



## MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF GAIRLOCH & DISTRICT HERITAGE COMPANY LTD

29 June 2023

Gairloch Museum. 4.30pm.

Present Roy Macintyre; Pauline Butler; Jeremy Fenton; Neil Lebeter; Peter Lynn; Barbara Mackenzie; Irene Macintyre; Anne MacLennan; Jean Ross; Allan Templeton.

Apologies Guy Seaman; Eilidh Smith; Scott Steedman; Ben Thomas; Rachael Thomas.

1. Conflicts of Interest

No potential conflict of interest was declared with respect to the Agenda.

2. Minutes of the Board meeting of 17 May

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 May were agreed to be a correct record, proposed by Pete and seconded by Irene. Matters arising:

- i) Anna, our Gaelic Development Officer, is intending to come to Gairloch to review our resources on 10 August and will then be able to report to the next Board meeting as to her plans.
- ii) Duncan MacKenzie has yet to confirm that he is available for our AGM. Irene and Roy will endeavour to finalise the arrangements, including venue.

3. Curator recruitment update

The schedule circulated had been adhered to and the advert placed both online on various museum and cultural websites, through social media and in GDT. The deadline for applications is 30 June. Those invited to interview will be informed by 14 July, with interviews scheduled for 21 July.

4. Financial report

Pete had circulated his report and figures for income and expenditure January-May. Our income is well below that of last year and, even though we are beginning to see the benefits of the solar panels (all grant payments now received), our running costs are likely to be in deficit by year end unless income increases considerably and savings can be made. We recognise that there will always be a tension between commercial realities and our objectives to share our heritage to benefit our communities. Discussion ranged from ways to generate additional income short term, to exploring the possibilities of a funded post to help us with longer-term strategic financial planning, to include attracting endowments and legacies. There appears, currently, to be no community benefit arising from renewable energy developments in the area. Neil will look at MGS grants available and Roy will contact HIE to see what support might be possible. A meeting will be convened of the Finance Group, plus Neil and Eilidh, in the near future to focus on the specific issue of financial sustainability. He has been informed by our accountants of the new tax requirements regarding tips given to staff in the café.

5. Organisational policies and plans

a) To meet Accreditation standards, we require a Board approved Access policy and plan. A draft had been circulated which strengthens our explicit commitment to broaden access as part of the Equality, diversity and inclusion policy. This was endorsed by the Board. We have a detailed Accessibility Guide on our website already and intellectual and sensory access was integral in all planning for the layout and

displays in our galleries, trialled and tested by community groups since we have opened. The issue of the acoustics, owing to the nature of the building, is on this year's Action Plan, and research on how best to improve the situation is underway.

b) The model that Guy offered as the basis for our Health & Safety and Emergencies Policy and Guidance has been amended to be consistent with the terminology and format of our other policies and has been circulated. It provides a starting point for a suite of risk assessments across the various locations and aspects of Museum operations (including manual handling and COSHH) which the FoH team are working on. The 'responsible persons' have still to be appointed. It was agreed that documentation must be fully relevant to our museum circumstances and staff (employees and volunteers) be trained/advised accordingly.

c) Following a meeting of the Forward Planning group on 16 June, a draft update of progress to date towards our medium term goals, and the priorities for the Action Plan 2023-2024 had been circulated. We will use social media/GDT to try to find some-one with some experience, who would undertake an environmental audit for us to make explicit what is implicit or taken for granted. There are still some aspects of the Action Plan which need to be clarified, and, as always, the unexpected will arise. The Board endorsed the Forward Plan as a working document.

d) The report of the meeting held on 27 January to consider a longer-term Sustainability Strategy had been circulated. It was agreed that many of the points would be integral to the discussions planned as a Finance Group focus.

#### 6. Curatorial update

Rachael's report covering Collections and Projects will be circulated. She has confirmed that we were on the list for the Axiell Collections data transfer programme. More than 100 of our objects can now be seen on the Smartify website <https://app.smartify.org/venues/gairloch-museum-nmxst> The next step, to create location-centred 'trails', available online, which will encourage visitors to explore particular aspects of a settlement's story, is underway. This is being supported by Jim and a Smartify consultant. Rachel has initiated her own project to research local cruck buildings, which is of interest to HES and to the benefit of the Museum.

#### 7. Events and outreach

Eilidh provided a list of forthcoming events and activities and has indicated where Board/volunteer support is needed. Offers were made!

Sarah provided an update on the 'Whatever the Weather' sessions and plans for the autumn/winter. The Board agreed that she look to recruit a Duke of Edinburgh Award student to help with the activities, which Neil can help with.

#### 8. Exhibitions

The report of the Exhibition Planning Group meeting held on 15 June had been circulated. It is recognised that not all exhibitions can, or should, be expected to generate income. Several Board members hoped that future exhibitions could showcase objects from the Collection. Allan welcomes further suggestions. A meeting to plan the 2024 anniversary exhibition is to be held tomorrow.

#### 9. Operational matters

The summary Report circulated covered updates on Front of House/Retail and Marketing. There were no further matters arising from these.

Jean had prepared and circulated a detailed breakdown of café numbers and income for the past two months. Staffing continues to be stretched and, on occasion, will limit what is offered. Customer feedback continues to be very positive.

Premises: Museum cleaning is currently being undertaken by FoH staff as part of their employment.

Roy reported that the joinery work has been undertaken and that the solar panels project will be completed once the electrics and data cable for the monitor are installed, planned for 5 July.

There are several queries to address about routine maintenance and functions, for example of the

battery back-up (or not) of the emergency lighting, and who is now undertaking these tasks. Roy will discuss these issues with Guy, so that staff know who they can call on for assistance and advice when required.

10. Any Other Business

- i) Roy reported that, at last, the five additional rocks are now in place in the Outdoor Museum.
- ii) The Laide Chapel sign is also now, at last, in place. Jean will send a photo and caption for Facebook. Consideration needs to be given as to how best to spend the residual funds.
- iii) It was agreed that, on a trial basis, the Activity Room could be used by staff for a late afternoon, weekly 'Thought for the Day' session.
- iv) Pauline has met the director of a play which is to be staged as part of the Edinburgh Fringe in August. 'The curious case of Osgood Mackenzie' is based on her research. She offered him our Facebook publicity and hopes to persuade him to bring it to Gairloch/Poolewe!

11. Date of next meeting

The next Board meeting is scheduled for Thursday 24 August at 4.30pm.

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 6.25pm.