Dumfries & Galloway Woodlands – SCIO #052525

2nd Annual General Meeting: 25/09/2025, 5.30-6.30pm

In-person at Balmaclellan Smiddy and online via link

Members in attendance:

Karen Morley	Jools Cox
Adam Gillingham	Mary-Ann Smyth
Graeme Dalby	Jack Barton
Julian Stanning	Theo Stanning
Cally Wight	Ed Kyrke
Julian Waddell	Heather Irvine
Peter Dreghorn	John Carolann
Anna Lawrence	Rhona Davies
Gareth Clingan	Nic Major
Ian Murgatroyd	Clair McFarlane

Apologies from:

Nick Dowdell	Alan Smith
Jean Shaw	Fiona Smith
Chris Shaw	

Also present:

McNabb Laurie – DGW Manager	Sam Lomax – DGW Administrator
Phil Dowling – DGW Action Officer	

DRAFT

1 Welcome

1.1 All were welcomed to the meeting by Chair, Karen Morley (KM).

1.2 It was noted that the quorum for a DGW AGM was 3 members, making this event quorate.

2 Minutes from last AGM *(26/09/24)*

2.1 Minutes from the last AGM had been made available online and copies were available for those present in person.

2.2 The minutes from the last AGM were approved.

3 Review of 01/04/24 to 31/03/25

3.1 KM gave a review of April 24 to March 25, this period being the focus of the financials detailed in the Annual Return.

3.2 This is DGW's 2nd year of operation with significant increase of turnover to 460k shows how DGW has grown. Steps such as gaining lottery (NLHF) funding and recruiting two employees has allowed DGW to do so much more.

3.3 The D&G Tree Planting Grant Scheme has been a huge success and funding has been secured for this new season.

3.4 DGW is now the owner of Bennel Wood thanks to generosity of a private donor and support from SOSE's Natural Capital Innovation Fund. This is being labelled a 'woodland laboratory', trialling new treatments on the naturally regenerating trees.

3.5 Membership of DGW is growing and now stands at 222 members.

3.6 Thanks to Trustees, staff, partners and members for support.

3.7 Now into 3rd year of funding, focus is moving to sustainability of the operation, going forward.

4 Consideration of latest Annual Return *(01/04/2024 to 31/03/2025)*

4.1 Copies of the Annual Return had been made available online and printed copies were available for those present in person.

4.2 Accounts drawn up with the support of Carson & Trotter.

4.3 Members were happy to approve the Accounts. These would therefore be submitted to OSCR before the 31/12/25 deadline.

5 Review of DGW Aims/Purposes

5.1 At the Trustee Strategy meeting in April 2025, a review of the governing objectives was undertaken. It had been proposed that the following tweaks be made, to better reflect the emerging roles for DGW:

Current Aims/Purposes:

a) *To support the creation of ecologically and economically sustainable woodlands across the Dumfries & Galloway Region*

b) *Conserve and enhance the biodiversity and natural systems in woodlands and their related habitats*

DRAFT

c) *To enthuse, celebrate and harness interest in native woodland; and connect people who are actively restoring natural woodland habitats in Dumfries and Galloway*
d) *To work with agencies, statutory bodies, communities and other partners to better understand, manage or acquire areas of existing or potential native woodlands.*

Suggested New Aims/Purposes:

a) *To support the creation AND MANAGEMENT of ecologically and economically sustainable woodlands across the Dumfries & Galloway region.*
b) *Conserve and enhance the biodiversity and natural systems in NEW AND EXISTING woodlands and their related habitats.*
c) *To enthuse, celebrate and harness interest in native woodland, and connect COMMUNITIES AND OTHER PARTNERS who are actively restoring natural woodland habitats in Dumfries & Galloway.'*
d) *To work with PEOPLE to better understand, manage or acquire areas of existing or potential native woodlands.*

5.2 The meaning of 'maintenance of woodlands' was queried– for example, does this include removal of tree guards, does this come under ongoing management? It was clarified that would be classed as management. It was noted that DGW has been investigating and trialling new forms of protection, including biodegradable tubes and metal cactus guards.

All present were happy to approve the proposed changes to governing aims/purposes of D&G Woodlands.

6 Trustees + Governance

6.1 Current trustee list was noted by all present, with office bearers:

- Chair: Karen Morley
- Secretary: Adam Gillingham
- Treasurer: Jools Cox

6.2 It was noted that DGW has an ambition to undertake a Trustee mapping exercise in the coming months, identifying gaps of knowledge and geographical spread, as well as to identify potential new Trustees.

6.3 Thanks were recorded to all trustees for their ongoing support.

DRAFT

7. 2025/26 Annual Return

It was proposed that DGW re-appoint Carson & Trotter as Independent Examiner for the 2025/26 Annual Return. No objections were made.

8. Next AGM

The date for next year's AGM was suggested to be 24th September 2026.

9. AOB + Questions

9.1 McNabb Laurie, D&G Woodlands Manager (ML), gave a brief presentation entitled 'Work so far and ambitions in the next 12 months'.

Key messages from the presentation included:

- Tree grant scheme is front and centre of what DGW do
- Engaging with landowners to build the pipeline of native woodland creation
- DGW aims for people, public and environmental benefits – these can be visible, e.g. benches for public use, or strategic, e.g. training or jobs to retain young people in the region
- Education and community engagement (e.g. schools, prison) will be a focus next year – aim to secure funding for a specific DGW employee role
- Events throughout the year build the profile of DGW
- Aiming to become proactive rather than reactive, and move to a more sustainable footing, securing funding and extending staff contracts

ML also gave an overview of the variety of different projects within DGW, including:

- Wood of Keyr (more funding has been received to continue this);
- Woodlands Plus (Waterside Hill with sculpture to be installed next year, Glaisters Bridge with new benches, both adding value to commercial settings);
- Solway Coast and Marine Project Landscape Connections (DGW as fulfilling the Coastal Woodlands elements of this scheme);
- Bennel 'Woodland Laboratory' (working with University of Birmingham and SRUC Barony on potential research).

DRAFT

9.2 ML gave thanks to all involved in DGW – to employees Sam Lomax and Phil Dowling, as well as to all members, trustees and other partners.

9.3 Positive thanks for DGW support were received from RAW (Restoring Annan's Water) and shared with attendees.

9.4 The meeting was opened for questions and discussion, including the following points raised:

- Q: how can membership offering be developed, what can we do to improve, what would members like from DGW? Input sought from attendees in and after the meeting.
- Q: regarding the tree grant scheme and how it is awarded – should it be targeted towards certain types of work? Discussion already being had with Trustees about scoring applicants. Suggestion to prioritise ecological value of the project; whether multiple grants are available; rules must be clear for applicants.
- Q: can a tree or woodland be a Trustee of DGW? Representing the nature that is being addressed. For further discussion
- Q: how does DGW respond if being approached in relation to proposed woodland, do we take a stance? Current position is that DGW does not write in support or objection of any proposals, but does try to add value.
- Q: do we have targets for the areas of woodland we want to plant or enhance? Not yet, but this is a good suggestion and would be developed as an idea.
- Q: do we have option for people to donate a tree for birth/marriage etc. Noted recent work to plant a wedding tree at Glaisters Bridge. This workstream needs to be developed further.
- Castle Douglas doesn't have a town wood – could this be something for DGW, to create a community wood there? Discussion took place on options.

9.5 Thanks were given to all for attending and the meeting was brought to a close at 6.30pm.

DRAFT