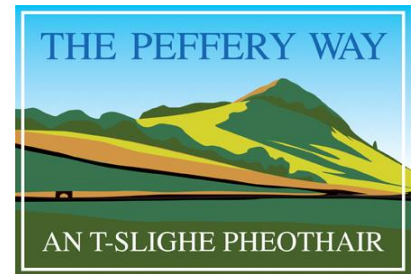


**PEFFERY WAY ASSOCIATION (PWA)  
FOURTH ANNUAL MEMBERS' MEETING (AMM)  
SATURDAY 4 JANUARY 2020  
HELD AT STRATHPEFFER STATION IN THE GOODS SHED**



**COMBINED CHAIR AND TREASURER'S ANNUAL REPORT  
COVERING THE PERIOD 30 NOVEMBER 2018 TO 30 NOVEMBER 2019**

**Introduction**

It's been a very busy and successful year for the Peffery Way Association (PWA). Another 2km of path has been constructed at a cost of around £175,000 taking us past the half way mark with just over 3km of the overall 6km of the route now completed.

This report which covers the period of our financial year i.e. from 30 November to 30 November picks out the key milestones and highlights on the project during that time.

**Trustees, Members and Volunteering**

As we have said before, the PWA would be nothing without our trustees and our members. We are blessed with a group of very determined trustees who have helped push the project forward. This last year has been no different in that respect and we would like to thank each of them for their significant contribution.

Over the year we saw one change in our group. Angela Douglas moved house and as a result decided to step down from the PWA. Angela had worked tirelessly on many aspects of the project including applying for funding from various bodies. She had a very good success rate and was instrumental in our successful application this year to Sustrans for support. We are all very sorry to see Angela go but we know we can always call on her support in the future. She will be missed.

As Angela left, we were delighted to welcome Alison Smith onto the board of trustees. Alison brings to the table a wealth of local knowledge and we have no doubt she will make a significant contribution to the workings of the PWA.

We are very grateful to our members for their continued support. This support is very evident in the turn out we see for volunteering duties. In recent months Heather and Kevin Crockett took on the role of managing the maintenance of the path through organising volunteering days. So far they have organised four events which resulted in a total of just over 120 hours being worked. During these volunteer days essential maintenance works were completed and over 420 new trees were planted along the route of the path. Volunteer days are essential to keeping the path at the standard we require and we are very grateful to everyone who has helped out. Your support is very much appreciated and we'd like to thank Heather and Kev for their hard work.

**Construction of the path**

At the end of 2018 we received confirmation of an award of a further grant under the Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP). This grant was awarded for the construction of a large part of phase 2 of the path. Phase 2 runs from Dingwall to Fodderty and this grant gave us funds to construct three sections within that phase, totalling around 2.5km.

At the beginning of February 2019, our contractor – Highland Conservation – began work on the first of these three sections – at the east end of phase 2. This section was completed by May 2019 and in mid-June work commenced on the west end of phase 2. The west end section was completed about four weeks later.

There remains a part of the path about 350m in length between these two sections which we refer to as the “difficult terrain section”. This section has not yet been taken forward as we are considering different design options involving both boardwalk and earthworks solutions.

The funding available for this remaining section under the SRDP grant remains available as we have managed to secure an extension of time to our contract with SRDP, giving us more time to determine the correct solution.

The works we have completed now takes us past the half way mark for the project. The overall length of the path will be 6km. We have now completed over 3km.

Another significant bit of progress worth mentioning on the construction of the path was the completion of the second bridge at the Strathpeffer end. This work, enabled by a donation from a local individual, has opened up the next section at the Strathpeffer end for access to allow construction works to proceed once funding is secured.

We have also now purchased a number of new signs for the route which will be erected over the coming weeks. These signs should help to encourage more people to use the path.

### **Funding and financing support**

While we have seen some significant success with funding applications, the SRDP funding route that we have relied on heavily in the last two years will not be open to new applications for paths such as ours for the next couple of years. We have therefore had to widen our horizons and consider other options. It was with this in mind that we applied to Sustrans for funding earlier in the year. Our application was successful and we are now in detailed discussions with Sustrans over issues such as match funding and the design of the “difficult terrain” section mentioned above. Sustrans has already made funds available to pay for a consultant to design the solution for the “difficult terrain” section and that work is underway.

Under the terms of the SRDP funding mentioned above, we had to find the funds required to pay for the construction works in advance as the grant is paid retrospectively. We are very grateful to the two local trusts and other individuals who have helped us with interest free loans. I am pleased to say that all but one of these loans have now been repaid. Without this type of support we would not have been able to make the progress we have seen this year.

During the year, in addition to the SRDP and Sustrans funding mentioned above, we also received other contributions or donations as follows:

- The Crerar Trust - £15,000
- The Highland Council - £2,000 from each of the two Ward Discretionary funds (Wester Ross, Strathpeffer & Lochalsh and Dingwall and Seaforth)
- Five particularly large personal donations from individuals (all > £1,000) amounting to £19,750
- Miscellaneous smaller donations amounting to £425, and
- Other fundraising activities (including the Jenny Graham Round the World Talk) amounting to £1,400.

All of these donations were very welcome and we are very grateful for the support given.

### **Addressing the remaining land issues**

We have formal agreements in place with landowners covering 90% of the overall route. This position has not changed since our last AMM despite our efforts. However, during the latter part of 2019 we did see the first steps taken in a process by the Highland Council to give the path “core path status”.

This process is a rather long one and includes similar proposals for new paths across the whole of Wester Ross. The PW is but one of a large number of paths being considered. At

this stage only the western half of the path is being considered due to the Council ward boundaries. The eastern half of the path will be subjected to the same process in the next year or so.

The first stage of the process involves a consultation exercise. The outcome of that consultation was that the PW received forty-six notes of support and one objection. The next stages will involve discussions to try and resolve the objection and if that is not possible then the matter will be considered by the Highland Council and ultimately the Scottish Government Ministers who have the final say on the matter.

We are hopeful that the whole path will eventually achieve “core path status” as it helps strengthen the ability of the Council to maintain it free of obstructions and obstacles.

### **Talk from Jenny Graham at Dingwall Academy – March 2019**

In March 2019, we were delighted to have Jenny Graham speak at a special event held in Dingwall Academy about her round the world solo cycling achievement. The event was a sell out with around 200 people in attendance.

### **Dingwall and Seaforth Highlanders - Second bench installed**

Thanks to the generosity of the Dingwall and Seaforth Highlanders, we were delighted to see a second bench manufactured and installed by the Dingwall Men’s Shed. It is located about 1km east of Fodderty and provides another opportunity to rest and admire the fantastic view up the valley.

### **Cycling Without Age UK – Trishaws**

During the year we received a visit from representatives from Cycling Without Age UK. This organisation is supported by the Scottish Government and promotes the use of electric bikes attached to trishaws for taking people out into the countryside. The people who benefit can be those who are less able to walk or cycle on their own such as the residents of our local care homes and those who perhaps live on their own and do not get out very often. We are very keen to purchase one or two of these trishaws at some time in the future and to set up a system of volunteer pilots to cycle them with people on board along the path. The representatives from Cycling Without Age UK thought the path would be ideal for this kind of activity.

If you would be interested in becoming one of the volunteer pilots then please let us know. It is unlikely we will be in a position to buy one of these trishaws for some time yet as our main focus has to remain on building the path but once we are further down that road we will certainly want to explore this idea further.

### **Dingwall Academy – S3 Class and Shona Davidson**

We had the pleasure of meeting with the S3 English class taught by Shona Davidson at Dingwall Academy during the year. They were undertaking a project on persuasive writing skills and prepared and sent various letters to key people asking them to support the PW. We are very grateful to them all for their support.

### **Next steps**

Our plans for next year are of course dependant on funding but we would like to complete the “difficult terrain section” mentioned above. While it is only 350m long, it will be the last of the difficult sections to construct and is estimated to cost around £100,000. Once complete, it will mean that people can walk or cycle from Fodderty to within 150m of Mill Street in Dingwall with links to other paths along the route. If our discussions with Sustrans are

successful, we are hopeful that they will cover 50% of these costs but we will need to raise more funds to close the gap that remains.

### **Volunteer days**

There will be more volunteer days organised throughout the year to help us maintain what we have built. Please keep an eye out for emails, Facebook page messages, etc. for details.

Thanks to everyone who has supported us throughout the year. It continues to be great fun being involved in the project and if you are interested in becoming a member or joining the board as a trustee please let us know.

**(N.B.** The accounts of the PWA can be viewed on our website – [www.pefferywayassociation.scot](http://www.pefferywayassociation.scot)).

The latest year, to November 2019, will appear once approved and registered with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR).

**Ron McAulay (Chair) and Ian Searle (Treasurer)**

**January 2020.**