



**PEFFERY WAY ASSOCIATION (PWA)
SEVENTH ANNUAL MEMBERS' MEETING (AMM)
TUESDAY 6 JUNE 2023 AT 6:30PM
TO BE HELD AT THE OLD FODDERTY BRIDGE, FODDERTY**

**COMBINED CHAIR AND TREASURER'S ANNUAL REPORT
COVERING THE PERIOD 30 NOVEMBER 2021 TO 30 NOVEMBER 2022**

Summary

It is good to be able to report another successful year for the Peffery Way. At the end of our financial year (30 November 2022), we had constructed all the sections of the path for which we had landowner permissions in place which effectively meant that 5.2km of the path out of an overall length of 6km had been completed. Only two sections remained and since the end of the year, one of those has now been addressed.

Trustees, Members and Volunteering

We continue to enjoy tremendous support from our members, volunteers and trustees. Without that support, the progress we have made would not have been possible and we remain very grateful to them all.

Construction of the path

In the early part of the year, Highland Conservation Ltd were appointed to construct the section of path from Fodderty Bridge to the boundary of Millnain Croft. These works were completed by late May/early June and the finished works have made a very positive difference replacing a very wet poorly drained section of path with a very good dry path that is much easier to use for people of all abilities. These works were largely funded with a grant from the Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP).

Funding and financing support

Over the course of this year, we have continued to receive funding from a number of different sources. Details are given below:

SUSTRANS Funding £8,620

THC Dingwall & Seaforth
Ward Discretionary Fund £2,000

The National Lottery
Community Fund £7,500

Foundation Scotland £1,730

Scottish Rural Development
Programme £46,820

Personal donations and
other fundraising £10,975

(of which £10,000 was one donation from a former local,
now resident in Canada!)

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

SUSTRANS

We continue to work with SUSTRANS and have been able to use their funding support to purchase and install a second counter on the path. This counter is providing us with very encouraging information on the numbers of people using the path.

Addressing the remaining landowner issues

Throughout the duration of the project, this has been a key issue for us. At an early stage, we were able to negotiate access agreements with most of the landowners affected covering 90% of the route. However, there were two sections of the path over which we were unable to get agreements in place. In 2020, at our request, the Highland Council began the process of serving a formal Path Order on the landowners affected by the path at the Dingwall (or East) end of the path. The process of approving such an Order involves comprehensive submissions to the Scottish Government and the appointment of a Reporter to consider the matter. During the year, we have provided information to the Reporter in response to questions he has raised. In August 2022, we heard that the Order would be confirmed but that various detailed matters had yet to be finalised. It was not until the beginning of February 2023 (outwith the period covered by this annual report) that we finally received the formal confirmation that the Order had been approved. This was a major milestone in the project and has since allowed us to construct the path at the Dingwall end opening it up to everyone to use.

We are now in discussion with Highland Council about either reaching agreement with the owner of the one remaining section of path or promoting a similar Order to cover it. We hope to be able to update you on this process in our next annual report.

While the Highland Council has included the western half of the Path in their Core Path Plan review, they have yet to submit the revised Core Path Plans to the Scottish Government for approval. This is due to issues with another path which is in dispute elsewhere in Wester Ross. It is hoped that the plans will be submitted in the near future.

If the western half of the Peffery Way is given Core Path status, then the Highland Council will be able to remove all obstructions on the remaining section of path that has not yet been constructed.

Next steps

Our plan for the remainder of 2023 involves two key elements: firstly, we will work with Highland Council to either negotiate an agreement or promote a second Path Order covering the Millnain Croft section. We also plan to improve the short section of the path at the Strathpeffer end where the width of the path is less than elsewhere. We have received funding for this work from the SRDP fund.

Volunteer days

We are delighted to continue having the support of Heather and Kevin Crockett who continue to organise our volunteer days for us. These days are essential for keeping the path in a good useable condition. Heather and Kevin continue to organise more volunteer days, so please keep an eye out for emails, Facebook page messages, etc. for details.

Once again, we would like to say thanks to everyone who has supported us throughout the year. It really is appreciated by us all.

(N.B. The accounts of the PWA can be viewed on our website – www.pefferywayassociation.scot.)

The accounts for the latest year, to November 2022, have already been approved and registered with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR).

Ron McAulay (Chair) and Ian Searle (Treasurer)

June 2023.