



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

17 May 2023

Gairloch Museum. 4.30pm.

<u>Present</u>	(In person) Roy Macintyre; Pauline Butler; Sally Cameron; Jeremy Fenton; Peter Lynn; Irene Macintyre; Anne MacLennan; Jean Ross; Eilidh Smith; Ben Thomas. (Zoom) Anna MacQuarrie; Scott Steadman; Rachael Thomas.
<u>Apologies</u>	Neil Lebeter; Barbara Mackenzie; Guy Seaman; Allan Templeton.

At the start of the meeting, Jack McCruden, our marketing intern, gave a short presentation as to the potential of Tiktok in reaching new audiences, particularly young adults, and promoting the Museum through creative and engaging short videos. His ideas to develop this approach on an experimental basis will be welcomed.

1. Conflicts of Interest

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

2. Minutes of the Board meeting of 8 March

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 March were agreed to be a correct record, proposed by Allan (by email) and seconded by Irene. Matter arising:

Sarah Wright was appointed to the Wellbeing through Reminiscence Coordinator post through due process.

3. Co-opted director

Karen's contract as our Curator ended on 16 May, following her resignation. Our Articles require an employee to be a director on the Board. Eilidh Smith, Front-of-House Coordinator, was nominated to be co-opted and her appointment approved. Pauline will deal with the resulting Companies House admin.

4. Recruitment issues

- i) Pauline explained the policy-based, well-practised procedures for preparing to advertise for a new curator. To remain an accredited museum, we need to employ an appropriately qualified professional. All Board members will be circulated with drafts for comment and amendment at each stage of the process, to be reviewed and finalised by the Personnel Group, with Neil co-opted as a Museum professional with recent, relevant experience.
- ii) Café staff: Sally updated the Board with the current situation: two additional team members have now been recruited, though further staffing would provide more flexibility and help ensure opening to plan.
- iii) There has been no response as yet to our advert for a cleaner. It was agreed to broaden the remit to 'Museum assistant', with scope for additional hours in other roles. In the meantime, Irene is undertaking most of the cleaning, for which we are very grateful. We recognise though that this cannot be sustained into the summer.

5. Financial report

Pete had circulated figures for income and expenditure January-April. As expected, there is a substantial deficit month-by-month at the moment, and it is evident that visitor numbers and spend are lower than last year - not surprisingly, given the cost-of-living realities. Peter will revise the projections for the rest of the year in the light of the current situation, bearing in mind the distortions of income and expenditure of grants for projects, and present these to the next Finance Group meeting. Discussion on how additional income might be generated included: the need to undertake fundraising and to reduce costs wherever possible; how to attract more coach traffic (though bookings have proved unreliable); further efforts to encourage local hotels to promote the Museum to their guests ...

6. Organisational updates

Further to the ratification of those general policies presented to the last meeting, Pauline reported that:

- Sarah, our Wellbeing Coordinator, has reviewed and updated some details of the Safeguarding Policy (Section 2). Having worked extensively with vulnerable adults, she has offered to be our Safeguarding Lead for as long as she is in post, for which we are very grateful
- Health and Safety policies have now been sourced from other museums and will be used, following discussion with the Front-of-House team members, to inform the further development of the (Section 3) Health, Safety and Emergencies draft policy, which Guy has prepared from his experience in industry
- the amended version of the Environmental Sustainability policy (Section 4) was ratified
- the Finance Group will review the current Financial Reserves policy (Section 8).

Some responses had been received to Pauline's request to all to review the 2022-23 Forward Plan overview and Action Plan. Typo dates have been corrected, some comments have been amended, and the unforeseen outreach activity of creating a community tapestry panel for Inverness Castle had been added. She will now bring together known developments and intentions for the 2023-24 Forward Plan, following discussion with colleagues, with the aim of convening the Planning Review group within the next month.

5. Acting Curator's Report

Rachael had circulated her report, which included Collections; Projects; Miscellaneous. Following explanation and discussion it was agreed that Rachael:

- i) progress the conservation work proposed on the foghorn and outdoor pulpit, once she had ascertained the costs
- ii) confirm that we accept the quotation from Axiell, other than the training fee, in order to put Gairloch Museum onto their waiting list for their Collections data upgrade service.

Further matter arising: unexpectedly, three Finlay Mackinnon World War I service medals had come up for auction on eBay last month. It was not possible to negotiate purchase as bidding had already begun. We do not have substantial reserve funds for such ad-hoc opportunities and were outbid in the auction. Rachael has written to the seller to request that he notify the buyer of our interest in the medals, but, to date, no response has been received.

6. Project updates

- i) Gaelic development: Anna reported on the organisational arrangements that were in place to manage the project and explained that, given our curatorial circumstances, she had been working more with the other museums involved at the moment. An online meeting is scheduled for tomorrow, 18 May, with Rachael and Neil which should help to clarify her objectives and planning for Gairloch. Now that the Partnership Agreement has been found, the administration of invoices has been clarified and implemented, and Pauline has written to the curator at the Highland Museum of Childhood to assure the partnership that we have both the commitment and the capacity to fulfil our obligations to the project.

- ii) Solar panels: Guy had circulated a report to update on project progress, and grant expenditure and payment. Delivery of the interpretation panel is imminent.

7. Events and outreach

- i) Sarah had circulated a report on the current Wellbeing project 'Whatever the Weather' and is now completing the required feedback and expenditure details for the first year's grant. The Board agreed to her request to explore further how the acoustics in the Activity room can be improved, together with the costs, so we can consider making an application for funding support. Peter has previous experience of such an undertaking and Eilidh understands that soundproofing work was implemented for the new Contin Hall.
- ii) Emma's update on the broader Events programme was circulated, which included her plans for activities to link with the forthcoming Waterline exhibition and for the summer holiday period. There has been a great deal of positive feedback for the Ceildih evenings and school visit activities.

8. Exhibitions

The report of the Exhibition Planning Group meeting held on 4 May had been circulated. The remarkable, current art exhibition by Dan Murray has attracted highly favourable feedback and visits to the Museum from many local young people.

Sally has agreed to prepare canapes for the preview of Sheena Graham's exhibition in July.

9. Operational matters

The summary Report circulated covered updates on Front of House, Marketing and Retail. There were no further matters arising from these.

Café: Minutes of the Café Group meeting of 4 May had been circulated. Sally added that a group of S1 pupils is booked to visit soon for a day on work experience and she hopes that we can continue to offer similar opportunities - maybe helping to recruit staff for the future! She appreciated the advertising now in place outside.

Premises: Pauline read an update from Guy. Eilidh explained the electrical faults that are being dealt with. Further to this: the lift had been serviced, Sally had dealt with minor repairs in the café and undertaken some deep-cleaning, and Roy has ideas as to how to resolve the long-standing issues with the vents in the retail area.

11. Any Other Business

Roy has asked Duncan MacKenzie to be the speaker at our AGM, scheduled for 30 October. The topic is likely to be related to his recent research at Inverlael, an Ullapool Museum project, undertaken with funding support from HES.

12. Date of next meeting

The next Board meeting is scheduled for Thursday 29 June at 4.30pm.

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