



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Tuesday 7th November 2023

Loch Fyne Hotel and on Teams

at 10.30am

Minutes

Attendance: Alasdair Reynolds (AR, Chairperson), Jane Wright (JW, Vice-Chairperson), Tim King (TK, Treasurer), Alan Kettle White (Director, AKW), Roger Brook (RB, Director), Robert Younger (RY, Director), David Stewart (DS, Director), Jonathan Brown (JB, Director), Alyssa Stewart (AS, Secretary), Graeme Anderson (GA, AFT Biologist), Robert Jackson (RJ, AFT Biologist, Teams), Duncan MacGillivray (DM, Dunoon & District Angling Club), Bill Rankin (BR, Dunoon & District Angling Club),

Apologies: Hugh Nicol, Andrew Barker, Ian Tegner, Steven Beale, Andrew Wales, Pandora Buchanan Jardine, Johnny Buchanan Jardine, Ian Amory, David Milburn, Charles Fforde, Caroline Fleming

INTRODUCTION FROM THE CHAIR

Alasdair welcomed everyone to the meeting both in person and on Teams.

It has been a busy year. AR commented that whilst not wishing to 'steal Alan's thunder' he would like to report that he attended fieldwork with the team when they were smolt tagging on the River Orchy, which was fascinating. He watched the biologists operating very efficiently, and delicately on these very small fish using essentially a pop-up veterinary station. This is work of a very high professional standard. AKW welcomes anyone that would like to join them in the future.

Accounts

AR apologised for the late presentation of the draft accounts and reports which was largely out-with our control. This has been a result of delays with the Accountant. AR considers that AFT are not receiving a satisfactory accountancy service at the moment. (A meeting has been arranged with the Accountant to review and improve the service provided.) The directors have a copy of the draft accounts and if there are any queries please get in touch with AR, TK, or AS. If we do not hear back within a week, we will consider the accounts to be approved.



Finance:

AR spoke of where the AFT have come from over the last five years in business terms. In 2019 we had a turnover of £94,883 and a small surplus of £4147. We have had all sorts of things happen between then and now, particularly COVID, however, the income at the accounting year end (March 2023) was £236,296 with a small deficit of £1,031 this year. Since the end of the accounting year we have taken on a new member of staff however we were, during the accounting year, reduced to a biologist team of two so contractor costs increased. Our turnover has more than doubled over the five years but we haven't increased our surplus by a similar amount, there are good reasons for that but we do take a bit more risk now than we have done previously. The Executives will be discussing how to manage this increased risk. TK and AR have ideas to propose to manage the risk better.

AFT does not have a limitless personnel resource for the workload, and it has been a very busy year for RJ, AKW and GA.

AR thanked AKW, GA, RJ and AS for all their work and also thanked Archie for his part-time work. He also thanked the co-directors for their support during the year.

Our increased turnover has meant that AFT has reached the VAT threshold which will have a few implications moving forward, Simmers (accountants) will assist with this transition (and this will be discussed at the forthcoming meeting referred to above).

ELECTION/ RE-ELECTION OF DIRECTORS

The following directors retire by rota and have agreed to stand for re-election.

Roger Brook (Exec)
Tom Turnbull
Johnny Brown (Exec)
Alasdair Reynolds (Exec)

They were proposed en bloc by JW and seconded by DS.

MINUTES OF 2022 AGM, 8/11/22

AR asked if there were any matters arising from the Minutes.

JW commented that last year she felt that it was time for someone younger to take over the Chair, and she paid tribute to AR's contribution this year. We are in a good position due in part to the experience of AR and TK.

JW also stated that AFT are desperately in need of a younger Board. Please could all the directors consider any possible candidates.

The minutes were approved by JB and seconded by JW.



MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE MEETING, 05/10/23

The minutes were approved by JB and seconded by JW.

MATTERS ARISING

None.

DRAFT ACCOUNTS 2022/23

TK reiterated the apology for the late FYE23 accounts.

There is a deficit of £1031 on a turnover of well over £200k, which is an improvement on the budgeted deficit of £2097. This is as a result of AKW and AS working to ensure that the budget is accurate and therefore enabling the executives to make clear decisions. Expenditure was a little higher than budgeted primarily because Piran left and AKW had to utilise contractors more than was budgeted.

Cashflow by end of year was managed well, AFT ended up with £76,000 in the bank account. We have since opened an interest-bearing reserve account which is generating interest for us on the £50,000 deposited. The debtor's figure is usually quite high, this is due to fourth quarter invoicing, and we are not anticipating any long-term difficulties.

TK reported that the unrestricted funds total for the FYE23 was £51,940. Surplus funding will be released from restricted projects once they are complete which will benefit AFT. The goal is to move as much as possible to unrestricted funds.

Thanks were given to AKW and AS for producing a good budget.

JB thanked TK for his reporting which is clear and easy to understand.

FORECAST FINANCIAL POSITION 2023/24

The big news for this year, as AR had previously mentioned is that the commercial work has increased over recent years and now equates to 45% of income. AFT have reached the VAT threshold which will need to be managed and operated correctly. As a charitable organisation AFT's income from Grants and Donations will be exempt from VAT. Commercial activity where we are working with a corporate client to deliver a specific piece of work, will be VAT-able.

There are Trusts that have a trading body to protect their charitable status. The trading arm would make a donation with gift aid to the trust which would not affect the trust's charitable status. After discussion and research it has been concluded that this would involve significant additional administration, we believe that we can carry on as is for the present.



It is proposed that the accounting will be moved online allowing the accountants to work with up-to-date information.

AFT are now an organisation of 4 members of staff, and trading at nearly one quarter of a million pounds per year, which is impressive. We now have two excellent biologists working with Alan and this is making a difference to the Trust and to Alan's workload. The Trust is now quite a complex organisation. Expenses are also higher and whilst as a charity, AFT are not focused on making a profit, cashflow has to be taken into account. The seasonal invoicing will need to be addressed as most of AFT's income is currently received at the end of the year. Consideration is being given to introduce interim invoices as this would mitigate the seasonal invoice issue and spread income throughout the year.

AFT has a huge amount of work being done by a few very skilled people. From a business perspective this is an issue: AFT need to ensure their staff take leave and have training and development opportunities and this needs to be addressed. AFT have a duty of care for the 4 members of staff.

Our budget for the current year was initially a forecasted deficit of £35,000, it already looks as though this will be significantly improved to a small surplus, which is purely through additional income. TK is confident that additional work will come the Trust's way, not least as a result of the fairly catastrophic recent flood damage to some local rivers.

The Treasurer's Account bank balance is currently down below £20,000, however we don't want to eat into the reserve amount (£50k in a 30-Day Notice account) if this can be avoided. It is now a case of raising invoices as quickly as possible to improve the cashflow.

The interest rate on the £50k deposit is not the highest however the Executive has agreed that some flexibility needs to be retained to allow access to the money reasonably swiftly.

JW asked if AFT is near the position of turning down work, which TK thinks is possible. The balance between the commercial and non-commercial work needs to be reviewed.

AKW has a good relationship with contractors, some of whom AFT use to fill in gaps in the workforce as well as carrying out specialist work, however they are expensive.

RB would be cautious before turning down any work, as it opens up the door for competition. AFT could subcontract to other trusts around Scotland that are not at full capacity.

AR thanked TK for all his work in a rather demanding year.



STAFFING

AR thanked the team for all their work.

Rob Jackson (RJ) has recently joined the team and has been a significant asset.

AKW reported that the finances tell the story. Whilst the increased turnover demonstrates how much the Team have done this year, there is not a large surplus which shows how much money has been put into resourcing existing and additional work.

TK witnessed GA and RJ at the community education day at Craignish, they both volunteered to attend the day and TK stated that they did a great job in showcasing the work of AFT.

JB asked if the staffing needs to be addressed to enable AFT to take on more work. TK agreed that this needs to be considered.

AOB

No AOB.

At this stage the AFT AGM combined with the ADSFB board meeting.

BIOLOGISTS REPORT

UPDATE ON AQUACULTURE