



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

9 November 2022
Gairloch Museum. 4.30pm.

Present (In person) Roy Macintyre; Karen Buchanan; Pauline Butler; Sally Cameron; Jeremy Fenton; Neil Lebeter; Peter Lynn; Irene Macintyre; Anne MacLennan; Guy Seaman; Eilidh Smith; Allan Templeton; Ben Thomas. (Zoom) Barbara Mackenzie.

Apologies Jean Ross; Jen Shaw.

Neil was welcomed to the Board, following his election at the AGM.

1. Conflicts of Interest

No potential conflict of interest was declared with respect to the Agenda. The annual return of the related declaration forms (as advised by our solicitor) is underway.

2. Minutes of the Board meeting of 14 September

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 September were agreed to be a correct record, proposed by Allan and seconded by Pete. There were no matters arising.

3. Company governance

- i) The AGM, held on 24 October, had gone smoothly. Proxy votes in good measure ensured we were quorate. The suggestion was made that our constitution should be amended to reduce the 10% membership quorum requirements. Pauline outlined what that would involve should anyone wish to undertake the task of amending our Articles of Association and convening an E.G.M. If we use Gairloch Community Hall again, we should use their sound equipment to improve audibility.
- ii) All retiring Company officers were re-appointed to their respective roles and it was agreed that Scott Steedman be asked to continue as a co-opted member.
We would welcome representation from younger members of the community and Pauline will contact Gairloch High School to see if there is interest.
- iii) The membership of our current working groups was reviewed and revised. Guy will activate the Premises group; Ben and Guy will liaise to establish the 'Ever Greener' group, which could have a very broad impact going forward and Scott will be asked if he is still able and willing to lead the group looking at the Museum's vital longer-term financial/strategic sustainability.

4. Financial report

Pete had circulated a summary of our current financial situation, the usual profit and loss statements for September and October and a new format for actual v. budget expenditure. Café wages can now be separated out, though, as yet, the overheads for the café are not. Further refinements were proposed, including the splitting of exhibition and events income and expenditure and clear identification of funds which are reserved for specific purposes. Pete and Eilidh will see what adjustments can be made to the EPOS allocations.

We are fortunate in that our electricity contract continues until May 2023, and we would hope, by then, to be seeing the benefit of the solar panels. Pete is enquiring of SSE what our options are then likely to be. We have registered for a government supported utilities procurement scheme, although it is currently closed. We are also soon due for a Calor Gas refill - cost unknown as yet. Given the current financial climate, we anticipate that the next two years will see discretionary spend much reduced, which will impact considerably on our income. Irene is already reviewing the shop stock with this in mind.

5. Solar panels project

MGS is allowing us to apply for a Capital Resilience Top-up grant to cover the additional £15K quoted for the costs of the solar panel installation since our submission last year. The deadline is tight - 25 November. Karen will provide Guy and Pete with the MGS log in details, which will give access to the original application information. The programme to install the panels has been much delayed (materials unavailable, technical specs not yet finalised and building control decisions still awaited) so there is some concern that the deadline of 31 March will not be met. Guy is doing all he can to expedite matters.

Development of the associated interpretation for the panel(s) in the Museum gallery has yet to be progressed with Pixelstag. Karen will put Guy in touch with the company so that this also can be taken forward.

6. Curator's Report

Karen's report has been circulated. It covered Buildings and grounds; Collections; Interpretation and displays; Professional development & training; Projects and miscellaneous.

Matters arising:

- i) Following the success of the submission to the SCA Twenty Treasures competition, there will be further publicity about Dr. John Mackenzie in a forthcoming 'Who Do You Think You Are' (genealogy magazine linked to the successful BBC TV series).
- ii) The interpretation work on panels near the Gairloch burial ground that Karen is undertaking to support GAD (Gairloch Area Development) should help signpost visitors to the Museum.
- iii) A Gaelic Development Officer, working with a partnership of four museums, has now been appointed, to start early January. It is to be a 2 year, 0.5 f.t.e, post, working to the terms and conditions of employment of GDHC and reporting directly to Karen. Bòrd na Gàidhlig has been very flexible and responsive in supporting the appointment.
- iv) It was agreed that we do not have the capacity to collaborate with the Community Land Scotland's touring project within their timescales.
- v) Karen explained how it is proposed to deliver the 'Winter Wednesdays' aspects of the Health and Wellbeing project, now that Sarah Wright has been appointed to replace Jen until the end of March. Sally is providing venue and refreshments. All costs anticipated are within the grant budget. Karen will enquire whether it is possible to have flexibility on spending within the various expenditure categories. There will be careful recording and evaluation, qualitative and quantitative, of the experience which will help inform a further application to the same funders for a programme, ongoing but extended, for another year.
- vi) There was a wide-ranging but inconclusive discussion as to how best to resolve the issues arising from our current dependence on grant-funded posts to lead our comprehensive range of events and activities ongoing.
- vii) We have an ambitious programme of exhibitions for the next two years and current staff resources (employees and volunteers) are stretched to support this. There is funding available, via a long-standing donation from Mark Feeny, which will cover a 0.2f.t.e post until October 2024. Discussion was whether this should be a staff post, with all the on-cost and staff management implications, or on a consultancy basis. The Board favoured making this a

fixed term contract staff post. Details for the job profile and recruitment will be discussed and progressed by Karen, Pauline and Allan.

ix) Discussion on Karen's proposal to appoint an assistant curator to enable her to deal with the backlog of work on the archives was deferred.

7. Pauline shared a message from Jen Shaw, who has been our Events Coordinator since March. She expressed her thanks for all the support offered and emphasised how much she has enjoyed her involvement with the Museum.

8. Date of next meeting

Business was not completed so the meeting was adjourned, to resume on Wednesday 30 November at 4.30pm.

The meeting ended at 6.25pm.