



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

8 July 2025

Gairloch Museum. 4.30pm.

Present Allan Templeton; Corinna Annetts; Pauline Butler; Liz Forrest; Peter Lynn; Irene Macintyre; Roy Macintyre; Anne MacLennan; Gordon McIntosh; Jean Ross; Guy Seaman; Ell Sinclair; Scott Steedman (Zoom); Ben Thomas.

Apologies Deborah Keith; Eilidh Smith.

1. Conflicts of Interest

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

2. Minutes of the Board meeting of 7 May

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 May were agreed to be a correct record, proposed by Roy and seconded by Anne. Matters arising:

- i) Gordon and Corinna had a very useful and supportive meeting with an officer from HIE recently. He was particularly interested in the Roundhouse project. There may well be further developments.
- ii) Three faulty external lights will be replaced.
- iii) Gordon has made contact with a Gaelic department officer in Nova Scotia who has offered to help us make heritage contacts.

3. Report of the Executive Group

The Executive Group met on 27 May. Notes from the meeting have been circulated to inform of progress on action points.

4. Financial report

Pete's monitoring reports on our budget forecast and trading in 2025 to date have been circulated. He clarified that, despite the forthcoming reduction in the commercial tariff, our current contract for solar panel export with Scottish Power is as good as we are likely to find.

The first draft of our 2024 Accounts has been received. Various corrections and amendments have been proposed: in particular we would like to put the emphasis in the headline financial outcome statements on operational profitability rather than the inevitable 'deficit' result of depreciation.

5. Financial Strategy Group (FSG)

Minutes of the meeting of 27 May have been circulated. A further meeting was held today (9 July) which focussed on the recruitment of a Marketing Officer. Applications are currently being assessed, with interviews scheduled for 30 July.

The next meeting of the FSG will consider membership issues.

6. Curator's report

Corinna's report has been circulated. It covered: Grants; Exhibition Development; Preventive Conservation; Gaelic; Other points.

Further to this:

- i) Corinna explained the opportunity afforded by a generous donation for exhibition development to commission a touchscreen kiosk for visitors to view images from our photographic archive and postcard collections and from the 'new museum' building project. It was suggested there could be a retail outcome also.
- ii) Maree Todd MP has, in the letter following her meeting with Corinna, Sarah and Eilidh, (she was impressed!), indicated some possible funding sources for our community work. The Scottish Government has also announced a new Museum Futures' fund.
- iii) Scott suggested that there might be some benefits to Gairloch Museum linking with other archaeological digs in the north of Scotland, with respect to promotion of our respective activities and knowledge-sharing.

7. Forward Planning

The draft Forward Plan for 2025-2028 was endorsed, recognising that it is a working document. Seven priority areas have been identified, covering both 'core and continuing' functions and developments. Most of these are already being progressed and we are determined to be realistic in what additional activities can be taken on, interesting though they might be. The 'Advocacy' aspect acknowledges our role in continuing to be a leader in the independent museum sector. It was suggested we could take advantage, through social media channels, of some of the very positive comments in the Visitors' Book.

8. Roundhouse Project

Corinna has spent most of her time recently working on the detailed planning of the project, meeting groups and individuals who will be stakeholders, and writing funding submissions. Allan commended her excellent leadership and management of these complex aspects. Following tender submissions, Arc Architects has been contracted to prepare the application for Planning Consents. A community Open Day to share ideas is scheduled for Tuesday 15 July.

In response to a query, Corinna confirmed that a maintenance plan has been built in for the first 5 years and that training is envisaged for a core of local craftspeople.

9. Events and Outreach

Ell's updated record of events recently undertaken and planned was circulated. Further to this she noted:

- our presence at the Gairloch Gathering, supported by the UHI STEM Coordinator, had generated a lot of interest, both in our current tattie programme and in the Roundhouse project
- two guided walks in Poolewe, one in collaboration with the Highlife Highland Ranger, are planned for the last week in July
- store tours will be starting in August
- the winter talks programme is almost finalised, with a broad range of topics, starting in September.

10. Exhibitions

Notes from the most recent meeting, 23 June, have been circulated. The just-opened exhibition by the Royal Scottish Society of Painters in Watercolour is outstanding and we are exceedingly grateful to our volunteer curators (Fiona and Alison) for their superb hanging of the paintings in the two galleries.

11. 'Ever Greener' task force

The notes of the meeting of 16 May have been circulated. Regular monthly outdoor maintenance sessions have continued with a core group of committed volunteers.

It was noted that the regular volunteer who cuts the Outdoor Museum area will be out of action soon for the rest of the season, so offers to mow and strim would be welcome.

The next meeting, to be arranged after the community Open Day, will consider the potential for interpretive displays related to environmental matters and possible activities related to the roundhouse project.

12. Operational matters

- i) Front of House & Retail: Eilidh has provided an update report on recent business. Allan expressed his ongoing concerns at the pressures on her and Barbara, which we eventually hope to mitigate by the appointment of additional employees.
- ii) Café: Jean reported continuing staffing problems with Saturday opening.
As indicated in the Maintenance issues report, there are concerns at the lack of stability of the café chairs. Repairs are being undertaken where possible, but Noreen is now looking at the costs of purchasing chairs which better meet our operational requirements.
It was noted that the Open Day in September will need café staffing.
- iii) Facilities and Health & Safety: Barbara has circulated an updated list of current building issues. Guy indicated those which are now being resolved. Internal lights seem to fail quite often.
The once-a-month collection for paper and cardboard is proving inadequate. Pete will explore if it is possible, and at what cost, to organise a fortnightly bin-emptying.

13. Any Other Business

- i) Allan recommended that Alastair Stephen, who is already involved with both the Events Group and the Roundhouse planning, be co-opted to the Board. He will be invited to our next meeting.
- ii) Anne enquired as to when the acoustic panels for the Activity Room are likely to be installed. Pete has this planned for next month, before the Wednesday sessions resume.

14. Summary of Action Points

- **Pete** to convey to our accountants a request to amend the headline statement ref. profitability.
- **FSG** members to compile a shortlist for the Marketing Officer post, and conduct interviews on 30 July.
- **Pauline** to amend one point in the Forward Plan to specify that increased income will be committed to appointing a further Front of House employee.
- **Allan** to inform Alastair Stephens of his co-option onto the Board, and **Pauline** to provide him with access to Board documentation.
- **Building Maintenance Group** to continue to progress the list of repairs needed, including lighting failures and to the external render.
- **Pete** to explore if a fortnightly paper/cardboard bin collection is feasible.
- **Pete** to install the acoustic panels in the Activity Room in August.

15. Dates of next meetings

The next Executive meeting will take place on 29 July.

The next full Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 10 September at 4.30pm.

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 5.45pm.