



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

14 September 2022
Gairloch Museum. 4.30pm.

Present (In person) Roy Macintyre; Karen Buchanan; Pauline Butler; Peter Lynn; Jean Ross; Eilidh Smith; Allan Templeton.
(Zoom) Anne MacLennan.

Apologies Jeremy Fenton; Liz Forrest; Irene Macintyre; Guy Seaman; Jen Shaw; Scott Steedman; Ben Thomas.

1. Conflicts of Interest

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

2. Minutes of the Board meeting of 27 July

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 July were agreed to be a correct record, proposed by Peter and seconded by Jean. There were no matters arising.

3. Financial report

- i) Roy's overview and the P&L Report for August 2022 had been circulated, as had notes from the meeting of the Finance Group on 9 August. Trading in August was marginally better than July but still less than in 2021. This is in line with other Highland heritage venues.
- ii) Terms of agreement for undertaking our accounts were signed with Azets on 9 August and they are doing their utmost to complete the work by the due date of 30 September. OSCR has been informed of the difficulties we have experienced through the year with Gallone Ltd. who took over PNL Accounting.
Audacia Ltd have been dealing with our payroll since August.
- iii) The rental to be paid by WHC has increased in line with the terms of the lease. Depending on upcoming utility costs, there may need to be discussion on the service charges.
- iv) We have received notification of a substantial increase in the cost of Calor Gas.
- v) Peter will present Board reports from now on; he is looking at the formats for doing this.

4. AGM 2022

Arrangements are now in hand for the AGM, which is scheduled for 24 October in Gairloch Community Hall. To ensure we are quorate, we will encourage those members unable to attend to appoint a proxy. Liz has confirmed her resignation from the Board and we acknowledge with gratitude her many years of contribution to our work.

5. Curator's Report

Karen's report has been circulated. It covered Collections; Interpretation and displays; Professional development & training; Projects.
Matters arising:

- i) Karen explained her thinking behind a possible grant application to the MGS Museums Development Fund for a backfill curator to undertake the role whilst she concentrates on dealing with the backlog of cataloguing the archive collection and undertakes the preparation related to the necessary replacement of our AdLib documentation system. Before an application is made, this should be discussed further to clarify how Museum needs might best be met.
- ii) Karen is delighted with the breadth of support that Sofie Bannister is able to give to the development and conservation of the collections.

5. Report from the Personnel (Forward Planning) Group

Notes from the second meeting of the Personnel Group (17 August) had been circulated. The group will now focus on how best to support our staff, both paid and volunteers, through training, development and review processes, with a programme for the winter months. Eilidh is working on a standard form to record staff training.

Jean will be exploring with the café staff how to mitigate their concerns about lone working. As our staff expands, we need to review some aspects of our contract details and employee guidance to a) recognise that we are a heritage charity, not a commercial business, and b) to clarify our sickness, holiday and maternity leave provision.

6. Solar panels project

In common with similar projects, our intended contractors are struggling to provide quotes for the materials required, given the ongoing difficulties of procurement. It seems likely that the costs will be higher than the estimates used for the grant application and adjustments may need to be made. MGS have been informed. The quotation for the interpretation has not changed.

7. Events & Outreach

Jen provided a powerpoint overview of the 10 day long 'Make Room for Stories' festival which came to a close last night. Karen reported on the extremely positive feedback that had been received from the diverse audiences, including all the schools from Applecross to Scoraig, and the contributors. All agreed that the Festival had been extremely worthwhile, whilst recognising the huge effort that had been needed to deliver such an ambitious programme. Several events will have a longer-term legacy, including *Aultbea Stories* and *Delving into Dixon*, and we are encouraged to look to maintain a *taigh ceilidh* tradition.

Jen, with Karen, will now work on the required evaluations and paperwork, and then concentrate on the aspects of her role that will engage GAMS and similar groups in Museum activities.

8. Exhibitions

The programme is working to plan, with a rapid transformation of the downstairs gallery now underway to host the Royal College of Physicians' exhibition on *Remote and Rural Remedies*.

9. Operational matters

- i) Front of House: Eilidh reported that there are no significant issues currently. The Museum will be closed on Monday 19 September as a mark of respect on the occasion of the state funeral of Queen Elizabeth II. Decisions will need to be taken soon as to our opening hours over the winter.
- ii) Marketing: Eilidh had circulated an updated report on marketing activities. She has had a welcome and productive session with Martin Hughes to begin discussion as to how the Museum and Inverewe might collaborate on promotional measures.

- iii) Retail: On behalf of Irene, Roy reported that September had brought a change in purchasing patterns, with more quality goods being sold. Wyvis Distillery has delivered some good quality advertising material.
- iv) Café: A meeting was convened on 19 August of Board members who have been particularly involved with the operation of the café at which Jean offered to liaise on a regular basis with the managers. She is analysing the income and expenditure, and spending blocks of time in the café. She is impressed with how Sally is building the capacity and confidence of her team members, with a view to their being able to work independently of her supervision. This bodes well for the future.
- v) Premises: no progress has been made yet either with the ventilators at the front of the building or the delivery of the geological stones for the Outdoor Museum. Karen is maintaining a record of all external work undertaken by volunteers.

10. Date of next meeting

There being no other business, the next Board meeting, post-AGM, is scheduled for Wednesday, 9 November at 4.30pm.

The meeting ended at 5.55pm.