ERCS Virtual AGM 2025
Minutes of the virtual fifth AGM (draft)
Held on Wednesday 08 October 2025, 6 - 7pm

Present: 34 members (online via zoom)

Trustees: Lloyd Austin - Chair, Julie Christie – Treasurer, Deborah Long – Vice-chair, Kevin Dunion, Jim Jarvie, Clare Symonds, Campbell Gemmell, Tom Ballantine.

Ordinary members: there were 26 ordinary members including Associates.

Apologies: there were apologies from Pippa Scott - Trustee and 8 ordinary members including Associates.

Staff: Shivali Fifield, Jack Withy, Ben Christman, Zoë Molloy.

AGM Business

1. Chair's welcome

Lloyd welcomed everyone to the fifth AGM of the Environmental Rights Centre for Scotland and confirmed that the meeting was quorate (10% of membership). ERCS now has 204 members compared with 161 last year.

Lloyd introduced the trustees and staff and thanked them for another very productive year.

2. Approval of minutes 9 October 2024

The minutes for the virtual fourth AGM held on 9 October 2024 (paper 1) were approved with no amendments.

3. Annual report & financial statements for the period ended 31 March 2025

- Chair's Report

Lloyd noted the main achievements of the year which are detailed in the Trustees' Report accompanying the financial statements. He highlighted the Birthday party, celebrating 5 years of ERCS, and noted key developments including the launch of the Advocacy Manifesto, appointment of Kate Smith, ERCS's second in - house solicitor, and the establishment of the law firm ERCS Legal Ltd.

Lloyd thanked everyone who has made these achievements possible including ERCS's funders, the staff team and fellow trustees.

- Treasurer's summary

Julie gave a summary of ERCS's finances for the accounting period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, as outlined in paper 2.

As in previous years, the charity's finances only required an independent examination, rather than a full audit.

In summary, ERCS's finances for this accounting period were income £440,205, expenditure £367,484 and operating surplus £72,721.

ERCS had unrestricted reserves of £338,196 which was higher than the minimum set by the trustees to hold unrestricted reserves equal to three months' salary costs. This has been intentional to support organisation growth and the establishment of the law firm ERCS Legal Ltd.

However, much of ERCS's current grant funding from trusts and foundations is due to end next financial year. The board approved a new fundraising strategy in May 2025, which details how ERCS will seek to diversify income with a mixed portfolio of grants from trusts and foundations, proactive engagement with members and supporters for individual donations and legacies, as well as legal aid income with the law firm.

- Consideration of the annual accounts 2024 - 25

Julie asked if members had any questions on the accounts as presented in paper 3.

There were no direct questions for Julie, but members commented in the Zoom chat thanking Julie for her work and it was agreed that participants had given the accounts their consideration.

Julie advised the meeting that the accounts would be approved by the Board directly following the AGM.

The approved accounts will be sent to the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) and will also be available on ERCS's website.

4. Presentation on ERCS's work during this period and the launch of ERCS Legal Ltd

- Shivali Fifield, chief officer

Shivali gave a presentation on ERCS's activities during the reporting period, key achievements and strategic objectives moving forward.

Lloyd thanked the staff team for their work and asked if there were any questions from members. There were no direct questions for Shivali, but members commented in the Zoom chat congratulating the ERCS team.

- Ben Christman, legal director / principal solicitor

Ben gave a summary of the advice service's work and the establishment of the law firm ERCS Legal Ltd.

Two members asked questions about the charging policy for the law firm. Ben explained that the majority of cases would be funded by legal aid with some 'no win no fee' cases in line with the firm's case selection criteria.

A member asked about who the advice service enquiries come from and Ben signposted to the Advice Service Snapshot which has this information as well as the nature of enquiries. Another member asked if the law firm has professional indemnity insurance and Ben confirmed that this was the case.

There were no further questions.

5. Election of trustees

Lloyd introduced paper 5 which gives the register of trustees and schedule of retirement; and ERCS's Constitution clauses on election, appointment, retiral and re-election.

- Scottish Environment LINK's nominated trustees

Scottish Environment LINK's Governance Group have nominated Deborah Long and Aedán Smith to continue to be their representatives on the ERCS Board.

Kevin Dunion and Grainne McGinn were introduced and both said a few words about their backgrounds and reasons for standing for election. Lloyd said some words on Jamie Whittle's behalf who was unable to attend.

- Schedule of retirement

As Clare Symonds, Campbell Gemmell and Juliet Harris will retire and vacate office, no other trustees need to stand for re-election at the 2025 AGM.

Lloyd thanked these Trustees for their support and all their work for ERCS.

- Co – option of trustees

Kevin Dunion was co-opted to the Board to be a charity trustee in November 2024. He will retire from office as a co-opted trustee and has been nominated by the Board to stand for election.

- Member nominations of new trustees

The Board have received two member nominations for new trustees from Jamie Whittle and Grainne McGinn. In line with ERCS protocol on electing trustees and tenure, these applications have been approved by the Board.

- Resolution for the election of trustees

Paper 4 provides short biographies and statements from the nominations seeking election at the 2025 AGM.

Members were asked to vote for each person individually via the zoom voting application.

The resolution to elect Kevin Dunion, Grainne McGinn and Jamie Whittle was passed by a majority vote with no votes against.

Lloyd encouraged any participants who wanted to become a trustee in the future to contact Shivali for a discussion on what the role entails and how best to get involved at an early stage.

The appointment of office bearers will be decided at the Board meeting directly following the AGM.

6. Thanks and close

There being no further business, the Annual General Meeting closed at 6:50pm.