore structured my Report into the key milestones that we have passed over the past 18 months or so.

Formation of the Trust

If I could start off with a quick reminder about how FDT came about.

The concept of forming a Development Trust for the FINDERNE area was initiated by the FINDERNE Community Council in late 2017, following initial consultation with the FINDERNE community and negotiations with Hill of Glaschyle Renewables LLP (that's the developer of the Logie Wind Farm), as an appropriate vehicle for developing and delivering community projects that were felt to be beyond the scope and capacity of the Community Council itself.

Given the general level of local community support for this to happen, the rational and initial formation of the Finderne Development Trust took shape early in 2018 in parallel with successful negotiations with Hill of Glaschyle Renewables LLP for the granting of £138,000 per annum community benefit funding from the Logie Wind Farm to provide core funding to help underpin the Trust's future activities. This was seen as being absolute pivotal in securing a stable and long term financial platform from which to achieve our ambition of delivering our vision which is to make Finderne home to a welcoming community where people of all ages want to live, work and visit because of its outstanding environment and the quality of life it offers. Furthermore this vision is predicated on making sure that the benefits we deliver are long lasting ones that will serve not only our current but future generations. Which is why we often refer to these as "legacy" benefits, our operating model being distinct from, but nonetheless wanting to work alongside, other grant giving models such as the Berryburn Community Benefit Fund.

The coming together of the Trust's first voluntary Board of Directors took place during the first quarter of 2018 and FDT became formally incorporated as a Company Limited by Guarantee in May 2018.

Community Consultation & Strategic Plan

One of our first big tasks - and one that was justifiably expected of us by Hill of Glaschyle Renewables - was to seek the views of the Finderne community as to their needs and expectations and how well this would dovetail with the FDT's own vision and objectives. This we did during the second half of 2018, embarking on a lengthy programme of community engagement to survey and gather the aspirations and concerns of the wider Finderne community as to what people felt were the key priority issues, opportunities and long term benefits that the Trust should help address, develop and deliver.

We did this with help of an experienced team of experienced community engagement consultants, including StrategyStory who produced a video providing a delightful cameo of the Finderne Community and their aspirations. I would encourage you to have a watch of this if you haven't already - on our website - and it has also been streaming on the screen behind here this evening.

Drawing on the outcomes of this consultation enabled us to move to the next stage which was drawing up our first 5-year Strategic Plan which, after a few iterations, finally "went live" at end of May 2019.

The purpose of the Plan is to articulate the Trust's key strategic themes and associated project priority areas for the next 5 years and to provide us with a working document that will guide our activities and support future funding applications. We fully anticipate that while some of these activities and projects may be led directly by FDT, others are likely to be achieved more effectively through collaboration with other partners to mutual benefit.

You can read the Strategic Plan in its entirety on our website.

Appointment of Development Manager

At the beginning of the year we embarked on the recruitment of our first full time employee and at the beginning of March 2019 we were delighted to welcome into post Pery Zakeri as FDT Development Manager. Having previously held positions at the Tomintoul and Glenlivet Development Trust and the internationally acclaimed Spirit of Speyside Whisky Festival where she led the event to achieve significant growth over three years, we are very fortunate indeed to have been able to bring Pery on board as a member of the FDT team. I'm sure most of you have already met her - she is already making her mark with delivering both our Strategic Plan and our internal communications strategy to make people more aware of what and where the Finnerne Development Trust is all about.

Office Launch

We formally opened our new office premises at Logie Steading at a ceremony on Friday 31st May, with Douglas Ross MP cutting the ribbon. We also used the event to formally launch the Strategic Plan and to introduce Pery as our new Development Manager.

I would like to formally record our thanks to Logie Estate for allowing us to base our first office premises at Logie Steading which for us is a prime location as we set off on our development trust journey. Whilst it is an ideal location, our ambition, of course, is that within a comparatively short time we will grow out of the portacabin and have to locate elsewhere, but for the time being we are well set up. Also my thanks go to my colleague Directors who pitched in with copious amounts of voluntary time to source and deliver the portacabin itself, then clad, decorate and help equip it to point where we can present ourselves professionally to the outside world!

Charitable Status

At the beginning of May 2019, FDT achieved Scottish Charitable Status which enables us to take advantages of certain taxation exemptions and also positions us more favourably when applying for certain types of external funding.

Implementation – setting our operational priorities

Having published our Strategic Plan - which sets out the scope of projects for our delivering our vision over the next 5 years - the Board of Directors then undertook a series of “brainstorming” sessions over the last few months to thrash out and agree which of the various projects we would prioritise for implementation over the next 2 years and that would provide the framework for Perry’s work schedule. This we have now done which means we are now well and truly “out of the blocks” and can re-focus the resources of the Board and the Development Manager into “doing” rather than “thinking” mode, marking the beginning of our “next chapter” of development.

I know Pery has already communicated to members what our 6 priority projects are but in case you are not yet aware, these are in summary:

- **Community Broadband**
- **Rural-based Apprenticeships**
- **Energy Efficient Living, including a wide range of economic and environmental projects, all of which contribute to making Finderne an innovative leader in sustainable living**
- **A Community Hub**
- **Community Home Care and Well-being**
- **Recreational Routes - the focus on working in partnership with the Dava Way Association to develop the Dava Way as Finderne’s key recreational and tourism asset.**

There will be much more information coming about each of these projects in due course as we put the flesh on the bones so I don’t propose to go into detail about each of the projects as part of this Report but will happily answer questions or my colleague Directors and/or Pery will be happy to discuss them with you afterwards.

In Conclusion

Although perhaps not always appearing like it to the outside world and our wider membership, the last 18 months has been a very busy and formative period for the FDT, soaking up enormous amounts of voluntary time and commitment to get to the where are now – i.e. ready and positioned to start putting all the preparatory work and thinking into action. We will be endeavouring to keep you all informed about our progress over the next 12 months until we meet again at next year’s AGM!

A Team Effort

Finally I couldn't possibly conclude this Report without paying heartfelt tribute and thanks to the current Board of Directors for the time, energy and commitment they have contributed to achieving the milestones I have just alluded to. All are Finderne residents and busy people, many still fully engaged in their professional jobs, many already contributing in other ways to the wider community, but nonetheless still willing to engineer the time to provide voluntary input, through a shared passion for pursuing the Trust's vision.

So thank you to all my colleagues, both those remaining to take up a further term and also to those who have stood aside either because of the weight of other commitments or prepared to make way for new blood and fresh energy.

Thank you.

Chris Piper FICFor
Chairman, Finderne Development Trust
September 2019