



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

31 July 2024

Gairloch Museum. 4.30pm.

Present Allan Templeton; Corinna Annetts; Pauline Butler; Peter Lynn; Irene Macintyre; Roy Macintyre; Anne MacLennan; Anna MacQuarrie; Gordon McIntosh; Jean Ross; Guy Seaman; Eilidh Smith; Ben Thomas.

Apologies Scott Steedman.

1. Conflicts of Interest

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

2. Minutes of the Board meeting of 12 June

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 June were agreed to be a correct record, proposed by Jean and seconded by Guy. There were no matters arising.

3. Report of the Executive Group

The Executive Group met on 16 July. Notes from the meeting have been circulated to inform of progress on action points. Matters arising:

- i) A further meeting has been held to consider issues of financial sustainability, discussing the priorities for a financial strategy (to focus on footfall, membership, donations and legacies) and the remit for a potential fund-raising post. The developed proposals will be brought to the next Executive Group meeting and then the Board.
- ii) With a view to the AGM and potential elections to the Board, Pauline advised that, although we aim to have representation from across the breadth of our collections area, we do not currently have any members from Kinlochewe/Torrison or Wester Loch Ewe.

4. Financial report

Pete's report on our income and expenditure breakdown to the end of June has been circulated. This shows an improved position compared with 2023 and he anticipates that the July figures will continue this trend. As well as the £40K now in a fixed term interest-paying bond, he is about to open a 30 day notice account. We still await the first full draft of our 2023 accounts from Azets.

He continues to pursue his efforts to secure 'export' payments for the surplus electricity from our solar panels but has been thwarted by slow responses from SSEN.

Roy advised that we check when the next lease review is due with our UHI, North, West and Hebrides tenants, and that we ensure that the greatly increased costs of providing utilities is taken into account in the negotiation.

5. Curator's report

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

- i) Now that the news is public, we are delighted to celebrate our successful application for an MGS Development Grant. 'Pushing the Boundaries' will enable us to appoint to a 2 year Events and Outreach Coordinator post. We will be advertising from the end of August and interviewing in October, with a view to the successful applicant being in post by the end of the year. Pauline was thanked for her input.

ii) We are doing all we can to progress the proposed endowment donation from the USA through the necessary financial processes.

6. Gaelic Development

Anna gave a verbal update on her engagement currently with the four museums in the cluster. In these final months of the post, she will be working on ensuring that there are legacy materials available.

She is planning a visit to Gairloch in August, details to be confirmed, but possibly to coincide with the visit here of Bria Mason, our newly appointed Gaelic conversation convener.

Anna welcomed the arrival of the new Museum signage, with its significant Gaelic content.

7. Events and Outreach

The report of the Events Group meeting of 18 June has been circulated. The MGS award will contribute significantly to what can be planned for our 2027 anniversary year. There are many activities organised through these summer months, including very welcome sessions for youngsters.

8. Exhibitions

The report from the EPG meeting of 18 June has been circulated. The current SSA exhibition is arousing considerable interest and comment, with visitors, (including the artists themselves), coming specifically to see it.

9. Membership

The membership group has met recently. It is difficult to analyse the fluctuations in membership through the data available but it is thought that more members are being retained year-on-year.

Pauline could provide historic information from her membership files for AGM notice purposes, should this be helpful. The group intends to provide updates on membership to the Board more routinely.

10. Environmental Sustainability

Notes from the meeting of the 'Ever Greener' task force on 2 July have been circulated. Having worked through the MHH checklist, there seem to be few practical improvements that can be made to make our premises and operations more sustainable, given our location. We must all continue with our current sustainable practices and should publicise our activities and commitment more widely. Anna offered to provide us with details about resources that could inform our consideration of projects to develop a focus on heritage-focussed environmental sustainability for the Outdoor Museum.

11. Operational matters

- i) Front of House: notes had been circulated from Eilidh, with reference to admissions figures by category. There was some discussion as to the lower figures for family and child entries this year.
- ii) Café: Minutes of the most recent café meeting (20 June) have been circulated. The café income continues to balance positively against expenditure and the operations and staffing arrangements are working well.
- iii) Retail: Irene reported that books and knitwear are attracting particularly good sales currently. She is phasing out the purchase of products sold in plastic containers.
- iv) Facilities: Guy has reviewed relevant Risk Assessments, given work undertaken. Most downstairs floors have now been resealed. He noted that the batteries of several external emergency lights seem to have failed and will cost replacements.
Roy has asked David Fingland to give advice on the mounting of the new external signage when he is in the area next week.

12. Any Other Business

- i) Roy has revised his intentions for the creation of a geology timeline. Following discussion with his professional contacts, rather than basing it entirely within the grounds, he is scoping the possibility of a timeline trail, 4.5km long, into the village and along to the youth hostel.

This will require information boards en route - which would need to be agreed by HC planners - and success with grant applications. He will discuss the costs of suitable durable panels with David Fingland when he is here.

- ii) Eilidh will circulate proposals for Museum opening/closing from November to March for consideration by the Executive Group and final decision at the next Board meeting. There will be group activities on Wednesdays and Fridays ongoing.

13. Summary of Action Points

- **Roy and Pete** to check review date of college lease and revise utility element of the contract
- **Corinna and Pauline** to prepare recruitment pack for advertising the Events & Outreach Coordinator role
- **Anna** to provide information on resources related to Gaelic activities to support our 'Ever Greener' agenda
- **Eilidh** to circulate considerations for November-March opening 2024-2025
- **Guy** to price batteries for external emergency lighting
- **Roy** to develop proposals and costings for a Geology timeline trail.

14. Dates of next meetings

The next full Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 11 September at 4.30pm; the Executive Group will meet on 27 August.

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 5.40pm.