



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

11 September 2024
Gairloch Museum. 4.30pm.

Present Allan Templeton; Corinna Annetts; Pauline Butler; Peter Lynn; Irene Macintyre; Roy Macintyre; Anne MacLennan; Anna MacQuarrie (Zoom); Jean Ross; Eilidh Smith; Ben Thomas.

Apologies Gordon McIntosh; Guy Seaman.

1. Conflicts of Interest

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

2. Minutes of the Board meeting of 31 July

The minutes of the meeting held on 31 July were agreed to be a correct record, proposed by Anne and seconded by Jean. Arrangements are in hand for the AGM on 28 October. Papers will be sent out the first week of October as per the schedule in our Articles.

3. Report of the Executive Group

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

- i) The Financial Strategy group met again on the afternoon of 11 September. A strategy document is near completion and will then be presented for Board consideration.
- ii) After discussion, the Board agreed that the Museum will no longer use Twitter as a social media platform and our volunteers will concentrate on maximising the potential of Google and Art Fund promotion.
- iii) Two of the three new signs are now installed, with thanks to Kenny Smith in particular for his efforts. Simpsons have informed Roy that they do not have the capacity to install the third sign, so he is meeting a possible alternative contractor on Friday.
- iv) As the papers circulated for this meeting indicate, there is now a broad range of active working groups, together with ad hoc task groups, delivering on Museum priorities and sustaining more routine activities, which seem to be working well. Several of these include volunteer members with considerable expertise. Their invaluable contributions are greatly appreciated.

4. Financial report

Pete's report on our income and expenditure breakdown to the end of August has been circulated. Azets has assured him that the final version of the Accounts will be with us next week. The Board asked Pete to convey to the accountants the concern of the Board that, once again, the delivery of the final Accounts is very close to the OSCR & Companies House deadline and for inclusion in the distribution of AGM papers, which causes us anxiety.

We are pleased that, at long last, we have a contract for Smart Export Guarantee with Scottish Power. Pete was thanked for resolving the unexpected VAT issues, owing to a long-standing glitch in the EPOS to Xero data transfer. The payback of the shortfall will impact on our reserves.

We still await confirmation of the setting up of the short-term interest account, for reasons unknown.

5. Curator's report

Corinna's report has been circulated. It covered: New Acquisitions; Grants; Accreditation; Gaelic Conversation Group; Asbestos Management Plan; Exhibitions; Environmental Monitoring; Events and Projects. Further to this:

- i) The Board endorsed the Asbestos Management Plan. Corinna has now secured a lower quotation for a professional survey but will first check that we are required to have such external inspection of the relevant collections items (particularly the gas masks). She has undertaken a related one day training (as has Jean).
- ii) The Board agreed with Corinna's recommendation that, although interesting objects in their own right, the offer of a radio and transmitter equipment would be declined as, other than local ownership, they do not have evident relevance to the heritage and display of our collections area.
- iii) Considerable preparation had been required for the online Accreditation interview with the MGS Officer on 21 August. We understand that she has recommended that Gairloch Museum be re-awarded full accreditation status. This should be confirmed by the end of September after due consideration by the UK panel. Allan thanked Corinna, Pauline and Rachael (for her considerable input into updating the curatorial policies and plans) for their contributions to this outcome.

6. Gaelic Development

Anna's report on her recent involvement has been circulated. Further to that, she expressed her delight at the Gaelic elements in the current "Ulaidhean/Treasures" exhibition, noticed when she visited in August.

7. Events and Outreach

Sarah's report on recent WWW and schools-related activities has been circulated, as has the report from the Events Group meeting of 6 August. A funding application is to be made to Age Scotland imminently to request support for our Wednesday sessions ongoing.

8. Exhibitions

The report from the EPG meeting of 5 August has been circulated. There was a further meeting on 10 September. We understand that delivery of the Tapestry Exhibition, scheduled for early October opening in the ground floor gallery, is likely to be delayed. Alison Dunlop has offered to fill the gap, however long it is, with a display some of her paintings.

Serious planning is now underway to liaise with RSA with respect to the celebrations of their 200th anniversary in 2026 and our 50th anniversary in 2027.

9. Membership

The membership has remained fairly consistent at around 520 throughout 2024 to date. Pauline will include those who have not re-joined in the send-out of invitations to the AGM.

10. Environmental Sustainability

Notes from the meeting of the 'Ever Greener' task force on 19 August have been circulated. Some initial clearing was undertaken in the recent (brief) spell of good weather in collaboration with the volunteers who maintain the archaeology trail. Pampas grass removal, ditch clearance and gorse cutting back are the autumn priorities and willing and able volunteers will be sought to help with this.

11. Operational matters

- i) Front of House: notes had been circulated from Eilidh, with reference to admissions figures by category. The opening times proposed for the winter and early spring periods were agreed.
- ii) Café: Minutes of the most recent café meeting (29 August) have been circulated. At the next meeting in October, detailed planning will be undertaken to prepare for Sally's standing down as café manager. The strong reputation and good working relationships she has established make her a hard act to follow. Jean was thanked for her continued input and support to café operations.
- iii) Retail: Further to the information in her report, Irene highlighted that there has been quite a change in the pattern of retail purchases over this season. Sales of alcohol and soap products have reduced considerably, but woollen goods and books sales, always good, have attracted particularly strong custom.

- iv) Facilities: other than the Archive Store, Allan reported that all downstairs floors have now been resealed to limit the concrete dust. Guy is dealing with snaggings as they occur. We recognise that we will need to plan ahead to ensure the external façade is maintained to the highest standard. Eilidh and Barbara will review relevant Risk Assessments after this first season of implementation.

12. Any Other Business

- i) A donation has been offered to convert the WWII Defences & Incidents poster in the Three Wars Gallery into an interactive display, as was originally intended but for which there was insufficient funding in the project exhibition budget. The work to progress this is underway.
- ii) As no negotiations have taken place, the current rental/service provisions with WHC continue for a further year. Roy is in contact with the University's solicitor to revise the lease conditions for the longer term. The details need to be lodged in Museum records.
- iii) Eilidh has a session booked with ExpoNorth to seek their advice on improving our internal IT networking and records management.
- iv) Estelle is working on a submission, deadline end October, for grant funding from the National Heritage Lottery for a project which will focus on recording local history through oral testimonies. She is interested to have input from Board members as to the gaps that could be filled, and of potential project partners.
- v) Rachael is collecting local by-names and would welcome information.
- vi) The four behind-the-scenes tours on Doors Open Day, 7 September, were very well supported and we thank Rachael for leading them.

13. Summary of Action Points

- **Financial Strategy Group** to finalise and circulate their proposal document
- **Roy** to negotiate fixing of the third sign with an appropriate contractor
- **Pete** to convey our concerns to Azets that the completion of our 2023 Accounts is later than agreed
- **Corinna** will check within the sector to ascertain whether or not to commission an external asbestos survey
- **Pauline** to send AGM invites both to current and recently lapsed members
- When work party dates are planned (likely at short notice), the wider volunteer force will be invited to come and help with the weeding and clearing work required around the building (**Pauline**)
- **Eilidh and Barbara** to review risk assessments ongoing
- **Everyone** to contribute their thoughts to Corinna on a) oral history gaps b) by-names for forthcoming project planning
- **Roy** to copy Corinna/Pauline in to the correspondence with respect to lease negotiations with WHC.

14. Dates of next meetings

The next full Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 23 October at 4.30pm; the Executive Group will meet on 1 October at 2.15pm.

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