



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

7 January 2026
Gairloch Museum. 4.30pm.

Present Allan Templeton; Corinna Annetts; Pauline Butler; Liz Forrest (Zoom); Peter Lynn; Irene Macintyre; Roy Macintyre; Sadie Paige; Jean Ross; Guy Seaman; Eilidh Smith (Zoom); Scott Steedman (Zoom); Ben Thomas (Zoom).

Apologies Anne MacLennan; Gordon McIntosh; Ell Sinclair; Alastair Stephen.

Allan wished everyone a 'happy New Year', and welcomed Sadie to the meeting.

1. Conflicts of Interest
No potential conflict of interest was declared with respect to the Agenda.
2. Minutes of the Board meeting of 12 November 2025
The minutes of the meeting held on 12 November were agreed to be a correct record, proposed by Jean and seconded by Pete. Matter arising:
The Volunteers Lunch in December in *Am Bàrd* had been a very successful occasion and the Board records its thanks to everyone who cooked and served.
3. Report of the Executive Group
The Executive Group met on 10 December. Notes from the meeting have been circulated to inform of progress on action points. The efforts by everyone required to ensure verification of identity for Companies House in good time to submit the trading company confirmation was appreciated.
4. Financial report
Pete's monitoring reports on our budget forecast and trading to end of 2025 have been circulated. The shop and café generated a good income in December, though admissions were low. Owing to an MGS grant instalment now to be paid in January rather than the originally expected December, our trading surplus for 2025 will be below forecast. The considerable capital expenditure on café chairs and equipment means that we will not be liable for Corporation Tax for 2025. We have received notification of a 13% increase in our rateable value from April 2026. We receive 80% 'charities' rebate and are also still on transitional arrangements. Pete requested that he be informed of any known significant changes to routine income or expenditure as he finalises the projected budgets for the coming year. He is already aware of the need to allocate considerably more funds to the regulatory gas, electricity and equipment testing, and for buildings maintenance more generally.
5. Financial Strategy Group
There has been no meeting of the group since the last Board meeting. One is scheduled for 20 January. Marketing activity is ongoing and we hope to be able to take advantage of a 'micro-grant' scheme (MGS) of max. £3000 for 'quick win' income-generating or footfall increasing activities. Following application, Gairloch Museum has been awarded a place at VisitScotland Connect, the

flagship travel trade event which will be held in Glasgow in April. Helen and Eilidh will attend. Allan reminded us that, as part of our Financial Sustainability Strategy, we are still looking for substantial donations to our Education and Endowment Funds.

Roy will investigate how Gairloch Museum can join the list of approved charities that can be supported by the Co-op.

6. Curator's report

Corinna's report has been circulated. It covered: Gaelic; Acquisitions; Grants; Roundhouse project update; IT issues; AV set-up; Permanent displays. Further to this:

- i) Corinna's draft response on behalf of the Museum to the *ScotGov Guidance on Areas of Linguistic Significance for Gaelic* was endorsed as an excellent summary of the potential of a cultural gap in practice in Wester Ross.
- ii) We welcome the decision by Highland Council not to require a traffic survey as part of our application for planning for the Roundhouse. NLHF are meeting on 21 January to consider our grant application. If the submission for funding for report writing on the roundhouse surveys already undertaken is successful, Tom Gardner is hoping to produce the first one by the end of April.
- iii) We recognise that our IT capacity is stretched and that staff time is being diverted to resolve issues arising. Scott will investigate whether there are grant possibilities to support expenditure on IT resilience and cyber security and recommended that we contact other museums to see if they have found ways to manage issues that arise. HIE might also be able to advise.
- iv) There has been good coverage (end December), by the BBC and various newspapers, of the plans for a geological walking trail in Gairloch. Roy has commitments of £5K to support the costs but still awaits the necessary permissions from Highland Council.

7. Events and Outreach

Ell's updated record of events recently undertaken and planned (from November to March) was circulated. There is a very diverse range of activities. This week's talk on sea eagles has, however, had to be postponed because of the adverse weather for travelling.

8. Exhibitions

Notes from the most recent EPG meeting, 18 November, with the updates on planning undertaken, have been circulated. Corinna has successfully investigated how to include additional content in the film theatre offering.

9. 'Ever Greener' task force

The notes from the meeting held on 13 November, which include further information about the proposed future plantings, have been circulated. Pauline is in contact with Kevin Ball at Inverewe to progress the intended signage for the Gaelic Alphabet Tree Trail. There is a need for more capacious tree guards to give the saplings space to grow and a request to this effect will be posted on social media in the near future. Both Sadie and Guy offered materials.

Pete has the information from consultancy advice on battery storage (not likely to be cost-effective) and the installation of air-source units (looking more worthwhile, if grants for installation can be secured).

10. Operational matters

- i) Front of House: Eilidh provided a verbal report on the end-of-year admission total (9592), which is similar to that of the previous two years (2023 - 9515, 2024 - 9691).
- ii) Various issues relating to grounds maintenance and car-parking have been raised by a local resident. Allan has had a meeting to try to resolve the concerns and the situation will be monitored.

- iii) Retail: Irene has written to Allan to tender her resignation from the Board and associated groups and from her responsibilities for the retail operation, with effect on 28 February. On behalf of us all, Allan thanked Irene for her immense and incalculable contribution to so many aspects of the Museum over the years, most particularly for the ethos and development of the shop offer.
- iv) Café: Jean has met with Noreen to review 2025's operations, which have proved highly successful. The Christmas lunches worked well, though it is proposed that evening festive meals might be worth trialling next year. Providing external catering has been a development which looks to have interesting potential. Planning is underway for the months ahead, with a further prosecco breakfast, a bingo evening and the introduction of a 'Pudding Club' before the full season starts. Staffing, as ever, will be critical, and Jean is working on the budgetary implications of having a regular Saturday opening, which will necessitate increased staffing.
- iv) Facilities and Health & Safety: Guy has been undertaking some internal remedial painting and there is a significant programme of statutory inspections to be undertaken. Babs and Eilidh are working through the review of risk assessments. Whilst Simpsons accept their responsibility to do the work, there is, as yet, no schedule for the repairs to the external render.

11. Any Other Business

Sadie has drafted a members' newsletter, and noted that since it doesn't include a call for donations, then perhaps there is an opportunity to launch a fund raising activity linked to the Roundhouse project, donations to be recognised by the planned 'ring floats'.

12. Summary of Action Points

- **Everyone** to inform Pete of any significant income or expenditure details which could impact on the budget preparations
- **Roy** to investigate how Gairloch Museum can join the list of approved charities that can be supported by the Co-op
- **Scott** to investigate possible grants to support our IT operations
- **Pete** to circulate the advice from the energy efficiency consultants, once it is received
- **Jean** to review café staffing requirements for the year ahead, with recommendations on wages and recruitment
- **Premises group** to schedule the requisite equipment checks.

13. Dates of next meetings

The next Executive meeting will take place on Thursday 12 February.

The next full Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 4 March at 4.30pm.

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 5.35 pm.