



Newsletter 12, 5 June 2023.

Dear member

This is the 12th in our series of newsletters designed to keep our members up to date with the work being carried out by Rhynie Charitable Trust and to address any issues or queries raised by our members. The last edition (No.11) was sent on 29 June 2022 following a suggestion at the previous AGM that communication with the membership through newsletters should be continued.

The 2022 AGM was held on Sunday 27 November 2022 in No.14, The Square, Rhynie. Attendance, as at previous AGMs, was small although we did manage to achieve a quorum, allowing the AGM to proceed.

As we had a Special Resolution to consider it was important that we were able to hold the meeting. We would like to impress on members that we need your input and feedback to ensure we continue to take the Trust in the best direction for its members. We are concerned that no comments have ever been received in response to our previous newsletters so it is difficult for us to know what members would like to see happening in the village.

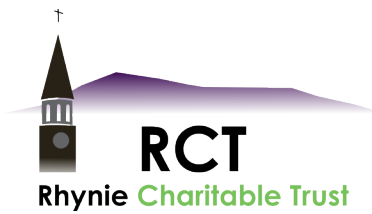
The minutes of the AGM., and other meetings of the Board, are available for members to download from our website, together with a copy of the Special Resolution which was passed. This Resolution will hopefully enable the trust to make applications for Community Asset Transfers.

We were able to briefly update those members who attended the AGM on some of the projects we have been working on but there was a suggestion that we should resume our newsletters to ensure that the information reaches as many of our members as possible.

Previous newsletters have been distributed by an email mailing through MailChimp. We are a little concerned about the level of opening of these emails, and whether members are receiving them. The rate of opening for our last 3 messages were:

	Sent	Opened	Clicked
AGM reminder	63	33	12
AGM notice	65	42	13
Last newsletter	71	44	24

Comments or responses received to these communications – **zero**. It may be that some of these disappear into spam boxes so are never seen but we are open to suggestions for how we can improve this.



Trust officers

Mike Davies continues as Chair and Colin Mumford is responsible for the membership. George Beverly has been working on projects like the refurbishment of the Gala toilet unit. He also gives us the benefit of his wide local knowledge and experience. Averil Stewart is continuing as Treasurer, although not a Director, for the time being but intends to stand down at the next AGM. Martin Dow and Alastair Wilson are Board members without specific office.

We would still have a vacancy for up to three more directors. We would be very keen to welcome anyone who may be interested in assisting the Board with taking on either the Secretary or the Treasurer duties. This does not need to be a Board member. Please contact Mike (861535, or mike@braeheadrhynie.co.uk) for more information.

Members list

Since the last AGM we have been consolidating our membership records. The contact information we have is not complete for all members. This does make it awkward when trying to send out information to members and we are trying to rationalise our database. Some members we know have left the area and some are deceased.

Our best information is that we have 66 members who were life members and 73 who were annual members (139 total). As we have rarely received any feedback from members we cannot be sure exactly how many still wish to remain members. If we are to progress with projects which would require applications for funding we need to have confirmation of the support we have in the village. We are currently considering the best way we can communicate with both existing members and other village residents.

Colin Mumford is now responsible for our member information and he would welcome any up to date contact information you can provide. You can email him at colin.jwmumford@gmail.com.

Wheedlemont Turbine Fund

Since the inception of this fund, up to April 2023, a total of £83724 has been paid by the developers to Huntly Development Trust (HDT) with £20931 transferred to RCT. There have been six invitations to apply for grants which have led to awards to 23 qualifying projects in Rhynie and Auchindore & Kearns parishes. We have so far distributed a total of £18950 to these projects.

Paths projects

a) We are still working with other communities on a project known as 'The Kingdom of the Picts' Trail to provide a walking and cycling route linking six communities from Gartly in Strathbogie to Corgarff in Strathdon. This has now been extended to reach to Huntly.

A route for the Trail has been drafted running from Huntly through the Clashindarroch



Forest to the ski trails at Black Middens, over The Buck then across the south side of the Cabrach into Glen Buchat, along the Ladder Hills and then down to Corgarff. The steering group is still seeking to discuss the issues with the estates but in the meantime will be looking at tracks to link communities to the route.

It is hoped to invite applications from each community along the route for some funding to develop or improve links from the villages to the main route.

A website has been set up at <http://www.kingdomofthepicts.co.uk> where details of the proposed route can be viewed.

b) In 2019 we also provided information to a project for Huntly Development Trust seeking to identify paths in the AB54 area which are either currently used by walkers or would be aspirational paths. Various public meetings were held to gather information on paths presently used and paths to which people would aspire. A consultant was appointed to report on the information, which was completed early in 2020.

HDT are, unfortunately, still in the process of setting up a website with mapping so these routes can be available for local residents and visitors to the area. The report can be downloaded at <https://www.huntlydt.org/uploads/AB54-path-network-survey-record-9-Nov-2020.pdf>. We understand that they now expect the website to be functional by sometime in 2023. This is connected with the Travel Hub in Huntly which is currently under refurbishment.

Rhynie Chert SSSI

We still have aspirations for this site and we have been looking at a possible path up the hill to join with the higher path up Tap O Noth. This would allow walkers to ascend the hill from the village without using the road. We have identified a line for the path through the SSSI which would reach the road to Windyfield. Beyond that would require discussion and negotiation with landowners and we have spoken to them but, so far, we don't have agreement to promote the route.

The area at the bottom of the site, near the Essie Burn, is being considered for paths similar to Moss Wood, although it can be a bit wet. NatureScot have proposed a lease on the land to enable us to develop paths but this is currently on hold as it seems the site is subject to restrictions on use from the original bequest. It would also require planning approval for which we would have to commission a number of surveys and make applications for grant funding.

Pictish Stones project

We commissioned a feasibility study to look into the present state of the stones and how they could be preserved and presented for the future. This would, hopefully, include the return of Rhynie Man which we understand would be supported by Aberdeenshire Council subject to provision of a secure location.



The report was presented at the AGM in 2019 by the consultants



and the final report was received in 2020. This set out their recommendations for how we might proceed with an indication of the priority for the various proposals. We are now starting work on the most urgent issues, beginning with the shelter by the cemetery which has been rebuilt.

We also submitted an application for Scheduled Monument Consent to erect protective fencing around the Craw Stane. This was considered by Heritage Environment Scotland and they advised of a number of archaeological studies they would require before this could be granted. The Board reviewed their requests and decided that this would make the project unduly onerous so withdrew the application. It is now in the hands of HES.

We have also contacted a stone conservator to undertake an inspection of all the stones to determine how these can be protected for the future.

Community Asset Transfer

We have been discussing CAT with Aberdeenshire Council, particularly with respect to a site on the business area by Books Abroad. This could be available for the construction of a community facility. We have amended our constitution to be in line with requirements of CAT and this was passed at the last AGM.

We completed an Expression of Interest form and submitted this to enable our constitution to be assessed. We are advised that there is a prior application pending for this site so our application is currently on hold. At a meeting on site we were advised that we would need to demonstrate a significant level of community support for any application to be considered. At the moment we don't feel we are able to comply with this as we have had little feedback from residents.

Rhynie Coronation celebrations

We had proposed to hold a celebration in No.14 for the Coronation but, in the event, only 6 people indicated an intention to attend and the event was unfortunately cancelled.

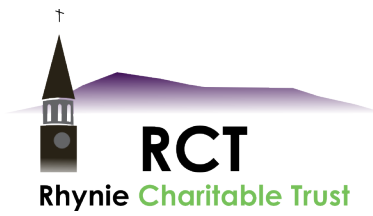
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Finally, we would like to extend an invitation to any persons who wish to help with the work of the Trust. If you would like to serve on the Board or assist in any other way we would be pleased to hear from you. Please contact any of the Board members below.

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Newsletters and other member communications will be distributed by email or post depending on the information provided by individual members. Please note, if you do not receive an emailed copy we do not have your email address. **We would appreciate any members who have so far not provided an email address to do so, if possible, since this is our preferred communication medium as it is cheaper and quicker.**

If you have not received our previous newsletters and would like to see copies of these or if you would like to



check that we have your correct email address, please do not hesitate to contact us. Copies of this and previous newsletters can also be downloaded from our website rhyniecharitabletrust.co.uk/pages/members/newsletters.php.

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