



FORRES AREA COMMUNITY TRUST

Annual General Meeting

Friday 11th November 2022, 6.00 pm – 6.55 pm

PRESENT:

Joanna Taylor (Chair), Bea Jefferson, David Parker, Mike Scott, Jim Farquharson. Susan Longmuir, June Airey, Peter Airey, Rob Coffey, John Robinson, Deborah Hockney, Lorna Creswell, Norman Thomson, Jane Johnston, Murray Drummond, Ruth Whitwell, David Sutherland, Paul Johnson, Linda Hardy, Joseph Kelly, Meg Ettles, Sandra MacLennan, Debbie Herron, David Hammond, Frances Anderson, Lindsey Standing, Ilona Wood, Stacey Harrison, Graham Watson, Euan Kershaw, Michelle Gillibrand, Chris Thomas and Tina Coffey (Minutes)

APOLOGIES:

Joanne Barry, Hazel Caldwell, Joshua Johnson (proxy), David Morrison and Kevin Skivington

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair, Joanna Taylor, introduced herself and welcomed those attending to FACT's AGM which was quorate with 20 members present.

2. Apologies

See above.

3. Minutes of AGM from 26th November 2021

There were no amendments or points to raise and acceptance of the minutes was proposed by Rob Coffey and seconded by Peter Airey.

4. Acknowledgement of Volunteers

The Chair acknowledged the support and invaluable contribution the volunteers have provided to FACT over the last year, these include volunteers on the Board and those who volunteer and work with staff to support members and the community. FACT hopes the volunteers enjoy themselves and get benefit from volunteering. The small group of volunteers are key to what FACT can and do deliver to the community. There is a clear vision of what the community want us to do and thanks to all for the many ways they help out. Our volunteer pool is getting older and we would encourage others to come forward. Huge thanks to all volunteers and to Tina and Bea for supporting the Board.

Superstar volunteer this year is Joseph Kelly and he is the Digital Volunteer of the Year in recognition of all he has done and continues to do with the Forres OnLine project.

5. Report on FACT Activities

A summary of activities and achievements is available in the Annual Report, which also includes an extract from the financial activities statement.

Debbie gave a presentation about the Town Hall. FACT took on the building in July 2018 following discussions with Town Hall User Groups (THUG) and Moray Council. FACT moved in on a 2 year lease and started a Community Asset Transfer process, Debbie acknowledged THUG support together with other groups and the Board. Forres Town Centre has lots of challenges and this venue has the potential to be at the centre of a more resilient town centre and town hall. A consultation event was held and it was agreed to undertake essential repairs. With support from the SCLF fund, a spring clean was held and numerous volunteers and staff turned up to repair, clean and paint, which in turn achieved increased usage of the building with more people, and a wider variety of people who now want to use the building. During the pandemic the team kept going with a food project, befriending, blankets were knitted. In February 2021 the town hall was acquired by FACT via a Community Asset Transfer.

Activities make a difference; they add vibrancy to building – and draw people to the town.

The town hall layout has changed over the years, it is split into 3 sections, with the lesser hall, main hall and North Room being constructed at different times, the building is changing to meet community needs. In future it is proposed to create more floor areas and this will enable a lot more use of space, and more accessible space in the main hall. Although this space stays as is, the stage end will change with the removal of the stage and there will be new retractable raked chairs. The acoustics in the Lesser Hall have been improved by acoustic panels this hall stays as is and is to be decorated. The kitchen is to be extended under the stairs and more doors put in, the gas is to be removed. The front of the building reception area will change to encompass a mezzanine floor, storage will be increased with offices increasing their natural light and more ventilation has been asked for together with keeping a blend of heritage features. Better insulation will be added.

In order to complete these works, we need to raise £4.23 million. £3 million has been applied for from the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund (RCGF) and we find out if we have been successful in the new year. If unsuccessful we can apply again in the new year. We have to find £1.3 million to match this. An application to Historic Environment Scotland has been submitted. Having submitted an Expression of Interest (EoI) to the Community Ownership Fund we have to submit the full application by 14th December for £250k capital and £50k revenue. Berry Burn have awarded FACT just over £35k for further essential surveys on the town hall. There is an application into the Architectural Heritage Fund for £25k to match fund. Looking at the National Lottery Heritage Fund unsure what this will be for as yet but intend to send off an application to them before Christmas. Held meeting with the Gordon and Ena Baxter foundation looking to ask for support towards refurbishing the kitchen and agreed FACT can submit an application in March subject to being successful with the RCGF application.

To refurbish the town hall will be a challenge but now is time as costs are rising and if FACT did nothing it would still take £1/2 million just to make the building usable for the next few years. A collective effort is needed and please could you all help to spread the word, participate by holding or coming to a coffee morning, become a member of FACT, volunteer, donate money if you are able (gift aid it if you can), attend event if at all possible and if you would like to book a room the FACT team would be more than happy to discuss this and

fund-raising events with anyone. FACT will be launching a comprehensive funding application in the new year.

Questions included the seating area in the main hall, the new seats will be flat against the wall and pulled out when required and there will be removable staging blocks. The current stage is not used a lot.

Thanks to Debbie for all the hard work on funding applications.

Debbie and the staff would like to thank all funders, volunteers, and the Board and Debbie would like to thank the staff.

FACT is now a living wage employer.

Debbie stated FACT are funded through:

1. Highlands and Islands Enterprise, and who also give advice and support.
2. Community Lottery Fund, who also gives advice and support.
3. Volunteer Support Fund has enables FACT to build a volunteer pool and give training.
4. Cameron Project is funded through the Beatrice Windfarm Fund and the National Lottery Community Fund.

FACT said goodbye and wished good luck to the following staff members who have left over the year Kirsty Williams, Charlotte Grigg and Eleni Cawthra-Hewitt Wallace. FACT welcomed Lindsey, Frances, Ilona, Graham, David, Lorretta, Esther and Michelle. A list of staff can be found on the activities report.

A Spirit of Community event was held in April and was a community consultation event, the report is to be circulated and printed in the new year. The information collected will be available to any group in the Forres Area. The information was gained in partnership with Moray Council, the local Community Councils, Forres Area Forum and Forres in Bloom.

The Pantry Project is run in partnership with Moray Food Plus, with more than 200 members. The project is to reuse food waste. Volunteers are a key support in keeping this project running with funding secured to continue for another 18 months.

The Cameron Project was set up to reduce social isolation, this project is fully subscribed and there is a waiting list and more befrienders are required, this project has grown and strengthened and has changed to meet the needs of the community.

Forres On-Line is busier than ever with outreach work being undertaken in local areas. The Employability Project is funded and runs to March 2023.

The Chair asked the audience to recognise how much is owed to the staff and how none of this would be possible without staff, funders and fellow partners. Thanks to all especially the staff.

6. Annual Accounts to 31st March 2022

An extract of the full financial statements was available in the Annual Report for information; a full set of Annual Accounts is available on the FACT website and can be emailed/posted out if requested.

The income to the end of March 2022 was £382k, similar to the previous year but the types of income were different with income affected by Covid. From March 2022 this is closer to normal with rental income increasing.

Expenditure – spent £242,729 mostly on staffing and building overhead costs, energy costs are fixed to December 2023. As it costs a lot to heat and light the building, a big part of the refurbishment plans is to improve energy efficiency and putting in renewables in order to

protect ourselves for the future against energy costs. Income looks considerably more than expenses gives a rather misleading picture as a big chunk of that balance is spent on the building and income is shown on the income and the expenditure account, the expenditure is only shown on the balance sheet. In reality, there is no surplus made on this element. We now have reserves at our target level of reserves at 6 months running costs, this may decrease slightly this year. There is a policy to keep at least 3 months minimum with a target aimed for 6 months.

Next challenge is to fund raise for the building, a big part of the development plans is providing small and flexible spaces in order to earn an income and reduce costs. We would like to thank and acknowledge all of our funders.
There were no questions.

A summary of the accounts will be made available on www.forresarea.org

7. Election of Directors

In FACT's Articles of Association, 3 Directors are due to retire by rotation and all are willing to stand for re-election. We remember Lesley Edwards who sadly passed away during the year and Laurie Piper who moved to a new job and left the Board.

There are 4 people willing to stand for election. The Ordinary (adult living in Forres Area) members attending received voting cards and the election took place with the following elected to the Board:

Name	For	Against	Abstain
Bea Jefferson	18	-	-
Jim Farquharson	17	-	-
Joanna Taylor	19	-	-
Joanne Barry	16	-	-

All 4 Director's were re/elected unanimously. There is space on the Board for more Directors and there is the option of co-opting Directos during the year, including for those living outwith the Forres ASG area. They could then be elected by members at the following AGM for a year. The Board carries out an audit for skills gap and always welcomes a wider range of skills, ages and interests. If anyone would like to join the Board, please speak to the Chair.

8. Close of Formal Business

The Chair thanked all present for attending FACT's AGM. There being no further business the meeting closed at 6.55 p.m.