



MINUTES OF TWENTIETH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING WEDNESDAY 11th OCTOBER 2017, NEWCASTLE COMMUNITY CINEMA

In Attendance: Mr Robert Agnew, Ms Helen Anderson, Mr Robert Armitage, Mr Newell Bingham, Mr Mark Brennan, Mr Matthew Bushby, Mr Andy Carden, Mr Martin Carey, Mr Alastair Chestnutt, Cllr William Clarke, Mr Roy Craig, Mr Daniel Cunningham, Mrs Una Cunningham, Mr Michael Cunningham, Cllr Laura Devlin, Mr Michael Donnelly, Mr Stephen Ferris, Mr John Fisher, Mrs Norma Fisher, Mr Peter Fitzpatrick, Ms Camilla Fitzpatrick, Mr Sean Fitzpatrick, Mr Wilbur Hazzard, Ms Isabel Hood, Mr Niall Kelly, Mr Tony Laverty, Ms Helen Lawless, Mr Jim Martin, Mr Vincent McAlinden, Mr Domnal McComish, Mr Colum McDaid, Ms Geraldine McDonald, Mrs Amanda McDonald, Mr John McEvoy, Mr Niall McGovern, Mr Charles McRobert, Dr Arthur Mitchell, Mrs Sinéad Mulholland, Mr Conor Murphy, Mr Sean Murphy, Mr Eamonn O'Connor, Mr Desmond Patterson, Ms Margaret Ritchie, Mr Dermott Rooney, Mr Brian Rooney, Ms Diane Ruddock, Mr Philip Savage, Mr Graham Seymour, Mrs Alwynne Shannon, Mr Geoff Simmons, Mr Mark Smyth, Mr Brian Stratford, Miss Katie Taylor, Mr Graham Thompson, Miss Siobhan Thompson, Mr Desmond Turley, Mrs Niamh Valentine, Mr Ian Watts, Mr Alan Whitcroft and Mr Ernie Wilson.

Apologies: Ms Heather Allen, Ms Eleanor Anderson, Mr Steve Brook, Mr Paddy Brow, Ms Maeve Campbell, Mr Emmett Devlin, Ms Marie Doran, Mr David Farnan, Ms Amanda Ferguson, Mr Dean Fitzpatrick, Mr Francis Flynn, Mr Ian Hannaway, Mr Chris Hazzard, Mr Nicholas Hore, Mr Aubrey Irwin, Ms Maureen Killen, Mr Gavin Mackie, Mr Robbie Marshall, Mr John Martin, Mrs Mandy McAvoy, Mr Brendan McDowell, Mr Jim McGreevy, Mr Craig McGuiken, Ms Rosemary McHugh, Mr Robert McKnight, Ms Rosie Mitten, Chair Roisin Mulgrew, Mr Seamus Murphy, Mr John O'Keefe, Mr Jim Saunders, Ms Joy Scott, Ms Jacqui Thompson, Mr Thompson, Mr Edward Wilson and Mrs Primrose Wilson.

Councillor Willie Clarke, Chair of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

Councillor Clarke welcomed guests and, as a Board member of Mourne Heritage Trust who previously worked in the high Mournes, spoke with affinity for the area. He highlighted the strong relationship between MHT and Council, most recently evidenced in the progress made with provision and management of outdoor recreation opportunities in Mourne forests.

MHT Chairman's Address – Mr Desmond Patterson

Mr Patterson highlighted that the AGM marked the anniversary of the foundation of Mourne Heritage Trust, noting that he was one of five Board members to have been involved through those two decades. He reflected on the many and varied achievements in that time, thanking partners, volunteers and funders for their support.

Minutes of the Nineteenth Annual General Meeting – 5th October 2016

There were no corrections to be made to the minutes of the AGM 2015. They were approved on the proposal of Mr Sean Fitzpatrick, seconded by Mr Ian Watts.

Auditor's Report – Mrs Una Cunningham, Purdy Quinn Chartered Accountants

Mrs Cunningham thanked Trustees, management and staff for facilitating Purdy Quinn Chartered Accountants in the preparation of the Annual Accounts for the financial year 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017 before proceeding to an overview of the summary accounts provided to attendees. Accounts were proposed by Dr Arthur Mitchell and seconded by Mr John Fisher.

Highlights of 20 years of Caring for Mourne

A photographic presentation charted the foundation and development of the Trust highlighting the growth of its activities. It also demonstrated the very significant leverage of funds (£20 million) and volunteer input (£1.5 million) into Caring for Mourne, the Trust delivering an additional £2.50 for every £1 provided by its core funders. Also highlighted were the consistent search for best practice, innovating from scratch or adapting techniques from other areas, and the achievement of awards from, among others, the Europarc Federation, Europa Nostra, NI Tourist Board, Civic Trust and RSPB. Mr Martin Carey, CEO of the Trust, thanked the 53 Board members and fifty plus different staff members who had contributed over the years.

Funder's Remarks

Mrs Helen Anderson, Director of Natural Environment Division of NI Environment Agency, noted her affinity for the cherished Mourne landscape, describing the mountains as delivering a 'big granite hug' to visitors. Referring to the presentation, she was struck by the images of different people all working together for the environment and the joy in the faces. Mrs Anderson highlighted the importance of MHT's work, noting characteristics including the organisation's ability to involve people in delivering high quality environmental outcomes, to build partnerships, to secure funding from a range of sources and to be resilient and adaptive to environmental, funding and other challenges. Helen made particular mention of the contribution made by the Trust in the year past to combatting a major wildfire at Gortin in County Tyrone, highlighting how its pioneering work could benefit Northern Ireland and not just the Mourne AONB.

Election of Board of Trustees

Martin Carey informed attendees that, in line with the Trust's Articles & Memorandum of Association, one third of Board members had tendered resignations. These were Cllr Willie Clarke, Mr Sean Fitzpatrick, Ms Isabel Hood, Ms Maureen Killen, Mr David Maginn and Mr David Thompson. Mr Carey reported that all six had submitted themselves for re-election. He further reported that a nomination had been received from Friends of Mourne for Mr Geoff Simmons, a Newcastle based Professor of Management & Director of Research at the Management School, Queen's University Belfast. The re-submitting trustees and nominee were approved on the proposal of Cllr Laura Devlin and seconded by Mr Alastair Chestnutt.

Closing Remarks

In closing Mr Patterson invited contributions from the floor. Mr Vincent McAlinden of Killowen Outdoor Education Centre, praised the contribution of the Trust while highlighting concerns with the decision to close outdoor education centres in the Mourne area. Margaret Ritchie, recently outgoing MP for South Down, recognised the contribution of the Trust to supporting important local sectors including tourism and farm diversification in the cherished landscape of the Mourne. Mark Smith of NI Fire & Rescue Service noted the benefit to his organisation – and thus to public safety – of drawing on the expertise of MHT in wildfire control. Mr Mark Brennan thanked the Trust for help with stiles to address issues relating to mountain biking on the open mountain. Mr Tony Laverty spoke of the benefits he had received as a long-time volunteer with the Trust and the importance of continuing the efforts in the face of ever growing visitor numbers.