

Rainbow Turtle Charity
Chair's Report: April 2020 – March 2021

1. Introduction

Welcome to the AGM for the Rainbow Turtle charity. As you know Rainbow Turtle consists of two arms, the charity whose aim is to educate about and promote Fair Trade in Renfrewshire, and the shop Rainbow Turtle Trading Ltd., which is a business and runs the shop in Gauze St which also supports and promotes Fair Trade.

This AGM is for the charity and fulfils part of our requirements as a charity. As such we shall cover the charity's activities and finances and, for interest, there will be short account of the shop's progress.

This report covers April 2020 to the end of March 2021.

2. Trustees and Members

The charity is required to have a board of trustees. At present we have six trustees and we are always looking for more, so if you are interested in becoming a trustee please let us know.

Trustees at 1st April 2020

Colum Scriven
Gillian Henry (Treasurer)
Steph Mayo
Kitty McEachen
Chris Johnstone (chair)

Trustees at 31st March 2021

Colum Scriven
Gillian Henry (treasurer)
Steph Mayo
Chris Johnstone (chair)
Anne MacInnes
Annie Hay
Marianne Sermanni

Kitty McEachen resigned as a trustee at the 2020 AGM. She had been a trustee since 2017 and we thank her for all her time, effort and goodwill in promoting and working for Rainbow Turtle.

Marianne Sermanni, Anne MacInnes and Annie Hay were elected to the board of trustees at the AGM.

Due to covid the trustee meeting in March 21 was cancelled but we communicated by email, all subsequent meetings were held as zoom meetings.

3. Charity Finances

Despite covid, Rainbow Turtle is fairly stable financially with regular income from members and irregular, but currently substantial, income, from the Council via Local Partnership funding. I am pleased to say that the bank balance is healthy at present. The finance report is attached and our treasurer, Gillian Henry, will talk to it separately.

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4. RT Charity and Education

The charity's activities were severely limited by covid, and we had no access to the office in the Methodist halls for the full year. Gemma, our education officer as well as shop manager, mainly worked from home and we communicated by email, WhatsApp and zoom calls. Gemma was able to work in the shop at times when it was open.

However, we did put some educational material online and enhanced our online presence. Gemma posted regular blogs and newsletter to keep Fair Trade prominent. We had online meetings for volunteers and Colum restarted the Rainbow Turtle podcast.

Unfortunately, Gemma handed in her resignation at the end of March. She will be sorely missed, and we all thanked her for invaluable input over the past few years.

We have good relations with the Scottish Fair Trade Forum. We made donations to them to help with producer visits and they helped us out with a financial donation following a collection during covid. We also made a donation to the Balmore Trust to help start up a Malawi project to produce briquettes. This project is both Fair Trade and green. We await a report on how it progresses.

We had a zoom meeting for the volunteers in august 2020. We acted upon the useful items that the volunteers highlighted, mainly about how the shop was running between the lockdowns.

We are looking to combine the two arms of Rainbow Turtle into a charitable trading organisation called a SCIO (Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation) that will simplify the structure. A separate paper in the AGM covers this in more depth.

5. Rainbow Turtle Shop

The shop has been open intermittently during covid with adaptations including timed pick-ups for when the shop was closed. In addition, we allowed customers to refill their eco cleaning products.

The volunteers have been very stoical in the face of the pandemic, and I am very grateful for all their input and understanding.

The shop was supported by covid grants from council/government and this has left us in a stronger financial situation.

Unfortunately, Gemma resigned for pastures new at the end of the March 2021. She is missed but we have been very fortunate to appoint Elise Kelly as her replacement.

6. Summary

2020/21 has been a tough year for everyone and very disruptive for Rainbow Turtle. However, I think we have come out of it stronger and better than before. Our finances are in a good position. We have new, exciting staff who are raring to go and a solid base of interested, caring volunteers.

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Thank you all for help this past year and we all look forward to working together in the coming years to promote Fair Trade and a fairer, greener world.

Chris Johnstone
Chair
25 Sept 2021