



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

12 November 2025
Gairloch Museum. 4.30pm.

Present Allan Templeton; Corinna Annetts; Pauline Butler; Peter Lynn; Irene Macintyre; Roy Macintyre; Anne MacLennan; Jean Ross; Guy Seaman; Eilidh Smith; Alastair Stephen; Ben Thomas (Zoom).

Apologies Liz Forrest; Gordon McIntosh; Scott Steedman.

1. Conflicts of Interest

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

2. Election of Officers

As this is the first meeting since the AGM, our Articles require the appointment of the Board Chair, Vice-chair, Treasurer and Secretary. Roy Macintyre has decided to step down as Co-vice-chair. The other retiring Board officers were all endorsed to continue in their roles: Chair: Allan Templeton; Vice-chair: Jean Ross; Treasurer: Peter Lynn; Secretary: Pauline Butler.

Elected directors are working through the Companies House requirements to verify their identity. Pete and Pauline need to hold the personal codes to use for their related admin, the first being confirmation for the trading company account in December.

3. Minutes of the Board meeting of 10 September

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 September were agreed to be a correct record, proposed by Jean and seconded by Anne. There were no matters arising.

4. Report of the Executive Group

The Executive Group met on 30 September. Notes from the meeting have been circulated to inform of progress on action points. Matters arising:

- i) Allan explained the considerations taken into account by the Executive Group when discussing the potential availability of the redundant ATC building next door for purchase or rent. It is not yet advertised for sale. Should it be possible to lease it for the period of the roundhouse build, that would be a very useful project base, but otherwise, given our financial circumstances, we would not be in a position to buy or lease it for operational use. The Board agreed.
- ii) The AGM held on 27 October was quorate without needing to include the 23 proxy votes received. All arrangements had gone smoothly, the talk was well received and our thanks go to Am Bàrd for providing an excellent refreshment service.

5. Financial report

Pete's monitoring reports on our budget forecast and trading in 2025 to date have been circulated. September and October saw good visitor numbers and retail sales continue to hold firm. The Café continues to exceed expectations, which is pleasing as considerable capital expenditure on new chairs and replacement equipment has been necessary. It is noted that the projected spend on repairs and maintenance this year is higher than forecast.

6. Financial Strategy Group

Minutes of the meetings of 3 September and 10 November have been circulated. There was discussion on the proposed increases of both entrance and membership fees. The majority of those present endorsed the FGS recommendations, though recognising the reservations of some Board members. HES has to be informed of, and agree to, the intended increase, as it is more than the rise in inflation. One mitigation would be to have additional Open Days, not necessarily on a Saturday.

7. Curator's report

Corinna's report has been circulated. It covered: Gaelic; Acquisitions; Grants; Roundhouse project update. Further to this:

- i) Corinna reported that HES had acknowledged receipt of the Annual Monitoring Report which had been submitted recently. One outcome of this is the need to have a more formal Maintenance Plan. Eilidh, Barbara and Guy have started the preparatory work. Another is to commission an architect's report on the current condition of the building. Roy is waiting for an estimate from LDN architects as to the cost.
- ii) We await decisions from two grant applications and Highland Council Planning before being able to decide how best to progress the Roundhouse project. Queries from the Council are being dealt with promptly by the architects. The Board endorsed all Corinna has undertaken to date, which has been a considerable amount of work, and agreed that the project should continue to be a priority for her, whatever the outcomes of the current submissions, recognising that this will impact on her other responsibilities and tasks.
- iii) Other applications are being progressed, including for funding to complete formal reports on past Roundhouse excavations, for a masterpiece loan for a future exhibition, and to display the Blind Piper's chanter, currently at NMS.

8. Events and Outreach

Ell's updated record of events recently undertaken and planned (from September to January) was circulated. The Tattie Project, modest though the final harvest proved to be, concluded with an art-based session for the *Whatever the Weather Wednesday* group and a Lòn Gàidhlig lunch. The Spinning workshops that were part of the Open Doors Day offer were very popular and it is hoped that they can be repeated.

'Make Do and Mend' has now established an outpost in Torridon. We are pleased that Ell is meeting the project remit of 'Pushing the Boundaries'.

Sarah's report highlighted the success of the monthly visits to Isle View Care Home, Aultbea, and recent school sessions with primary schools for Maths Week and the High School's S1 class to learn about roundhouses.

9. Exhibitions

Notes from the most recent EPG meeting, 23 September, have been circulated. New ideas for future exhibitions are forthcoming.

10. 'Ever Greener' task force

Grounds maintenance has been undertaken every month by a committed team to support tree-planting, path clearing, tattie project work and weeding. At the next indoor meeting, (13 November), it is intended to progress plans to use the potato bed area to grow plants that were traditionally used for medicinal and dyeing purposes. The challenge will be to improve our deer deterrence measures.

11. Operational matters

- i) Front of House: Eilidh provided a verbal report on recent business. Visitor numbers for September and October were reassuring. Babs and Eilidh are now addressing a number of issues for which there has been no time through the season, and also others which arose from the Volunteer

Feedback Session on 4 November. Noreen has arrangements in hand for our Volunteers' Thank You lunch on 9 December.

- ii) Retail: our shop income this year has held up better than that of many other tourist-related outlets. New clothing and ceramic suppliers are being explored for 2026, and we hope for good 'Christmas' gift sales, given that the Museum and Am Bàrd will be open more often than in recent years.
- iii) Café: the new chairs have arrived. It is recognised that Saturday opening is key to further improving the Café's contribution to Museum profitability - staffing is the critical issue.
- iv) Facilities and Health & Safety: Despite several seemingly constructive meetings with Simpson's staff, there has been no action to undertake the long-awaited, necessary repairs to the external render. Roy and Guy are preparing a letter to put our concerns on record. Other repairs are being undertaken as quickly as possible, acknowledging the pressures on local contractors.

12. Any Other Business

Roy has now submitted OS-based maps for his advertising consent application to Highland Council for the proposed Geological Timeline and we await their decision.

13. Summary of Action Points

- **All elected directors** to finalise their identity verification with Companies House and give the codes to Pauline/Pete.
- **Financial Strategy Group** to inform HES of the proposed entry fee increases.
- **Eilidh, Barbara and Guy** to progress the writing of a formal Property Maintenance Plan.
- **Corinna** to prioritise progressing the Roundhouse project, contingent on the outcomes of the planning application and grant submission outcomes.
- **Roy and Guy** to write to Simpsons to press the urgency of the repairs to the external render.

14. Dates of next meetings

The next Executive meeting will take place on Wednesday, 10 December.

The next full Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, 7 January 2026 at 4.30pm.

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