

**Minutes of the Annual Members Meeting of the  
Anstruther Improvements Association on  
Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2024 at 7pm at Dreel Halls,  
Anstruther**

**Present**

**Ordinary Members:** Arran Aird, David Andrews, Kate Anstruther, Toby Anstruther, Richard Emanuel, Christine Keay, John Myles, Mary and Trevor Money, Christine Palmer, Jan Palmer, Karen Porter, Barbara Ramsay, Susan Scrimgeour, Teresa Sguazzin, Alan Stewart, Diana Sykes, Louis Theran, Kenneth Young

**Ordinary Members who attended in part:** Linda and Tim Fitzpatrick, Barbara Fotheringham, Elizabeth Gordon, Ken Mackinnon

**Observers:** Julie Charentenay, Hannah Fleming, Dariusz Kwiecien, Sophie Palmer, Julia Priestley

**Apologies:** Janet Bulloch, William Dick, John and Catherine Kellett, Lavinia and James Kilbride, Chloe Milne, Bill Motion, Elizabeth Riches

1. CP opened the Annual Members Meeting (AMM), welcomed the members and read the apologies.
2. The minutes of the 2023 AMM were proposed by Toby Anstruther and seconded by Trevor Money. There were no corrections. Under matters arising Sophie Palmer outlined what has happened since she requested that the AIA consider establishing a youth division at the 2023 AMM. Sophie has become the AIA's first Youth Leader and has volunteered at numerous events, including the Dreelside Park opening and a wellbeing event at Waid Academy. Supported by Julia Priestley, the AIA's community development worker, she has opened discussions with Waid Academy to encourage more young people to volunteer at events, resulting in a significant uptake. Julia and Sophie are working on developing more opportunities for meaningful volunteering through the AIA. Young volunteers will be able to log volunteer hours to count towards the Saltire Awards, a national young person's awards scheme.
3. CP presented the President's Report (see below).
4. CP outlined the Committee's proposal that the annual subscription for September 2025 to August 2026 should be set at £10. The proposal was approved by the ordinary members unanimously.
5. The constitution requires that one-third of the Trustees retire each year and two of the existing Trustees had resigned in writing and were putting themselves forward for re-election. They had completed and submitted nomination forms within the deadline laid out in the constitution. Both nominees were voted in unanimously as Trustees by the ordinary members present at the AMM. They are: Kate Anstruther and Chloe Milne. No other nomination forms had been received.
6. CP presented the independent financial examiner's report to the members.

7. As Joint Treasurer, KA presented the annual accounts to the members, who received them. KA provided a headline summary of the income and expenditure for 2023. She explained the difference between unrestricted and restricted income and expenditure, and why it was most meaningful when judging performance and management of the AIA to focus on unrestricted financial activity. Although the accounts show an unrestricted deficit of £5,726, this can be accounted for by depreciation of AIA assets (totalling nearly £8.4K). Given steep rises in energy costs (from just under £4K to nearly £8K), the organisation has done well. Of note was Alan Stewart's work on hall hire, which had resulted in an increase from just under £4K to nearly £8K. CP invited questions from the members, but there were none raised.
8. The AIA Committee proposed that Mark Robertson of Henderson Black be appointed as independent financial examiner for the SCIO's accounts and this was approved unanimously by the ordinary members.
9. CP made a call for any other competent business.
10. There was a question regarding the timing of the AMM and whether it could be held earlier in the year, when a review of the previous year's activity felt more recent and relevant. To some degree this depends on when the accounts are ready and judgement on how to maximise attendance, but the Committee would consider whether it could be held earlier in the year. A second question was asked regarding whether the young volunteers could be given full voting rights. The Committee will look into the legality of this.
11. CP closed the meeting and expressed thanks to the Trustees, Julia Priestley, the Honorary Patrons and the Members.

**Above minutes accepted as a true record**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_(Chair)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Review of Activities 2023

2023 was the final year of our three-year funding from The National Lottery Community Fund to establish the Anster Community Development Project and employ our first Community Development Worker, Julia Priestley. The funding has transformed the AIA, allowing us to make a step change in the range of events and activities we can offer our community at Dreel Halls and our effectiveness as a community group outside the walls of our heritage home.

We completed our season of *Anster Nichts* at the start of the year with talks by Dr Andrew Blight (The Biodiversity of Coastal Marine Ecosystems) and Harry Watkins (Plants on the move). The new season began in September with talks by Nikki and Claire Pollock (Rooting for a Better Future at Ardross Farm) and Team Footprint (Bring Back Woodland to the East Neuk). Our October talk and AGM were threatened by Storm Babet; Dr Anne-Marie Weijmans was kind enough to brave the elements for those who could make it and gave us a fascinating gallop around the solar system. We will reschedule Dr Weijmans' full talk for next season, and the teaser she gave us suggests it is one not to be missed. Our thanks to all our speakers, who generously give up their time to educate and entertain us.

*Anster Cinema* continued with monthly film screenings at Dreel Halls, usually on the first Sunday of the month at 6.45pm. We offered a free screening of Ava DuVernay's searing documentary *13<sup>th</sup>* and finished the year with the ever-popular *Meet Me in St Louis*. Another highlight was a community screening of a one-off film, *The Real Dreel*, by local filmmaker Bill Bruce, capturing some of the voices of the Dreel Burn community. The event included live music by Tom Houston, with opportunities for our audience to join in making it a memorable evening.

We enjoyed another busy and successful *Duck Race*, continuing our new tradition of an outdoor prize giving and bonnet parade. The Design a Duck colouring competition has also joined the new *Duck Race* format, and Jacqui Irvine and Pam Gough had the tricky task of choosing the winners from a terrific field of entries. Our thanks to Bowhouse Food Market for offering us the opportunity to promote the *Duck Race* at the March market. The biggest thanks, though, must go to all the people who volunteer on the day and the businesses who sell our sponsored ducks and donate prizes – our busiest event of the year simply could not happen without them.

*Dreel Babies & Toddlers*, our early years social group, entered its third year. Our thanks must go to volunteer Katherine Harley, who coordinated the group throughout 2023, along with a dedicated group of supportive weekly parent helpers. The group also benefited hugely from regular volunteers Jacqui Irvine and Gill Fraser. The group enjoyed dressing up and hosting parties to celebrate the King's Coronation, Halloween and Christmas. The parents, carers, babies and toddlers participated in crafts, ceramic painting, songs and rhymes, and organised outreach activities led by the Scottish Fisheries Museum.

*Dreel Friends*, our community café, continued to provide space for members of our community to meet and socialise and keep in touch with community activities. The regular audience enjoyed the teas, home baking, book swap, stories for younger children and a seasonal, themed craft table. This activity is supported by regular volunteers and in 2023

partnered with East Neuk Lighthouse, Bilingual Families in Fife and Tayside and the Scottish Fisheries Museum to provide activities for young visitors.

*Dreel Crafters* has thrived in 2023, growing in popularity and providing opportunities for volunteering, skill sharing and connecting with like-minded crafters. Yet again, members of the group contributed knitting to raise funds for the *Duck Race* and were at the centre of the AIA's *Vintage Day* in October. Here, Dreel Halls hosted traditional vintage teas, vintage jewellery, clothing and craft stalls, charity stalls, including Anstruther's very own Community Kist, and a raffle. Visitors had a lovely time and the AIA is grateful to the volunteers, home bakers, crafters, stall holders and local businesses who supported the day. Like the *Duck Race*, *Vintage Day* raises critical funds for the AIA's Anster Community Development Project and Dreel Halls.

In 2023, activity around the *Dreel Shelled Wall Restoration Project* grew. Behind the scenes, the AIA is working to ensure that the project has the permissions and resources to proceed; meanwhile the public focus is on collecting the shells to complete the work. We had a sunny September Buckie Treasure Hunt at Shell Bay in Elie, and volunteers also started the long process of sorting and bagging shells.

The *Dreel Burn Project* went from strength to strength in 2023, and in total the Dreel Burn Project has attracted over £500,000 of funding to the East Neuk area for environmental outcomes. Our community science volunteers completed a full year of water quality monitoring, and, with funding from The National Lottery Community Fund via Climate Action Fife and St Andrews University Community Fund, we were able to recruit new volunteers to be trained in the Riverfly Partnership's Monitoring Initiative. This team of volunteers will monitor the health of the burn through the presence or absence of pollution-sensitive invertebrates. We have partnered with Footprint East Neuk's Dreelside Woods group to organise regular litter picks along the burn, and, with the help of Forth Rivers Trust, delivered our first Fish in the Classroom project at Anstruther Primary School, allowing P5s to nurture brown trout eggs in the classroom before releasing them into the burn. We held three engagement sessions: in April and September we opened Dreel Halls to the public for Community River Sessions, the latter allowing us to celebrate one year of the project. We also attended the Anstruther Harbour Festival with the Forth Rivers Trust's interactive river table. We are lucky to be supported by a Steering Group to help guide the direction of the project.

The first landscape intervention in the catchment, led by Forth Rivers Trust, received full funding from NatureScot and Fife Environment Trust in 2023. This will see the creation of a new wetland area, installation of leaky dams, more tree planting along the burn and the removal of a ford which impedes fish passage in 2024. These should increase the burn's biodiversity and address flooding risk caused by climate change.

The success of our community activity drew attention to the Dreel Burn in 2023, and the AIA was invited to join a partnership project led by Fife Coast & Countryside Trust to demonstrate within the Dreel Burn catchment how nature restoration might be funded by private investment. This partnership project is funded by Fife Council and the Facility for Investment Ready Nature in Scotland (FIRNS), a collaboration between the Scottish

Government, NatureScot and the National Lottery Heritage Fund, and the AIA has been tasked with delivering community engagement activity for the project.

In September we had some cracking, if blustery, weather for *Doors Open Day* at Dreel Halls. Our volunteers were able to offer visitors great views, tours of the St Nicholas Tower and delicious home baking. Volunteers also manage the AIA garden, just over the bridge from Dreel Halls.

In November thanks to funding from The National Lottery Community Fund, the AIA was able to thank all the wonderful volunteers who offer up their time and skills, at a celebration at Dreel Halls. It was a wonderful evening, and even our volunteer Committee and Honorary Patrons were able to relax and enjoy the evening.

The AIA is part of the East Neuk Youth Network and participated in the 2023 Spring East Neuk Family Learning Roadshow in Crail. In the summer of 2023 we were delighted to welcome back the Fèis Rois Ceilidh Trail's talented young musicians for a fantastic evening of traditional music at Dreel Halls. We also took part again in the November Bowhouse Food Market, selling home-made seasonal apple crumbles and raising much needed funds for the AIA.

In 2023, Julia provided support to and partnered with a wide range of community groups and individuals, including Anstruther Skatepark Group, Dreelside Woods Community Asset Transfer, Anstruther & District Allotment Association and Dreelside Park Upgrade. Towards the end of the year, Julia also carried out a community survey about the Anster Community Development Project, which has provided invaluable evidence for planning, monitoring and fundraising.

Hall use saw a healthy uplift in 2023, and our thanks must go to AIA Trustee Alan Stewart, who is the face of Dreel Halls for our hall hirers. Dreel Halls currently hosts a wide range of regular activities, including exercise groups and musical rehearsals, as well as private celebrations. All current events and activities in the AIA's programme can be found on the website and Facebook pages.

In 2023 we received financial and in-kind support from, among others, The National Lottery Community Fund, Fife Council, St Andrews University Community Fund, Community Kist, Norah Webber Trust, The St Andrews Ball, William Stewart, East Neuk Tabletop Games, Balcaskie Estate, Bowhouse Food Market, James Aird & Sons, Anstruther Co-Op, Morrisons St Andrews, Amazon Smile, Climate Action Fife and Anstruther's many local businesses, who support our events and activities. We had almost 100 paying members this year, who believe in the AIA's work and want to support us to continue with it. In 2023 we were selected as one of the Co-op Local Community Fund's supported charities, and members of the Co-op can select us as their chosen cause, increasing the amount of funding we will receive. The Trustees would like to extend thanks to Julia on behalf of the AIA members. Julia works tirelessly, and always cheerfully, to support the community to make things happen. She has transformed the AIA over the past three years, enabling us to offer around 11,000 engagements with people between 2020 and 2023 through the Anster Community Development Project, and we are delighted to be able to retain her for another three years

thanks to funding from FIRNS and The National Lottery Community Fund. We would also like to thank those who use and value our home, Dreel Halls, ensuring it remains relevant and vibrant.

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