



**Friends of the Ochils**  
Scottish charity registration number SC 022034

## **ANNUAL REVIEW & FINANCIAL REPORT 2007-08**

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### **CHAIRS' REPORT 2007-08**

The first part of the year saw intense activity on the public inquiry side; latterly, things have been less frenetic.

Friends of the Ochils, represented by Nicki Baker, participated to the full, in partnership with Stirling Before Pylons, and represented by John Campbell QC, in the Stirling session of the public inquiry into the Beaully – Denny power line. This sat from 20<sup>th</sup> November to 20<sup>th</sup> December 2007. The partnership put forward 18 witnesses, covering landscape, history, economics, undergrounding, health, tourism, regeneration, hydrology and planning issues. Members of Friends of the Ochils who gave evidence were Nicki Baker, Virginia Wills, Stuart Dean and Robin Kelsall. A number of other members came along to some of the sessions, and gave support that was much appreciated in the chilly, adversarial and sometimes intimidating atmosphere of the Inquiry.

After sitting for a year in public session, the Reporters to the Inquiry now expect to complete their written recommendations by mid February 2009. However, these will go in confidence to Scottish Ministers, and it is only after the Ministers have reached their final decision on the application – anticipated to be somewhere between May and September 2009 – that any of us will be given sight of the reports of the public inquiry. Our QC confirms that we have no way of demanding earlier access to the findings.

We are now starting again to meet with politicians, raising their awareness of the issues and of recent developments and seeking their support through asking Parliamentary Questions. We will also be liaising with other groups up and down the pylon line, seeking press coverage and publicity over the coming months, to try to ensure that the Ministers are as aware as they were in previous years that there is very widespread concern about the proposals.

On the wind farm front we ended a long series of public inquiries with the welcome news that Reporters turned down windfarm applications at both Rossie near Auchtermuchty and Tillyrie above Milnathort. The Tillyrie decision gives some hope that there is at long last a recognition that there has to be a limit to the number of windfarms in the Ochils but we are nevertheless moving inexorably towards the building of the three approved windfarms.

The highly intrusive Green Knowes development has been completed but work has yet to start on either the Lochelbank or Burnfoot Hill windfarms. However, whilst it is expected that building work on Lochelbank will commence in a few months, representatives from both Earn and Glenfarg Community Councils have had to work hard to ensure that the developers and Perth and Kinross Council keep to the conditions laid down by the Reporter in her approval letter, particularly in relation to ecological issues on the site. Before work can commence on the Burnfoot Hill windfarm, a number of planning conditions have still to be discharged. In particular the route of the connection of the windfarm to the grid has yet to be resolved.

It was a huge relief to be able, later in the year, to turn our attentions to positive activities, and a number of us took great pleasure in the guided walks offered on three summer evenings by committee member and local hill farmer, Fenwick Worrell. Fenwick's uniquely varied and detailed knowledge of the east central Ochils, his great ability in sharing that knowledge and his passion for so many aspects of the area, made for a series of very enjoyable outings. We plan to offer more of Fenwick's walks to members, next summer.

The Friends also contributed during the year to Stirling, Clackmannanshire and Perth & Kinross Councils' development of their statements of paths to be designated Core Paths. While it is still not entirely clear what the significance of this designation will be, it does appear likely that it will have implications for both signage and maintenance, and so we believed it necessary to give the proposals all due attention.

As we approach the end of 2008, and embark on our new financial year, we look forward to developing our strategies for the protection and enhancement of the Ochils over coming years. We hope that as many members as possible will want to contribute to this process, and will keep members informed, as always, via the newsletter.

## **PURPOSE AND GOVERNANCE**

The objects for which Friends of the Ochils was established are identified in the Constitution (last amended November 2006):

- a] To promote and conserve the landscape, natural beauty and wildlife of the Ochils, and to protect the historical and social character of the surrounding communities.
- b] To encourage consistent implementation of good planning policies appropriate to the other objects of the Association.
- c] To support responsible and well behaved public access to the Ochils consistent with the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.
- d] To promote appropriate study of and research into relevant fields of interest pertaining to the Ochils and its local communities, and to promote dissemination of the results of such study and research.

Committee members are elected from the membership for a 3-year period at the AGM, or may be co-opted. Nominations are sought through the Newsletter and at the AGM. The Committee members constitute the Trustees with responsibility for governance consistent with Scottish charity law and regulations. Office bearers are elected by the Committee. Policy and strategy are agreed at regular Committee meetings: five were held in 2007-08. Within agreed strategic frameworks, operational discretion is delegated to specific Committee members leading on particular activities.

## COMMITTEE (TRUSTEES)

			<i>Year of initial election</i>	<i>Current period of office</i>
<i>President</i> Rennie McOwan	Stirling		n/a	n/a
<i>Chair</i> Stuart Dean	Muckhart	01259 781551 spdean@lineone.net	2005	2005-08
<i>Vice Chair, Treasurer, Membership Secretary</i> Dr Nicki Baker	Parkhead Logie Stirling FK9 4LS	01786 833399 nicki.baker@btinternet.com	2005	2005-08
<i>Secretary</i> Dave Prentice	Tibbermore, Perth	01738 583345 dave_prentice@btinternet.com	2002	2005-08
<i>Newsletter Editor</i> Catherine Kilgour	Edinburgh	07970 821 483 catkilgour@hotmail.com	2007	2007-10
Fenwick Worrell	Glendevon		2007	2007-10
David Scott	Bridge of Allan		Co- opted 2008	
Julie Ellis	Edinburgh		2007	2007-10
Robin Kelsall	Blairlogie			<i>Stood down Oct 2008</i>

Committee members standing for re-election at the AGM are Nicki Baker, Stuart Dean and Dave Prentice. Robin Kelsall recently left the committee, after many years valued service, and we offer our very sincere thanks for all he has contributed. Ian Buchanan was unable to contribute to the committee during 2008, and is no longer a member – again, we are grateful for his services to the Friends in previous years. David Scott was co-opted onto the committee during the year, and stands for formal election at the AGM.

The appointment of office-bearers is remitted to the committee and there has been a change in office-bearers for 2008-09, as necessary to keep the organisation functioning. Stuart Dean has been designated the new Chair, and Nicki Baker has taken over the roles of Treasurer and Membership Secretary from Julie Ellis. We are most grateful to Julie for taking on these roles, at a difficult time for the organisation.

The committee always welcomes new members, and will be pleased to hear from any member wishing to join. To stand for election at the AGM, potential committee members must be proposed and seconded by other members of the organisation.

## MEMBERSHIP REPORT 2007-08

Membership decreased in 2007-08, to 177 individual members. While renewal rates remain high, at 90% in 2007-08, we have attracted only one new, community, member this year. Renewed efforts to recruit more new members will be made in 2009, starting with the revision and reprinting of our publicity leaflet.

### Membership at 31 August

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Honorary Life	-	-	1	1	1	1	1	1
Life	14	13	14	15	15	14	17	17
Family	27	27	25	30	32	34	34	30
Individual	46	44	44	50	57	61	61	56
Concession	41	39	38	40	39	42	42	38
<b>(Total personal)*</b>	<b>(154)</b>	<b>(149)</b>	<b>(145)</b>	<b>(164)</b>	<b>(175)</b>	<b>(185)</b>	<b>(189)</b>	<b>(177)</b>
Community	6	6	6	7	5	7	7	8
Corporate	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-

\* Family counted as two members

Proposed changes to the subscription rates have to be approved by the AGM. The subscription rates for individuals and families have never been changed, since the organisation's inception in 1993, and we see no need to increase them in 2009-10. Concessionary subscriptions started off as £1, then were raised to £2 at least 5 years ago. Postal costs will be going up this year, and we expect to be barely covering our costs for concessionary members, if their subscription rate is maintained next year. We therefore propose, subject to the agreement of the AGM, to raise concessionary subscription rates to £3 per individual, and £5 for couples, with effect from the start of our 2009-10 financial year.

We are also looking into the possibilities for moving to using Direct Debits, rather than Standing Orders, for the payment of subscriptions, but it appears that we will need more members before this will be agreed by our bank (the Bank of Scotland). We will keep members informed as to progress on this issue.

## FINANCE REPORT 2007-08

The accounting period runs from 1 September to 31 August. The table below shows income and expenditure during the year 2007-08, the year end position and a comparison with the previous financial year. In accordance with the requirements of section 44(1)(c) of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005, the annual accounts are examined independently, by Dr Brian Jamieson (of Manorcroft, Blairlogie), and have been approved by him without qualification.

Income from subscriptions was somewhat down in 2007-08, but some of the shortfall is expected to be recoverable in 2008-09.

Despite intensive activity in the first half of the financial year, in relation to public inquiries into the Beaully – Denny power line, and the Tillyrie wind cluster, the need for expenditure was substantially lower than anticipated. Most of all, although the 2007 AGM voted its support for the committee's then intention to donate £2,500 to Stirling Before Pylons (SBP) towards the costs of engaging an expert witness for landscape issues, in the event SBP were able to meet all expenses before this was done. It is our intention to protect this sum for use in future campaigning work.

Income for the year once more exceeded expenditure, and the committee believes there is no need to increase individual and family subscriptions in 2009-10, but are proposing a modest rise in the concessionary subscription (see Membership Report, above). A formal policy on reserves was adopted by the Committee on 15 January 2007 which requires that a minimum of £500 be maintained.

### Accounts for year 1 September 2007 to 31 August 2008 (1)

	<b>2007-08</b>	<b>2006-07</b>
<b>INCOME</b>		
Subscriptions	711.00 (2)	1159.50
Donations	98.50 (3)	1930.00
Gift Aid	- (4)	604.14
Bank interest	187.50	131.14
Other	10.00	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1007.00</b>	<b>3824.78</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
<i>On charitable objects</i>		
Landscape campaigning	338.64 (5)	698.54
Publicity: newsletter & annual review	408.29	391.28
Publicity: website	- (6)	489.38
<i>On administration</i>		
General administration	75.46 (7)	762.22
Other		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>822.39</b>	<b>2341.42</b>
<b>SURPLUS (DEFICIT) FOR YEAR</b>	<b>184.61</b>	<b>1483.36</b>
ADD Balance at 31 August 2008	4688.75	3205.39
<b>BALANCE AT 31 AUGUST 2008</b>	<b>4873.36</b>	<b>4688.75</b>
<b>REPRESENTED BY:</b>		
Bank of Scotland current account	477.14	1174.06
Standard Life Bank 10-day community account	4396.22	3514.69
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>4873.36 (8)</b>	<b>4688.75</b>

## **Notes to the accounts**

- (1) Accounts are prepared on an income and expenditure basis.
- (2) Subscriptions for Group members were due in April but, due to an oversight, were not requested at that time. Renewals of Group membership for 2007-08 have now been invited.
- (3) The drive for donations in 2006-07 to support the organisation's landscape campaigning activities was not repeated in 2007-08, given the healthy balances.
- (4) The date for collecting Gift Aid was changed in the course of 2006-07. The relevant request for Gift Aid for the remainder of 2006-07, and for 2007-08, has now been submitted. The income will be included in the accounts for 2008-09.
- (5) The sum of £2,500 which the 2007 AGM agreed could be donated to Stirling Before Pylons to support the costs of participating in the Stirling session of the Beaulieu – Denny public inquiry was not, in the event, required. This sum remains earmarked for any future landscape campaigning needs.
- (6) The costs of providing website services in 2007-08 will be included in the 2008-09 accounts.
- (7) There were no exceptional costs for administration in 2007-08, but higher costs will be incurred in 2008-09 for the revision and reprinting of the publicity leaflet.
- (8) FotO owns a Reflecta Classic slide projector and Sopar projection screen (bought Aug 2000, cost £190). Both are treated as having nil current value.
  - No remuneration was paid to any Committee member or any relative of a Committee member.
  - Expenses are paid to Committee members only in respect of verifiable costs incurred on behalf of FotO.

### **Signed:**

For and on behalf of the Committee,  
*Dr Nicki Baker (Treasurer)*

Independent examiner,  
*Dr Brian Jamieson, Blairlogie*

5<sup>th</sup>  
**January**  
**2009**

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