

AGM 2024

Introduction

Mark Ballard introduced himself as Chair of the Board; Catherine Lyons as Treasurer; and Florence Garabedian as Interim CEO. He welcomed members to the meeting and ran through the agenda.

1. Approval of minutes from 2023 AGM

Proposer: Duncan Wallace

Seconder: Ery McPartland

Minutes unanimously approved.

2. Chair's Annual Report

Mark Ballard updated members on the new FoES strategy, developed in 2023. The strategy process included staff, trustees, and the general membership. As part of the process six key values were agreed: hope, collaboration, creativity, care, justice and integrity. Mark spoke on these values and their importance to FoES as we work for environmental and social justice.

Mark then paid tribute to Gracie Bradley, who served as Director during 2023.

He followed this by discussing the context in which we are currently working, including the recent decision by the Scottish Government to drop its CO2 reduction targets, and the feeling that the Government is likely to be less supportive going forwards.

He described 2023 as a year of renewal, both in terms of renewing our strategy, but also as a period of cultural and organisational change for the organisation, and that this will continue into 2024. He said that he believes that FoES has come out of this period with greater clarity on our strategic priorities: getting Scotland back on track to make a just transition away from fossil fuel use and production by 2031; and becoming a thriving, resilient, inclusive organisation and a best practise employer.

He thanked staff members who left during the year including Winnie Yip (HR, Membership and Finance Officer), Gavin Thomson (Transport Campaigner), Mary

Church (Head of Campaigns), Ryan Morrison (Just Transition Campaigner), and Kerrigan Bell (Head of Development and Fundraising).

He thanked also former trustee Rachel Howell, who very sadly passed away in 2023, several months after stepping down from the Board. He praised her as a fantastic trustee, academic, and activist for environmental and social causes, and thanked her and her family for the significant legacy she left to FoES in her will.

3. Director's Report

The Director's report was delivered by Interim CEO Florence Garabedian. Florence reminded the meeting of the amount of change FoES has undergone since COP26 in 2021. This has included staff changes, including at senior management level, along with changes to various key systems and policies. She praised the experience, knowledge and professionalism of FoES staff, and described the year as busy and challenging but vibrant. She spoke of current workplans, including work on Peterhead and preparing for the upcoming UK elections, and of the intention to develop a membership strategy over late 2024 and 2025. She informed members that recruitment for a permanent Director and for a new Fundraising Lead is underway.

4. Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Catherine Lyons presented her report to the meeting. Income increased by 11% in 2023, due to the generosity of the legacy left by Rachel Howell. She also thanked the estate of John Curran. Expenditure increased by 4%, lower than inflation thanks to savings made. FoES's policy is to have a reserve of three to six months of operating costs. She informed the meeting that we have more than double six months of operating costs, and so our reserves are in a healthy position. She informed members that the majority of income comes from grants, followed by legacies, membership subscriptions and donations. The biggest category of expenditure was staff costs. She thanked FoES's main grant funders including the Players of the People's Postcode Lottery, the Energy Transition Fund, the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Foundation, the Solberga Foundation, Patagonia, and the Climate Change Collaboration. She informed members that FoES successfully passed its annual audit for 2023, and recommended that auditors Thomson Cooper be reappointed for 2024. Reappointment of auditors

Proposed: Catherine Lyons

Seconded: Mark Ballard

Appointment of Thomson Cooper as auditors unanimously approved.

5. Q&A

Question: Is FoES able to support a member's local campaigning against single use wet wipes?

Answer: We are campaigning on the circular economy bill which aims to reduce waste and the use of items such as single-use wipes. The bill is in its final stages and we have upcoming events in Stirling and Glasgow

Question: Can the reason for the large number of staff and board changes be explained, as this suggests dissatisfaction?

Answer: It is natural for people to reflect and move on after a high point like COP26, and a change in strategic direction. Former Head of Campaigns Mary Church had worked for FoES for 15 years. Change in culture has led to colleagues engaging differently. Becoming a best practice employer is part of the 2023-6 strategy.

Question: The strategy mentions movement building and relationship to membership. Are numbers of members falling? What is the state of local groups?

Answer: Membership numbers slightly declining. Questions around demographics and how to engage a wider range of people. Membership system very old and difficult to get information from. Key part of strategy is rethinking membership. FoES founded by local groups, need capacity to develop. Need to apply values of hope, creativity and care to local groups and ensure they are supported.

Question: How are values translated into concrete steps? Have there been metrics set?

Answer: There is a workplan being developed to implement these values.

6. Election of new board members

The following nominees were elected unanimously to the Board:

Catherine Lyons

Andrea Forbes Kimta

Bernice Maxton-Lee

Chris Stanley

Ery McPartland

Giulua Marzetti

Harriet Munro

Ian Marlee

Robin Aitken

7. Motions

Motion raised by Mark Ballard: Stop the new gas burning power station at Peterhead.

Motion unanimously approved.

8. AOB

No AOB raised.

9. Close and thanks