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**Trustees’ Annual Report for the period 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021**

The Trustees have pleasure in presenting their report together with the financial statements and the Independent Financial Examiner’s report for the above mentioned period.

**REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION**

**Charity Name**: Skye and Lochalsh Environment Forum

**Charity No**: SCO40820

**Address of Principal Office**: Tigh a Chiobair, Ord, Sleat, Isle of Skye, IV44 8RN.

**The Trustees during the year to 31st March 2021 were**:

Eileen Armstrong

David Ashford

Roger Cottis

Lindsay Thatcher

Melanie Watt

All served as Trustees throughout the period.

**STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT**

**Constitution**:

The Charity became a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation on 4th September 2013. It is governed by its SCIO Constitution which was adopted on 18th November 2013.

**Appointment of Trustees**

The Board of Trustees, which normally meets at least thrice annually, consists of the Charity’s Trustees. Trustees are elected at the Annual Members’ Meeting. Under the constitution, there must be a minimum of three and not more than nine elected Trustees. The Trustees may co-opt a further three Trustees if they consider it would be in the interests of the charity to do so. Membership of the Board is open to all Members of the Charity.

**Management**:

The Trustees are responsible for the strategic direction and governance of the Charity, whilst day-to-day running is delegated to the Secretary.

**OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES**

**Charitable purposes**:

To be a forum for members of the public and organisations in or associated with Skye and Lochalsh in order to promote and care for the landscape and biological diversity of natural and cultural habitats throughout for the benefit of present and future generations and to promote awareness, enjoyment, research, understanding and sustainable use of the area’s natural and cultural environment and biodiversity.

**Activities**:

Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, only limited activity was possible within the reporting period. **South Skye Seas initiative (SSSi),** south Skye lochs project to record principally Priority Marine Features (PMFs), was on hold. NatureScot requested a wider geographical recording area for PMFs. Subsequently only one underwater survey was possible, and this resulted in a new seagrass bed being located, with video footage being documented and reported to Marine Scotland.

Continuing membership and contact have been maintained through SSSi in the Coastal Communities Network (CCN), currently administered by Fauna & Flora International, which has involved input into various projects and consultations.

Struan Primary School, Isle of Skye, wrote to SSSi informing us of their Ocean School project. They requested assistance with their studies and informed us that seagrass *Zostera marina* fronds, a PMF, had been found on a local beach close to their School. Contact with the School would be instigated, and when safe to do so, visits would be made by team members.

**SLEF** members contributed to a UK wide project ‘Carbon Storage in Intertidal Environments’ (C-SIDE), where soil sampling from 13 local saltmarshes was undertaken in conjunction with Bangor University in North Wales and St Andrews University, Scotland. No reports have been received, however assurance was given that once normal working was permitted, we would receive our results and a report.

Funding, secured from Fauna & Flora International at the end of the last reporting period to facilitate an online Zoom contract for one year proved invaluable. This enabled **SLEF** Trustees to continue their charitable duties. In addition online mammal instruction courses were trialled, enabling four members to take part. Species background papers were produced and once people had read the contents online, PowerPoint presentations were undertaken using the Zoom facility. These were followed when safe to do so by onsite outdoor meetings, to assess if the students had understood the basic principles of each course. Future modules are anticipated.

Online Zoom sessions enable continuing contact with NatureScot’s Marine Team to discuss video footage findings from the Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) and GoPro camera of species and habitats, with special emphasis on PMFs. The data may assist in securing legal protection for areas around our study area of south Skye lochs, where benefits would accrue to the climate environment and some commercial marine species.

**Scottish Salmon Think-Tank (SST-T**) members have been mainly engaged in interaction with other coastal community groups via information exchange/discussion groups the Salmon Aquaculture Reform Network, Scotland (SARNS) and CCN. Such activity has included sharing knowledge, providing advice, engaging with various public consultations, and building our knowledge of the salmon aquaculture industry and the problems associated with it.

During the period in question, one of our number, Dr James Merryweather, began sharing his knowledge and experience through YouTube videos at a channel bearing the SST-T name: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCGEoQHoKRzsTK2NOC97oVsA/videos>. Not only can the increasing collection of SST-T videos be viewed universally, but also, they may be downloaded, copied and shared, even shown in public, without any © claims from the creator.

Additional funding of £1,000 was gratefully received by SLEF following the closure of the Skye and Lochalsh branch of Scottish Wildlife Trust in 2020.

David Ashford resigned as a Trustee on 14th July 2021 and Robert David Ware became a Trustee and Secretary on the same date.

Approved by the Trustees on 14th December 2021 and signed on their behalf by:



Roger Cottis

Chairman.