

Curator's Report

1.5 weeks of AL taken

Roundhouse Funding Update

Awards have been secured from the Communities Regeneration Fund, HES and the MGS Innovation Fund. The final pending grant is NLHF. Once that decision is received, we will be in a position to request permission to start!

We have also received a clarified / expanded condition from the Roads Department in relation to our planning application. We need to install a second dropped kerb in addition to the existing one. The new dropped kerb will be from the side access path. I have added this additional cost to the NLHF budget, which should cover this unexpected expense.

Roundhouse Publicity and Press

Following Highland Council's announcement of the Communities Regeneration Fund grant for the roundhouse, we have received several press requests to feature the project. These include BBC Scotland, Gairloch & District Times, and the West Highland Free Press. The West Highland Free Press also featured an article on our successful SocAnts grant.

Archaeology

Tom Gardner led the sample processing for the post-excavation reporting on Sunday 3 and Monday 4 May. The two days of sample processing were joined by Lucy, Jeremy and myself. This work is supported by the SocAnts grant and will result in radiocarbon dates and micromorphology analysis, which will feed into the DSRs and post-excavation reports, as well as into the design for the roundhouse.

We have publicised receipt of the SocAnts grant. Tom is keen to embark on the proposed three-year archaeology project and return to dig further in Roundhouse 8, so the plan is still to apply for additional funding to cover this.

Schools and Young People

The S1 SMART group visited again to learn about museum careers. They will engage with us again and book in during the roundhouse build.

I also met with Susan MacDonald, the new Developing the Young Workforce Coordinator, to discuss how we can work together and develop links with the high

school. She is interested in Gaelic events and possibly setting up a Young Curators Club, if there is interest from the school.

Health and Wellbeing Programme

I am currently filling in for Sarah and Anne and I will continue running the group until the new person takes up post.

I led the recruitment process, and we held two interviews. We have appointed Andi Neate, who will start on 1 October on a six-month contract. If future funding is successful, the programme will continue on a seasonal contract basis for Andi, with Anne and I covering the three months during the summer. The group takes a break during July and August. Andi will also lead the monthly care home sessions year-round.

This arrangement means that we can fit in with Andi's other commitments, reduce the fundraising burden for the programme, and still keep the programme going throughout the year.

Andi is a great candidate and was recommended by Sarah. She already knows the group and is liked by them, having run musical sessions for them previously. Alongside her musical talent, she brings other creative interests, including pottery, and will be a strong asset to the team. Allan is excited that she can run our annual Christmas Carols!

Outreach

I visited the Kinlochewe intergenerational group and prepared an outreach session on "The Post", bringing museum objects to their village hall.

We have signed a loan agreement with the group, allowing them to regularly borrow loan objects from us for their monthly sessions.

Digital Interpretation

The image kiosk is nearing completion and will be installed soon. We will be able to upload and edit images and text ourselves. Craig gave me a demonstration and joined a call to talk through the back end, how it works, and the hardware specifications.

Acquisitions

Recent acquisitions include: spinning wheel and peat cutter.

Sector Support

I prepared a visit for volunteers from Groam House Museum, who were interested in collections management and how our store is set up. I gave them a store tour, discussed packing of objects, gave a gallery tour, and answered a range of questions.

Access Equipment: Phonak Headsets

As part of the last Whatever the Weather grant, we had funding to invest in a loop system. Sarah and I researched a portable loop system called a Phonak Roger On, which works with a neckloop receiver, transmitter and headphones, and can connect to hearing aids.

We have used it successfully with the Wednesdays group. Two participants have said that it makes a massive difference.

We have since been contacted by the convener of the GALE dementia-friendly group, who wanted to know more about the Phonak system. We are now considering whether we could make the devices available for hire, possibly free of charge for non-profit groups and events.

Turf Grants

I submitted an Expression of Interest to the Headley Trust for the turf course in Iceland and an application to the Traditional Arts and Culture Fund, working with Archaeobuild's bid writer.

Rimmer Trust

The Rimmer Trust has agreed to fund the cost of a new GIS-compliant display case, which is £5,904. The Trustees have also agreed to continue their payments of £5,000 per year for both 2028 and 2029, giving the museum a contribution of £10,000 towards the costs associated with the planned Masterpiece loan.

Genealogy Research

I had a session with Dorothy to help me identify and understand more about the genealogy research information we hold. We identified material that would be useful to set up for independent research access in the library. This is a project I would like to progress this year.

Geology Timeline

I have been working with Roy on the geology timeline, looking through and commenting on the interpretation text.

We have secured £5,000 in total towards the project. Costs have increased since the original quote, so an additional application has been submitted to the Ward Discretionary Fund for £1,000.

There remains an outstanding amount of approximately £1,600, which we will publish as a private donations / fundraising appeal.