Scottish Land&Estates

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
Virtual Meeting Held 29 April 2025

Approval of 2024 AGM Minutes
Chairman proceeded to the formal business of the AGM starting with minutes of 2024 AGM which were presented to members for approval. Members showed approval by raising of hands on screens or virtually as well as via comments section.
Proposed by Lucy Laidlaw
Seconded by Laura Warrender

DECISION: 2024 Minutes were approved by the Meeting.

Presentation of 2024 Accounts
Chairman handed over to the Chief Executive and Director of Operations who gave an update on organisational finances and spoke on last year's accounts. A summary of income statement was presented which showed a modest surplus for 2025.

Chairman asked the floor for questions. No questions on the accounts were asked.

Chairman then proposed 4 resolutions and asked for approval.

Resolution 1: The Chairman asked members to approve the Directors' Annual Report and Accounts for the year to 31 December 2024 now laid before the meeting.
Proposed by Rob Whitson
Seconded by Malcolm Strang Steel

All in favour and resolution carried.

Resolution 2: The Chairman proposed that Saffery Champness be re-appointed as auditors to hold office until the conclusion of the next general meeting at which accounts are laid before the company and that their remuneration be fixed by the directors.
Proposed by Ev Channing
Seconded by Laura Warrender

All in favour and resolution carried.

Resolution 3: Laura Warrender retires by rotation and seeks re-appointment as a Director.
Proposed by Lucy Laidlaw
Seconded by Robert Troughton

All in favour and resolution carried.

<u>Resolution 4:</u> Michael Home retires by rotation and seeks re-appointment as a Director.

Proposed by Trevor Jackson
Seconded by James Pringle

All in favour and resolution carried.

All resolutions carried. This concluded the formal business of the meeting.

Welcome and Apologies

Chairman welcomed around fifty members to the 2025 AGM, confirmed apologies received from 2 members and 3 proxy votes which gave us the necessary quorum to proceed. Chairman confirmed the AGM will deal with official business of resolutions to be put to the membership and give the opportunity to update members on changes and planned activity for the coming year.

Chairman highlighted some of the biggest challenges for 2025 around Inheritance Tax and the Natural Environment Bill. He noted that Land Reform in particular poses a significant threat and SLE is focused on ongoing work to deliver hard evidence based on facts to persuade the Government that their proposed legislation poses significant obstacles which in turn will require a costly overhaul at taxpayers' expense. In the upcoming Programme for Government we expect economic resilience to be the key focus, an area in which landowners, including our members, will play a significant role in achieving.

Chairman also highlighted the impact SLE has had on politicians with the increased amount of briefings, mentions in various debates and greater legislative and policy successes. The work continues publicly and behind closed doors with National Policy Group, Land Reform Task Force and the Grouse Moor Management Group to name a few.

Chairman highlighted the importance of member support and ensuring we provide all the information needed to enable informed business decisions via info sheets, briefings, events and direct contact with our colleagues.

Chairman highlighted the continued commitment to WES and benefits associated with Trusted Operator status, particularly the Level 2 Accreditation which is now officially recognised as a means to monitor compliance with the Code. This was achieved by positive engagement with the Scottish Government and NatureScot.

Finally, Chairman mentioned the revision of our Landowners Commitment which is being relaunched as the SLE Members Charter.

Organisational Update

CEO gave a brief update on the key achievements of 2024 and highlighted the key areas of achievement. These include both in-person and online events, quarterly magazine, newsletter and the Annual Report.

CEO also highlighted that we are looking at major political changes in 2025 and 2026 with the general elections and members are encouraged to reach out to CEO and Stephen Young, Director of Policy, to discuss what this could mean for them.

CEO commented on a few key areas of policy:

- Land Reform has now completed stage 1 and SLE met with Cabinet Secretary to discuss significant amendments that are required at Stage 2 and our ongoing concerns regarding the Framework bill approach.
- Grouse Moor licensing modification came into effect in November 2024 which was a result of lobbying actions taken by SLE. Muirburn was also part of these modifications and we are actively engaged with Scottish ministers and NatureScot to advise on the lawfulness of the decision making in relation to both the licensing scheme and the Muirburn Code.
- Stage 2 of Housing Bill is going through at the moment with about 600 amendments and more pending due to a consultation launched by the Housing Minister.
- Agricultural Bill passed parliamentary scrutiny, including confirmation on the return of the delayed convergence funding to the agricultural budget over the next couple of years and confirmation of the 70/30 split between direct payments and competitive payments.
- Natural Environment Bill was introduced in February and includes targets for improving biodiversity, power to modify or restate environmental impact assessment legislation, legislation and provisions relating to national parks and few miscellaneous and general provisions. Ambiguity around the deer management aspect is the most concerning aspect of the Bill and it will have a direct and tangible impact on our membership. SLE is seeking legal opinion from senior counsel on its lawfulness, responsibleness and proportionality.

CEO thanked the staff as well as the members who continue to play their part in championing rural Scotland and the values of SLE to others.

SLE Landowners' Commitment – 2025 Refresh
Ross Ewing, Director of Moorland, gave an overview of the changes proposed to the existing Landowners' Commitment which were approved by a Board requested sub-committee. The key change was a shift from landowners only to members to highlight the variety of our current membership cohort and consolidation of the current 17 individual commitments to 5. Ross also clarifies that this is not a set of enforceable rules and no change of Memorandum of Articles is required.

Members are supportive of this in principle.

Looking ahead the Chairman confirmed the Annual Conference will be held on 21 May and Helping it Happen Awards will be on 2 October 2025.

Chairman thanked members for their support and also thanked all the team at SLE.
Finally he welcomed on board new Board members and thanked Mark Tennant who stepped down from Board today.

Chairman opened the floor to questions.

Chairman thanked the sponsors and also the staff team for organising the event and formally closed the meeting.

Signed .... Chairman Date ....