



GGT AGM 2025

Minutes of the AGM of the Glendale Gateway Trust on Tuesday 28 November 2025

Meeting started 7pm at the Cheviot Centre

Present Trustees: Rose Lovett, Jean Davidson, Pippa Ross, Russell Walsh, John Davidson

Members: Kath Lohfink, Linda Witson, Susan Coulson, Bob Burston, Alison Hilton, Barbara Ratcliffe, Patrick Sheard, Paulette Sheard, Tom Johnson, Frank Mansfield, Jenny Pollock, Rachel Sinton, Michael Allmey

Guests: Tom Burston, Chrys Murphy, Leon Shaw, Kath Maley

Staff: Lesley Robson, Sue Mitchell, Gill Lowes, Gemma Dresser, Gillian Gordon, Cindy Crossman, Ailsa Woods, Jan Brian

Welcome to all in attendance from Chair of the Board Rose Lovett.

Apologies for absence: Kate Allport, David & Margaret Buckle, Brenda Chesham, Peter W. Davies, Ruth Dickinson, Stella Harkins, Margaret Wood, Rob Marriner, Linda Murray, Jon Radgick, Pam Ratcliffe, David & Stella Tennet

- 1. Minutes of the previous AGM:** The minutes were agreed as a true record of the meeting held on Tuesday 17th September 2024. There was one minor typo which Chair asks for correction and will now ask members and trustees to accept this as the true record of the meeting.
- 2. Matters arising:** There were no matters arising from the minutes.
- 3. Appointment of Trustees:**

Chair Rose advised the need to step down, as she has been a trustee for 3 years. Stated she would be happy and honoured to be re-elected if that be the wish. Jean proposed and Russell seconded.

Pippa Ross is a co-opted trustee and needed to be formally voted in. Chair invited Pippa to introduce herself. Rose proposed Pippa and Jean seconded the vote.

Advised that John Davidson is willing to stand as trustee. Rose invited John to introduce himself. Frank Mansfield proposed and Pippa seconded the vote.

- 4. Declarations of Interest:** There were none recorded.



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5. Presentation of the Accounts:

- a. Report of the independent Examiners – no items of concern. The accounts were presented by Sue Mitchell, and have been signed by Rose, Chair.
- b. Appointment and fixing of the remuneration of the independent examiners – It was agreed that we would reappoint the accounts J H Greenwood at the same level of fees as this year. Proposer Rose (chair), seconded by Jean.

A copy of the signed financial statements is available for viewing on the GGT website.

6. Report from the chair of Trustees:

- a. Announcements

Rose updated everyone GGT staff as follows.

The CEO, Karen Froggatt, resigned in October. On behalf of the Trust, I would like to thank Karen for broadening the range of activities and services within the Cheviot Centre and the Glendale area, all helping to benefit the Glendale Community. In particular, the Trust thanks Karen for her role in being one of the main exponents of the Rural Advocacy programme. We wish Karen well in her future endeavours.

Announcement of the appointment of the new Operations Manager: Lesley Robson

The Trust has appointed Lesley Robson to the new position of Operations Manager.

Lesley comes to the Trust with a wealth of experience in community development, high level relationship building and strategic operational management.

She spent close to two decades working in foreign policy in post-war Iraq at a senior government level, supporting Iraq's efforts to rejoin the international community and rebuild diplomatic relations.

She returned home to Northumberland in 2016, then spent 8 years as Community Manager for the RNLI in Northumberland & the North East - managing over 750 volunteers, a complex buildings portfolio of over 40 lifeboat stations and shops and drove fundraising campaigns in collaboration with local communities and external stakeholders.



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Having spent the last 2 years as our Rural Advocate at the GGT, she now steps into the role of Operations Manager, bringing together her knowledge of rural issues, project development and regional partnerships with the Trust and we wish her all the best in her new role.

Thanked Trustees who have moved on since the last AGM:

With regard to trustees who have moved on since the last AGM, the Trust would like to thank Becci Murray, the former Chair for her professionalism and support, throughout and now; Siobhan Younger & Anthea Wood, as well for their support and continued valued role and presence at the Cheviot Centre, and finally, to thank Martin Kelso for his help as Treasurer.

Thanked the Staff:

On behalf of the trustees, I would like to thank the staff for their hard work and dedication. Advised that they will later present what they have been doing this past year.

Thanked the Trust's partners, who support and work with the Trust:

Thank you to our partners who support and work with the Trust, including the Northumberland County Council, Wooler Parish Council, Thriving Together, Northumberland Log Bank and other regional and national funding organisations.

b. Brief of Year

It's been another busy year for the GGT. We have continued to strengthen our partnerships, locally and regionally, to advance new initiatives and raise our rural voice through regional conversations and forums.

We have expanded the Rural Advocacy project and through our Rural Aspirations project we have helped over 60 people gain confidence to enter the employment market, education or training.

Gemma and the team continue to ensure the Cheviot Centre offers a thriving hub in which to visit, engage or work and we continuously look to improve what we offer the community with new activities and groups.

Working with our partners at NCC, we disburse the log bank and the food bank to support people most in need throughout Glendale.



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We have undertaken a huge push on compliance and as social landlord, we are constantly upgrading and maintaining our property to offer safe and affordable accommodation for local people.

Together we all seek to help, serve, develop and engage in activities that benefit the community of Glendale.

c. Post Office

Saving the Wooler Post Office from closure was the highlight of last year and is an achievement for which the Trust is immensely proud. It has meant that an active business and social hub in the community continues and more social housing is available as the postmaster's dwelling is converted into a family home.

Karen, working closely with the Cllr Mark Mather, and the with the help of local partners & funders, including WPC, Barmoor, and various members of the community, all managed to save the Post Office from closure.

Unfortunately, our postmasters, Ali and Shi Shi, are unable to be here this evening and send their apologies. However, they have taken time out of their busy day to provide you with this video.

Guest Speaker #1

A video was shown in which Gill interviewed Ali. They talked about how wonderful the reception from the community had been since they took over, as well as new services and retail offerings being added.

Guest Speaker #2

Mark Mather

Mark talked about his work alongside GGT and updated everyone on some current projects and recent successes.

7. Update on the work of GGT

Lesley gave an update on the Rural Advocacy work over the past year. She then introduced the new Rural Advocacy team. Ailsa Woods is the new Rural Advocate and Jan Brian is Rural Support Officer. She wished them well in their new roles.



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Each GGT staff member provided updates on the variety and the extensive work of the charity, including their achievements from the past year.

Gillian Gordon – Rural Aspirations Employability Officer

Cindy Crossman – Property Officer

Gemma Dresser – Cheviot Centre and Events Co-ordinator

Gillian Lowes – Communications & Projects Officer

Lesley gave an overall summary.

These presentations slides are available on the GGT website.

Special Recognition

Lesley presented Cindy with an award from the Royal Humane Society. This was in relation to Cindy's prompt action to perform life saving medical action on a gentleman who collapsed in the foyer of The Cheviot Centre earlier in the year. A letter of thanks from his family was also read out.

Guest Speaker #3:

Tom Burston

Since growing up in Wooler, Tom has been a development worker in various guises for most of his professional career. Firstly, overseas for 12 years, working in remote rural areas such as northern Pakistan and Sudan. He then came back to the UK and works here in Northumberland, for a European Union project called LEADER. For the last three years he has been a partner on a sheep and beef farm and lives in Alwinton. Tom gave an inspiring talk centred around community, what it means and the importance of it.

8. Questions from members and guests

Rose invited questions...



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a. **Bob Burston**

Mr Bob Burston – ex Trustee and friend of GGT/ex St. Mary's Church.Vicar & ex Wooler resident for many years.

Mr Burston wanted to pay tribute and give recognition to Duncan Davidson, who sadly passed away recently. Mr Davidson generously aided the biggest investment in the Trust's history which went towards financing the purchase of the land that is now Butler Court, which was then sold to Home Housing. GGT kept the High Street shop frontage for conversion to shops and flats. Mr Davidson's kind loan was interest free. For this, the Wooler community is eternally grateful to Mr Davidson and it forms part of his legacy in the area. Everyone applauded this recognition and the Trust appreciated Mr Burston's kind words and desire to have this noted.

Mr Burston recommends that The Trust should send a letter to the family of the late Duncan Davidson, thanking him for his generous financial support when the GGT was first starting out.

- b. **Bob Burston** reminded everyone of the GGT's approaching 30th anniversary in 2026 – cause for celebration.
- c. **Jenny Pollock** Why has the role of CEO been replaced with Operations Manager. RL stated the latter better reflected the role which largely involves management. High-level strategies have in the past and will continue in the future, to happen with the staff and trustees coming together to discuss new directions, focus and strategies.
- d. **Jenny Pollock** asked how many of the trustees were appointed or elected; RL stated they were all elected.
- e. **Patrick Sheard** asked how many Trustees were there. RL stated 5 as Mark Haworth is stepping down due to him pursuing a position with the Govt's Ethics Committee whereby he cannot have affiliation/membership with charities and other orgs. Mentioned drive to recruit more trustees.

Rose thanked everyone and invited all for tea and cake downstairs.

Meeting closed at 8.40pm

Signed:

Date: