

Minutes - Meeting and AGM of Cross-Party Group on Outdoor Education

9 November 2023 (via Teams)

Present

MSPs

Liz Smith MSP
Beatrice Wishart MSP

Members

Neil Baird, Rory Edwards and Laura Jack – Scouts Scotland (secretariat)
David Exeter and James Ferguson - The Outward Bound Trust
Mike Harvey – Parliamentary researcher
Gavin McWhinnie – Office of Liz Smith
Kevin Marsh - Craikhope Outdoor Centre
Rachel Luxton – Scripture Union Scotland
Jane Campbell Morrison - Scottish Adventure Activities Forum (SAAF)
Nick March - The Association of Heads of Outdoor Education Centres (AHOEC)
Jamie Miller – Scottish Outdoor Education Centres (SOEC)
Hazel Wiseman – OYT Scotland
Peter Higgins – University of Edinburgh
Andrew Bradshaw - Scottish Advisory Panel for Outdoor Education (SAPOE)
Peter Moir – Duke of Edinburgh
Toby Clark – John Muir Trust
Lee Musson – Rock UK

Guests

Rob Bushby – Unaffiliated guest
Ian Smith - Unaffiliated guest
Gillian Lithgow – Youth Link Scotland
Phil Thompson – Ardroy Outdoor Centre

Apologies

- Ali Dreyer – Abernethy
- Peter Wilson – Ardentenny Centre
- Paul Bayton – Scripture Union (Rachel Luxton attended)
- Stuart Younie – Mountaineering Scotland
- Brian Whittle MSP
- Daniel Johnson MSP
- Mark Ruskell MSP
- Fulton MacGregor MSP

Agenda

1. Welcome by Liz Smith MSP

2. Presentations by Outward Bound Trust and Ardroy Outdoor Centre followed by questions and discussion.
3. AGM
4. Closing remarks, date and time of next meeting

Agenda Item 1 – Welcome by Liz Smith MSP

Liz Smith welcomed attendees, provided a brief summary of the agenda of the meeting and outlined its focus on how outdoor residential can foster wellbeing, resilience and skills for young people.

Agenda item 2 – Presentations and discussions

James Ferguson of the Outward Bound Trust provided an introduction to the Let Us Out campaign. A national campaign led by the Outward Bound Trust in support of the three bills, currently progressing through national legislatures, to introduce a right to residential outdoor education for young people. James concluded his presentation with an invitation to the group to get involved in the campaign as partners to Outward Bound.

Phil Thompson of Ardroy Outdoor Centre discussed the potential of outdoor residential to underpin the Learning for Sustainability Action Plan. He focused on the John Muir Award as a potential vehicle for this, discussing the work of Ardroy in teaching young people about the circular food economy as one example of how the John Muir Award was already being used as a platform to successfully teach sustainability skills.

The presentations were followed by a lively discussion among group members. Pertinent discussion points included:

- The need to demonstrate how Let Us Out was a Scottish as well as a national endeavour and the potential importance of the group and young people's voices in achieving that.
- The need to overcoming barriers to participation in outdoor education, including costs, cultural expectations and anxieties around food. Several group members, including both speakers, expressed the need for both flexibility and an honest dialogue with teachers and young people about these issues.
- Whether to permit the use of mobile phones during outdoor residential.
- How best to integrate outdoor residential as part of a holistic curriculum. Group members stressed the greater impact a residential experience can have as part of a programme of learning.

Agenda item 3 – AGM

Rory Edwards of Scouts Scotland chaired the AGM.

Liz Smith MSP was proposed as Convener by Nick March, seconded by Hazel Wiseman and duly re-appointed.

Daniel Johnson MSP was proposed as Deputy Convenor by Liz Smith MSP, seconded by Beatrice Wishart MSP and duly re-appointed.

Scouts Scotland were also re-appointed as secretariat of the group.

Agenda item 4 – Closing remarks

Liz Smith MSP drew the meeting to a close. It was proposed the next meeting be held in January 2024. Those with submissions should contact rory.edwards@scouts.scot