

AGENDA Annual General Meeting of the Water of Leith Conservation Trust

Monday 6th October 2025 at 7.00 pm

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the last AGM - below
3. Matters Arising
4. Chairpersons Update
5. Formal Business
 - a) Presentation of the Annual Report – Chief Executive
 - b) Consideration of Accounts from 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025 – CT accountants
 - c) Confirmation of Accountants for 2025/6
 - d) Board of Trustees Update - recruitment, appointments and resignations
 - e) Confirmation of Office Bearers
6. AOCB

After the formal business we are delighted to welcome Rebecca Barr, Director of Project L-and Community Enterprise as our Guest Speaker (details below) followed by a drinks reception and opportunity to meet with staff and trustees.

“Farming Together for Nature” Rebecca Barr

A story of how local farmers joined forces to form a nature-focused cluster: sharing aims, exploring projects, and tackling challenges to farm with wildlife in mind. Find out more about how neighbouring farms in the Pentlands are working together across fence lines to deliver landscape-scale benefits for wildlife, farming, and the wider community.

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Water of Leith Conservation Trust **Monday 30th September 2024 at 7.00pm**

Trustees Present:

Pat Dawson (Chair), Tony Gray (Treasurer), Goff Cantley, Cordula Klein, Charles Everitt, Alice Lyall (co-opted), Gavin Davis (co-opted), Olivia Scott (co-opted)

Staff:

Helen Brown (Trust Manager), Kat Kane (Visitor Centre and Admin Officer), Ruth Prince (Outdoor Learning Officer), Gillian Wilson (Visitor Centre Officer),

Attendees

Alan Taylor, Anne King, Caroline Patterson, David Hoy, David Hudson, Douglas Tullis, Ewart Shields, Fay Anderson, Gavin Corbett, Gill Smith, John Burns, Linda Hutton, Louise Rodgers, Luca Craciunescu, Pat Everitt, Peter Hawkins, Ron Hil, Sandra Cameron Burns, Sandra Purves, Sheelagh Michael, Theresa Stephenson, David McLean on behalf of the Wester Coates Amenity Society

1. Apologies

Anne Eddison, Helen Panter, Hilary Cottingham, Iain Percival, Judy Cantley, Kate Tomlinson (co-opted), Maggie Laggan, Maggie Holland, Margaret Campbell, Margaret Granger, Molly Woolgar, Neil MacAulay,

2. Minutes of the last AGM

Approved as a true record, proposed by Anne King, seconded by Tony Gray

3. Matters Arising – There were no matters arising

4. Chairpersons Update – The Chairperson Pat Dawson opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

The trust has seen a wonderful year of achievements, from the great staff team, the amazing volunteers, the strength of conservation delivery on the river, the Visitor Centre improved services and the highly sought after learning opportunities. PD commended the Trust's Annual Report to the meeting. She quoted a recent Sunday times article which stated, "The transformation of Edinburgh's main river into a haven for wildlife is one of Scotland's most successful conservation stories." She went on to outline the contrasting challenges of housing developments, sewage outflows, litter, flood events and climate change, invasive species and public apathy. However, she was certain the Trust was willing to tackle these challenges.

She then outlined how the Trust assured itself it was well run; a governance audit was completed, policies especially the Incident Management and Reporting Policy were reviewed, as was the Risk Register. Work is ongoing to align resources to the delivery of our Strategy, launched in April 2024.

PD then announced to the meeting that the first Trust Chairperson, George Hunter, had left the Trust a legacy in excess of £600,000. She stated the Trust was very respectful of this and would be sage guardians of this bequest. The Trust would wish to mark Mr Hunter's considerable contribution to the Trust and ideas were welcomed.

She concluded by thanking everyone for another successful year and looked forward to working with everyone in the coming year.

5. Formal Business

A) Presentation of the Annual Report – Trust Manager

Helen Brown, Trust Manager presented her report on the past year which was circulated beforehand and can be found on the website. She highlighted some of our fantastic achievements through the last year and extended her thanks to the City of Edinburgh Council, our staff, trustees, volunteers and members.

Volunteer hours have increased, across all areas of our work they gave 11,040 hours of their time providing a value of £115,000 at national living wage, the equivalent of 6 additional full-time members of staff. Community action on the river from our volunteers, along with community groups and corporate volunteering saw 249 group tasks through the year. Our Patrol Team reached a record 195 individual patrols of the walkway. This year has seen growth of our new survey teams. They conducted 46 surveys along the river monitoring wildflowers, riverflies and fungi.

Our improved café offering continues to draw visitors to the centre and this year we trailed soup on a Friday over the colder months. We recorded 20,312 visitors to the centre with around a quarter also visiting our interactive exhibition.

Our learning sessions continue to grow as we delivered 172 learning sessions! Our program for high schools is continuing to grow as we delivered a record 39 classes over the year. Our activities, events, birthday parties and community groups visits all continue to be well attended.

Volunteers and staff continued to tackle invasive species on the river with increased focus with sources entering the river from tributaries. After 8 years of monitoring there are now just a few hundred giant hogweed plants remaining upstream of the visitor centre and pulling of Himalayan Balsam has also reduced to less than 138 hours. This really shows our efforts are paying off.

This year saw the start of the Coalie Park Improvement Project with contractors beginning work on site in November. The planned works are already transforming this underutilised stretch of river. We also developed and published a new five-year strategy to guide the work of the Trust in our new vision: 'a healthy river cared for by its community'.

B) Consideration of Accounts from 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024

The Trust Manager presented the Annual Accounts, drawing attention to page 7 which sets out the Statement of Financial Activity. For the year, The Water of Leith Conservation Trust recorded total income of £445,072 and total expenditure of £445,969. This reflects an increase compared with the previous year, primarily due to grant income and related project expenditure for the Coalie Park Improvement Project. Unrestricted income for the year was £254,170, with unrestricted expenditure of £249,562. After necessary transfers between funds to cover project expenditure, the Trust reported a small overall deficit of £509. At year-end, the Trust's total funds, as shown on the balance sheet, stood at £336,643.

The accounts were proposed by Ewart Shields, seconded by Peter Hawkins and approved by the AGM. There were no questions regarding the accounts.

C) Confirmation of Accountants for 2023/24

Tony Gray (Treasurer) outlined that we have now outgrown our previous accountants (Cowan & Partners Limited) as we have now reached a point where we need to have our accounts audited. He suggested we use CT Accountants to audit our accounts and prepare the formal accounts for presentation. This was proposed by David Hudson and seconded by Goff Cantley and approved by the AGM.

D) Board of Trustees update

Kate Tomlinson and Gavin Davis were co-opted on to the board in November 2023. Alice Lyall and Olivia Scott were co-opted on January 2024. They will stand for election this year alongside the continuing trustees. This was approved by the meeting. No trustees stood down at the meeting.

E) Confirmation of Office Bearers – Chair, Deputy and Treasurer

Pat Dawson will continue as Chairperson (proposed by Goff Cantley, seconded by Gavin Davis), Tony Gray will continue as Treasurer (proposed by Cordula Klein, seconded by Charles Everitt). Following a year without a Deputy Chair, Gavin Davis will now take this position (proposed by Tony Gray, seconded by Olivia Scott). This year also sees a new position of Deputy Treasurer taken by Alice Lyall, this role while not a formal office bearer is designed to allow for training and succession planning.

6. Any other competent business

A question was raised regarding council budgets for environmental work. As it stands the council have approved the previous level of funding and there is hope that we may get 3 year funding in future. It was also queried whether the large legacy will impact what the council may give us in future. Having the legacy doesn't stop us from applying for grants and funding so only time will tell.

Pat Dawson thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting was closed shortly after 8pm.