



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

8 June 2022

Gairloch Museum. 4.30pm.

Present (In person) Roy Macintyre; Karen Buchanan; Pauline Butler; Sally Cameron; Peter Lynn; Irene Macintyre; Anne MacLennan; Jean Ross; Jen Shaw; Eilidh Smith; Allan Templeton.
(Zoom) Jeremy Fenton; Barbara Mackenzie; Ben Thomas.

Apologies Liz Forrest; Guy Seaman.

Sally was welcomed to her first Board meeting.

1. Conflicts of Interest

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

2. Minutes of the Board meeting of 27 April

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 April were agreed to be a correct record, proposed by Anne and seconded by Allan. Matters arising:

- i) The final tranche of the Art Fund grant has now been received.
- ii) An Access Guide, based on the VisitScotland template, is now on our website.

3. Financial report

- i) The P&L Report for 1 January to end May 2022 had been circulated. Roy noted that May's visitor and retail income is considerably higher than for the comparable period last year. Given our multiple and complex grant successes, expenditure ongoing will need to be carefully allocated to the appropriate award.
- ii) Roy has been assured by RBS that they will now release the balance from the Chapel of Sand account, though the money has not yet materialised.

4. Curator's Report

Karen's report has been circulated. It covered Building and grounds; Collections; Interpretation and displays; Professional development & training; Projects; Miscellaneous. The minutes of the Interpretation Group meeting of 24 May have also been circulated.

Matter arising:

The Board fully supports Karen's submitting an application to become a Board member of MGS. At present they have no representative from the Highlands, nor anyone currently working in a small, independent museum.

5. Forward Planning 2022-2025

Draft documents related to planning for 2022-2023 and the medium term had been circulated.

The group working on this had met twice in person in recent weeks, with considerable inter-meeting correspondence and discussion. Roy and Irene suggested some additional points for including in the review of our current context, which highlighted the advantages of our situation

and some concerns. In general, this was accepted as a valid overview. The Board agreed both the adoption of the three cross-cutting challenges which are proposed ('Ever greener'; 'Onwards and upwards', and 'Expanding horizons') and the draft outline of the 2022-2023 Action Plan, with suggested amendments. There are one or two areas to finalise in this, and some detail is still required for the new developments which are proposed for the current year. Pauline will re-circulate the working document as soon as she has further information.

It is intended to establish three new focus groups (environmental sustainability; personnel; financial sustainability) to plan for the longer-term. Those present indicated their interests.

6. Solar panels project

Guy had circulated a summary of the progress to date and likely schedule of construction. As yet, we have no firm quotations from the preferred contractor so cannot award the contract. The funding is available until March 2023 but it is hoped that the panels will be installed long before then.

7. Events & Outreach

Jen reported that she has had a busy time with school visits, which have been well received. She is also concentrating on the organisation of the 'Make Room for Stories' festival, offering a very wide range of events, formal and informal. The Gairloch Gathering on 2 July will be a useful opportunity for promotion to a wider audience. Planning is progressing on enhancing our work with GAMS and we are exploring how best to contribute to the 'Prescribe Culture' collaboration between MHH and social care providers. Potential speakers are being contacted for the winter talks series.

8. Exhibitions

The report of the Exhibitions Group meeting of 12 May had been circulated. Allan explained some of the ideas being considered for our 5 Year celebration of the "New Museum" in 2024, which might well include both an invitation exhibition with prizes/sponsorship and a multi-artist focus on 'Our fragile land'. We recognise the need for at least some of our exhibitions to be income-generating.

9. Operational matters

- i) Front of House: Eilidh reported that communications between the various staff members were working well, and IT support continues to be very responsive. Exploring the best way to encourage donations is part of the work envisaged within the MGS Recovery Fund project.
- ii) Quality Assurance: New name badges and lanyards are to be funded through this same fund. VisitScotland's suggestions for visits by FoH staff to other organisations are being assessed for their potential benefits.
- iii) Marketing: the report that was circulated demonstrates that we have broadened our promotional activities. Pre-arranged visits by American and Belgian tours had worked well.
- iv) Retail: Irene reported on new stockists (woollen goods and ceramics) and the success of the headband kit and sales of wool. As European and American visitors begin to return, there have been pleasing sales of higher-end goods. Compliments have been received on the selection of books.
- v) Café: Sally detailed the current staffing arrangements, now that our new deputy manager has started, and ongoing issues as café assistants come and go. We are unlikely to be able to recruit sufficient staff for 6 day opening this season. Sally is discussing with Gairloch High School whether we can offer training places under the 'Developing the young workforce' scheme.

The increasing cost of supplies has necessitated two price reviews already. Various external/private booking possibilities are being explored and costed, and Christmas is already being

thought about! It was agreed that signage was needed at the entrance to assure visitors that the café (as well as the shop and downstairs exhibition area) could be accessed without paying for Museum entry, but A-boards were not thought suitable.

- vi) Premises: it was noted that the fire doors may need adjusting to close better, and that the ventilation in the shop needs to be altered in the same way as had been successfully implemented in the library.
- vii) Outdoor Museum: Roy reported that one stone is still awaited before he contracts for the installation of the new features.

10. Any Other Business

Roy has been assured that the accounts are being worked on and should be available soon for checking.

11. Date of next meeting

The date for the next Board meeting is Wednesday, 20 July at 4.30pm.

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 6.15pm.