



Helping Protect, Conserve and Develop a Better Built and Natural Environment

**Minute of the 27th Annual General Meeting
held on Monday 23 April 2018
at Cleish Hall, Cleish**

Present: Chairman Alistair Smith welcomed approximately 27 people to the 27th AGM of the Trust. He particularly welcomed David MacElhose of Perth Civic Trust and the speaker for the evening, Mr Brian Cunningham, head gardener at Scone Palace.

1. **Apologies** for absence were received from: George Pease, Bill Beaton, Mr & Mrs Pleass and Councillor & Mrs Robertson.
2. **Minutes of the last AGM** (held on 25 April 2017): Agreed as a true record.
3. **Matters Arising from the last AGM:** None.
4. **Chairman's Annual Report:** The Chairman reported on the year's activities as follows:

This year is the 27th Anniversary of the foundation of the Kinross-shire Civic Trust. The Trust was established in 1991 with the objects of promoting and encouraging a public interest in, and care for, the beauty, history and character of the areas of Kinross-shire and Glenfarg in order to maintain their essential character of the area, the preservation, conservation, development and improvement of buildings of general public or historic interest and a high standard of architecture and planning in the area.

The Trust has consistently pursued these aims over the years and we continue to do so. We strive to make a positive contribution to all things at all times.

Planning Committee. Our busiest activities are probably to do with planning matters. We receive the weekly Planning Lists from Perth and Kinross Council and the Trust's Planning Committee meets regularly to consider all the applications for Kinross-shire. The Planning Committee is made up of a wide amount of experience and knowledge, including professionals who bring their skills to examine the applications. On average we look at some 20 – 30 applications every month.

The major concern this year has been the Persimmon developments at the old High School site and Lathro Park. As part of its Planning Condition, Persimmon were supposed to have completed the reconstruction of the original high school building into four houses before selling any of the new houses. This Persimmon failed to do and the Trust had to pursue vigorously with PKC to have the condition enforced. In the end a bond was agreed between Persimmon and PKC and a copy of this and the agreed schedule of works is on the PKC planning portal. At long last work seems to be progressing but not before the completion and selling of many of the new houses. We were also involved in, firstly, trying to prevent, and then condemning, the swift demolition of several mature trees at the Lathro Park site.

We are also taking up matters with the PKC Procedures Committee regarding the performance of the Council over these concerns.

Everyone is concerned with the design and height of the new houses at both sites, which towers everything surrounding. Despite being in a Conservation Area at Kinross, no effort has been made to address this issue and PKC appear to have just allowed this to happen. Neither the style or the materials match anything in normal Scottish areas.

The result of PKC allowing Persimmon to build 300 houses at Lathro, as opposed to the 260 allowed in the current LDP, is immediately very obvious. The density and height of housing between Milnathort and Kinross is very plain to see and completely altered to topography.

Perth and Kinross Council are in the process of forming the next Local Development Plan (LDP2). The Trust has now responded to the Draft LDP2 and is awaiting the next production by PKC.

The Trust has several major concerns with the policies of the next LDP. PKC created a new Landscape Policy, which among other things created new Special Landscape Areas (SLA), which will help to protect these areas from unwarranted development. However, in setting these areas up PKC refused to recognise the Cleish Hills and the River Devon Gorge as SLAs. The Trust has continued to object to this omission.

Another concern is to do with the Housing in the Countryside Policy which the Trust has been very concerned about over PKCs continued laxity of the interpretation of the Policy for new development. The Trust feels strongly that many of the new housing clusters that have been given planning consent recently do not meet the requirements of the Policy.

Planning applications are subject to the policies of the Council's **Strategic Plans** and **Local Plans**. There have been a number of those over the years and the Trust has always made contributions to them all. The latest Local Plan is now under consideration and the Trust has responded to this.

Kinross-shire has a very large number of what are called 'Windfall' sites, ie sites which have not been included in the current LDP. This is adding to the current housing numbers and has caused PKC to reduce the number of houses in the next LDP2, but the continued progression of new houses is going to add to the strain on the infrastructure of Kinross-shire.

The Trust will continue to monitor this situation and object where appropriate.

There are a number of **Conservation Areas** and the Trust has been involved in the creation of these. Milnathort has not been included as a Conservation Area, despite being a very old village with a number of Listed Buildings within its curtilage. The Trust has prepared a paper proposing that Milnathort a Conservation Area and submitted this in response to the Draft LDP2.

The Trust has been informed by PKC that a new guidance document on Renewable Energy is about to be produced and the Trust awaits to see what this amounts to.

The Trust has always **supported development** but it has to be good development and the Trust will continue to oppose development that is inappropriate and is contrary to the Local Plan.

The Trust is concerned that there is an excess of development proposals in Kinross-shire, especially as a number of the policies for new housing have not yet been taken up. All this will put considerable pressure on the existing infrastructure.

The Trust's efforts to encourage good architecture have included the introduction of **Architectural Awards** schemes for new build, renovation and restoration of old buildings and improvement of the environment, including tree plantation. These are usually held on a bi-annual basis and this year the competition is for new-build. We always appoint recognised external judges to judge the competition.

The Awards are run by the **Trust's Awards Committee**, which also runs the **Best Kept Village Competition**. Last year's the BKV competition was well supported by the villages and hamlets in the county and the Trust is very pleased that this continues. Patrick Milne Home, last year's Awards Committee chairman, has decided to step aside as chairman after five years and the Trust warmly thanks him for all his hard work. Roderick Moncrieff has also decided to step down from the committee after many years of service and the Trust would like to thank him also for all the hard work he has put the Awards Committee

Patrick has been replaced by David Hill and he is joined on the Committee by Elsa Sinclair and Ian Smith. David will be giving his own report on the Committee, so I won't elaborate any further on that.

The Trust has a website (www.kinross-shirecivictrust.org) and we are also on Facebook. The website is organised by our Computer Manager, but we do need someone to keep in touch with the Trust's affairs and feed that information to the website. I would be very pleased to hear from someone who would like to take this on. It should not be an onerous task.

Donald Erskine and Colin Maitland-Dougall: The Trust was saddened by the passing of **Donald Erskine**. Donald was a founder member of the Trust, had been the Vice Chairman for a number of years and donated The Donald Erskine Cup for the Best Kept Village Competition. Donald was always the perfect gentleman and always a presence that one enjoyed. That presence will be much missed. The Trust was also saddened by the passing of Colin Maitland-Dougall, also a long-standing supporter of the Trust.

Logo: Trust has been considering replacing the current logo with something more up to date and striking. The current logo was a result of a competitions in the schools. We have prepared one or two ideas and these are on display for anyone's comments. There is a logo not here this evening and this will be circulated for comment.

Photographic Competition: We are holding a Photographic Competition within the Primary Schools and the High School. The idea would be to encourage to appreciate the environment that they live in here in Kinross-shire. We would appreciate any help from anyone who has experience in arranging such competitions. We would anticipate this at the Kinross Show and then directly with the teachers at the schools.

I would like to thank the **Planning Committee** for all their hard work this year. I would also like to thank very much the **Awards Committee** under Patrick Milne Home. Their committee has to put in a tremendous amount of work in arranging and organising these competitions every year and the Trust is very grateful to them all.

I would also like thank the Executive Committee, David Munro, Eileen Thomas, Ken Miles and Elsa Sinclair for all their strong support in this past year.

Can I finally thank all you members for your continued support? That is appreciated very much indeed. We are of course always looking for new members to continue the work of the Trust. We are looking for new members for the Planning Committee. If you feel you would like to get involved, please get in touch with any members of the committees.

Programme for the year: It was hoped that a visit to the garden at Cowden might take place, but a new access needs to be created before that can happen. It is hoped that a visit to Kinross House may be arranged. The Trust will have stalls at the Better Place to Live Fair and the Kinross Show. A dinner is also planned.

Alistair Smith, Chairman

5. **Treasurer's Annual Report:** Treasurer Ken Miles presented the financial statement for the year ended 31/3/18. The balance in the account on 31/3/18 was £2794.78. (This includes a sum of £1800 which was granted to the Trust towards the cost of publishing a booklet on Buildings of Interest in Kinross-shire.)
6. **Award Committee Chairman's Report:** David Hill reported that he, Ian Smith and Elsa Sinclair have visited all the settlements to discuss the Best Kept Village competition with local organisers. The BKV committee intends to introduce separate marking sheets, one for hamlets and one for villages. There will be two judges for each category (Jane Thornburn of Dollar and Lisa Edwards of Dunfermline). Judging of hamlets and villages will be carried out separately, so it won't be as tiring as previous years. The BKV committee also intends to introduce a certificate of participation, mentioning the excellent points for each participating settlement. The awards ceremony will be held in a central location and Lisa, who has done much to galvanise interest in Dunfermline, will give a talk. Judging will take place in July and the presentation will be in September. It is disappointing that there are only five definite participants for this year. One village group refuses to enter. Powmill intends to enter next year. David is keen to ensure that the BKV competition is different from the Take a Pride in Perthshire competition, which some of the Kinross-shire settlements enter. David expressed thanks to Sir Bobby Stewart, the originator of the Kinross-shire Best Kept Village competition, who was present at this AGM.
7. **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR):** The chairman read out a statement regarding the GDPR, which comes into force in May 2018. The statement was:
"You are advised that we store manually and on computer the details that you have supplied in your application form. These include your address, email address and telephone numbers. They are used for our records and to contact you with regards to any information the Trust may wish to pass to you. they are not used for marketing purposes and are not published anywhere or passed to any third party.
"If you have any objections to the above, please contact the Trust."
This statement will also be circulated by email to members.
8. **Appointment of Officers:** Every year in recent years Alistair has suggested that someone take his place. He is willing to carry on as Chairman for another year but thinks it would be good to have a new Chair. He has no intention of following the practice of the Presidents of China and Russia! He was elected as Chairman unopposed. Ken Miles and Eileen Thomas were nominated as Treasurer and Secretary respectively. There were no other nominations.
9. **Programme:** The Chairman had covered this item at the end of his annual report.

10. Any Other Business.

- a. Professor David Munro proposed a vote of thanks to Alistair for the splendid job he does in co-ordinating the work of the trust committees. The excellent turnout was a reflection of the interest and appreciation of the members in the work of Kinross-shire Civic Trust.
- b. Membership subscriptions were collected.

End of AGM

The meeting was followed by refreshments and an illustrated talk about the gardens at Scone Palace by head gardener, Brian Cunningham.

Brian began by giving a brief history of the site. There is evidence of a Roman encampment north of the palace. The Picts had a capital at the site and later Moot Hill in the palace grounds became the crowning place of Kings of Scotland.

The grounds are visited by around 10,000 people between April and October.

The palace has been in the Murray family for 400 years.

Brian showed photographs of some of the buildings in the palace grounds, including an old parish church. This dates from the time when the village of Scone was located here. The whole village was moved two miles away to allow for landscaping of the grounds after the medieval house was rebuilt as a palace in 1803.

Brian showed several historic photographs and modern equivalents to show different approaches to planting and design. A large kitchen garden has been reinstated to grow vegetables to use in the palace café. Maintenance regimes have changed due to the lower numbers of staff now compared to, say, 100 years ago.

Brian described various plants and explained why they were suited to the location. He also explained the important links between the famous plantsman David Douglas and Scone Palace.

There are five full-time gardeners at the palace and lots of volunteers. The volunteers are essential to the continued maintenance of and improvement to the gardens.

Brian answered lots of questions.

His was greatly enjoyed by the members present.