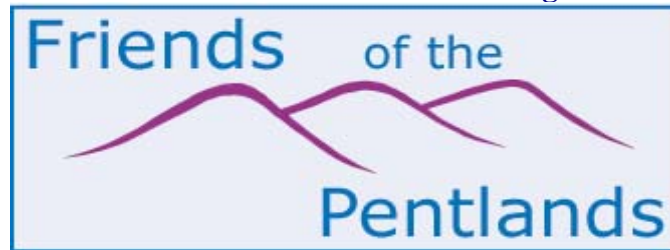


Chairman: Mr John Stirling



The Friends of the Pentlands is a registered Scottish Charity, No: SC035514

ACTION PLAN FOR 2009

1. INTRODUCTION

The Society's first Action Plan was issued in 2004. This, the Society's sixth Action Plan, was approved by the Society's Executive Council on 12 November 2008. It seeks to set out the Executive Council's *modus operandi*, its short and medium-term objectives and its aspirations for the future.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The inaugural meeting of the Society was held on 29 March 2003. The *raison d'être* for that meeting was a willingness to take forward two specific objectives stated in the Pentland Hills Regional Park Integrated Management Strategy; viz, the wish to establish "an independent friends group" and the wish "to encourage wider participation by the public".
- 2.2 A Constitution was adopted on 19 November 2003; the Society's first Annual General Meeting was held on 11 May 2004 and the Society became a registered Scottish charity on the same date. The membership of the Executive Council is shown at Annex A.
- 2.3 The Society supports SNH's contention that natural heritage contributes to people's quality of life and health via an awareness and enjoyment of their surroundings. An understanding and appreciation of natural heritage fosters local cultural identity and a sense of place. The Pentland Hills are the 'green lungs' of Edinburgh and have the capacity to contribute to improving people's physical and mental health by providing a place for informal recreation – walking, cycling, horse riding, sitting, socialising and 'breathing space' to take time out from the stress of modern life. The Pentlands provide a home for wildlife and enable people to appreciate biodiversity and natural heritage.

3. MISSION STATEMENT

The Society seeks to act as a catalyst to promote the conservation, protection and enhancement of the Pentland Hills, with particular emphasis on recreational quality, public access, cultural heritage, landscape and biodiversity.

4. AREA OF INTEREST

4.1 The Society has defined its area of interest as being the area delineated by:

- The Regional Park in the north;
- The A702 in the east;
- The A70 in the west and
- The minor road from Dolphinton, via Dunsyre to Newbigging, and then the A721 to Carnwath in the south.

4.2 While the Society's practical activities will be conducted within the area defined at paragraph 4.1 above the Society also has an interest in developments which impact on the visual landscape of the Pentland Hills, either when seen from the Pentlands or from the surroundings of the Pentlands.

5. MODUS OPERANDI

5.1 The Executive Council seeks to ensure that, as far as is practical, the Society's work demonstrates its all-embracing aspirations; its wish to be a catalyst for integrated action; its enthusiasm for advocacy; its wish to avoid being overtly political, yet retaining its right to lobby when necessary, especially with regard to perceived threats; and its hope that its work will, in the long term, lead to an inspirational approach to the environmental protection and enhancement of the Pentland Hills.

5.2 Furthermore the Executive Council will:

- Operate within the terms of the Society's Constitution.
- Comply with relevant guidance from the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) and, in accordance with that guidance a 'Code of Conduct' was approved in 2006.
- Provide a Report to members at the Annual General Meeting.
- Submit Accounts annually to members for approval.
- Ensure that the Society's policies and actions conform to Government guidelines in relation to equal opportunities and other non-discriminatory policies.
- Use its membership of the Pentland Hills Regional Park Consultative Forum to co-operate with the Regional Park, bearing in mind, however, that the Society's interests may not always coincide with those of the Park, and that the Society's area of interest extends well beyond the boundaries of the Regional Park.

6. STRATEGIC PRINCIPLES

- 6.1 The Society recognises that, as an all-volunteer body, its capabilities and influence are limited. In recognition of that reality the Society will seek, whenever appropriate, to obtain advice from and/or work with bodies that have greater expertise in the field of natural and cultural heritage and conservation and biodiversity.
- 6.2 Notwithstanding the above the Society's aspirations and activities will be guided by the following strategic principles.
- (a) The conservation, protection and enhancement of the Pentland Hills are for the benefit of present and future generations. The Society will, therefore, seek to protect existing opportunities and develop new opportunities.
 - (b) Activities in relation to conservation, protection and enhancement must be guided by those with specialist knowledge.
 - (c) Access to natural and cultural heritage is for the benefit of present and future generations. The Society will seek to promote exiting opportunities and develop new ones.
 - (d) The heritage of the Pentland Hills should be accessible to the widest possible range of people. The Society will seek to promote access, especially in those areas that are least visited.
 - (e) Enjoyment of the natural and cultural heritage of the Pentland Hills should be encouraged in a variety of different ways. The Society will seek to provide a varied programme of activities and, where practical, will open its activities to non-members.
 - (f) Providing a variety of educational opportunities is an investment in the future heritage of the Pentland Hills. The Society will provide a programme of educational opportunities for its member and, where practical, to non-members.

7. CONTINUING OBJECTIVES

The Society has a number of objectives which are essentially of an ongoing nature, although they are reviewed annually. These are listed below.

- (a) To maintain a mutually beneficial relationship with the Regional Park and the organisations represented on the Regional Park Consultative Forum.
- (b) To maintain mutually beneficial relationships with those organisations which share the Society's aspirations, eg Scottish Natural Heritage, the Paths for All Partnership and the Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society.
- (c) To maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Local Authority Access Officers, landowners, and other organisations with an interest in the Pentlands.
- (d) To continue to promote the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.
- (e) To support, and where appropriate assist with, specific Regional Park tasks which are compatible with the terms of the Society's mission statement.
- (f) To pursue biodiversity projects to enhance the landscape and improve habitats.
- (g) To pursue projects to maintain and, where necessary, improve existing paths.

- (h) To monitor planning applications lodged with Local Authorities to ascertain their potential impact on the Society's area of interest and, when necessary, to submit an appropriate response.
- (i) To maintain contact details of organisations, and individuals, with whom the Executive Council considers it appropriate to liaise, or establish a working relationship.
- (j) To maintain a 'Friends of the Pentlands' web site.
- (k) To continue to develop a wildflower meadow at Threipmuir.
- (l) To continue to monitor plans to develop wind farms at Harrows Law and Auchencorth Moss and Scottish Water's development of a new Water Treatment Works near Flotterstone.

8. SHORT TERM OBJECTIVES

The Society's short-term objectives are defined as those its Executive Council expects to achieve by 31 December 2009.

8.1. Educational, Environmental and Promotional Objectives.

- (a) To offer a programme of educational walks for Members, and at times for non-members, on themes such as biodiversity and social history.
- (b) To offer two winter talks, open to both Members and the general public, on topics consistent with the Society's mission statement.
- (c) To offer a programme of walks to foster the enjoyment of healthy walking, appreciation of the environment, and the enjoyment of the company of fellow walkers.
- (d) To promote a 'Walk of the Season' to encourage Members to explore and appreciate the Pentland landscape.
- (e) To assist Carlops Community Council with the installation of an interpretation board.
- (f) To install a sleeper bridge at Weststruther Burn
- (g) To improve way marking in the Crosswood area
- (h) To establish an alternative route around Easton Farm
- (i) To make improvements to the route at Baddingsgill.
- (j) To install a nest box with camera at Flotterstone.
- (k) To over-winter 200 wild flower plugs for potting-up and planting at Hillend.
- (l) To install two refurbished ScotWays signs at Auchengray and Henshaw Hill.
- (m) To develop a 'Walk to the Seven Trig Points'.
- (n) To install wheelchair friendly gates at cattle grids in Flotterstone Glen.
- (o) To install a style at the start of the walk from Boston Cottage.
- (p) To contribute to the 'Scotland's Rural Past Project' by providing input in relation to Craigentarrie and Threipmuir Steading.

8.2. Administrative Objectives

- (a) To achieve 325 members by 31 December 2009.

- (b) To recommend to the AGM subscription rates for the various categories of membership for 2010.
- (c) To ensure that the Society's running costs can continue to be met from membership income.
- (d) To hold events, such as 'Tea & Cakes' days, to raise funds for minor environmental projects while simultaneously providing an opportunity to promote the Society's objectives.
- (e) To issue *Pentland Post* three times per year.

9. MEDIUM TERM OBJECTIVES

The Society's medium term objectives relate to areas of improvement that have been identified as worthwhile but are either not of immediate priority, or depend upon substantial grant funding, or need to be addressed with other partners. These objectives may well take more than a year to achieve fruition. They are listed below.

- (a) To obtain funding for a small bird hide at Fairliehope.
- (b) To develop and publish a Pan-Pentlands leaflet and map.
- (c) To develop and publish a Pan-Pentlands place names leaflet.
- (d) To develop Pentland wildlife leaflets.
- (e) To install an automatic weather station at Harlaw.
- (f) To liaise with Historic Scotland with a view to contributing to their 'Adopt a Monument' scheme.

10. LONG TERM OBJECTIVES/ASPIRATIONS

The Society's long term objectives relate to improvements that will need substantial grant funding and need to be addressed in partnership with other organisations. They are listed below.

- (a) To purchase an all terrain buggy for the use of visitors to the Pentlands.
- (b) With the agreement and support of the local community to assist in establishing a path between Balerno and the Pentlands.
- (c) To investigate the possibility of providing a 'Wheelyboat' for the use of anglers with mobility problems.
- (d) To explore the possibility, with other interested parties, of improving the black grouse habitat with the Pentlands.
- (e) To make repairs to the little Vantage path.
- (f) To develop an on-going comprehensive assessment of developments, threats and opportunities within the area of the Pentland Hills in order to focus and prioritise the future work of the Society.
- (g) To consider the possibility of establishing a voluntary ranger service for that area of the Pentland Hills which lies outwith the boundaries of the Regional Park.
- (h) To promote the extension of the Regional Park in order that it may cover the whole area of the Society's interest.

11. FINANCE

- (a) The Society aims to continue to meet its administrative running costs from income from membership fees, including gift aid. During 2008 membership income and bank interest amounted to £2,338 while expenditure on administration was £1,326.
- (b) The Society aims to fund minor projects through a mixture of donations, internal fundraising initiatives and minor grants. During 2008 the Society raised £1,387 from fundraising activities and received £909 in donations.
- (c) Major projects which the Society undertakes will continue to be funded from grants, while the Society's contribution will be met in kind by time, managerial or labour, or both.
- (d) During 2008 the Society obtained a grant of £500 to part fund a major project.
- (e) As at 31 December 2008 the Society's accounts showed a deficit for the year of £1,598 and current assets of £5,776 compared with £6,813 at the end of 2007.

ANNEX A

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

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|----------------------|--|
| Chairman | John Stirling – elected to Council in May 2004 and elected chairman in May 2006 |
| Vice-Chairman | Mike White – elected to Council in May 2004 and elected Vice-Chairman in May 2006 |
| Treasurer | Nigel Fairhead – elected May 2004 |
| Secretary | Bob Paterson – elected May 2004 |
| Membership Secretary | Rod Greenwell – elected May 2007 |
| Members | Johanna Carrie – elected May 2007 Janet Clark – elected May 2008 Grace Jamieson – elected May 2008 Alyson Patrick – elected May 2008 David Pritchard – elected May 2006 John Surtees – elected May 2007 Averil Sutherland – elected May 2007 |

The point of contact for the Society is the Secretary:

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