



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

7 May 2025

Gairloch Museum. 4.30pm.

Present Allan Templeton; Corinna Annetts; Pauline Butler; Liz Forrest (Zoom); Peter Lynn; Irene Macintyre; Roy Macintyre; Anne MacLennan; Gordon McIntosh; Jean Ross; Ell Sinclair; Eilidh Smith.

Apologies Guy Seaman; 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 12 March

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

3. Report of the Executive Group

The Executive Group met on 29 April. Notes from the meeting have been circulated to inform of progress on action points.

4. Financial report

Pete's monitoring reports on our budget forecast and trading in 2025 to date have been circulated. Admissions and retail are not dissimilar to last year, with the café having improved turnover. The first of the two revenue grants from Highlife Highland has been paid. Pete will transfer some of the current account balance into the interest-bearing account.

5. Financial Strategy Group (FSG)

The group met on 7 May. The marketing strategy document has been agreed in principle and a list of potential individual donors is being compiled. Efforts are ongoing to secure funding to appoint a marketing professional. One generous commitment, for a 3 year period, has been agreed in principle, contingent on matched funding. This is likely to be from several smaller donations. To ensure a marketing campaign can begin to impact by 2026, the FSG wishes to make an appointment sooner rather than later. The Board therefore agreed to underwrite up to £5K of the funding required.

6. Curator's report

Corinna's report has been circulated. It covered: Grants; Exhibition Development; CPD; Gaelic; Other points. Further to this:

- i) Given positive responses to the proposals for the community Roundhouse build, Corinna will now make the submission of related grant requests (including to the SSE Development Fund) a priority, given the mid-June deadline.
- ii) Bòrd na Gàidhlig have reopened their Gaelic Development Fund for applications, with a very short time-scale. Although we would like to continue the grant-supported work of the past 2+ years, we need to be confident that we could recruit a strong post-holder, preferably locally-based, for a 3-year contract. We also need to consider the implications for our own staffing of delivering a further project. Corinna will appraise the viability of a submission over the next week and make a recommendation.

- iii) The Achtercairn Archaeology Big Dig is blessed with good weather and interesting finds. The community open day was well supported, including with school visits.
- iv) There has been some success with the requests for support funding for the proposed Geology Trail through Gairloch village.

7. Forward Planning

- i) Pauline had circulated a 'traffic lights' overview of the 2024-2025 Action Plan. This was ratified by the Board.
- ii) Corinna and Pauline are currently working on collecting and collating the details required for each section of the agreed template for the 2025-2028 Forward Plan. It is intended that a draft will be ready to present to the next Board meeting.

8. Gaelic Development

The proposed revision of one sentence of the Gaelic Statement has been circulated and was endorsed. Pauline hopes to undertake research next winter into the extent Gaelic was, or was not, encouraged in local schools from the 1872 Education Act until World War I.

9. Events and Outreach

Ell's record of events recently undertaken and planned was circulated. She explained how each is being evaluated as to attendance, profitability and learning for future activities. Further sessions of *Make Do and Mend* are scheduled and a joint session may be possible with the Torridon community. There is a strong list, already, of potential speakers for the winter talks series, including the AGM. The 'tattie planting' project has generated considerable interest, and there is an associated programme of activities, one aspect being lunches for the Gaelic Conversation group.

10. Exhibitions

The group met last week. The volunteers involved remain very committed to supporting future plans, including an RSA exhibition. The possibility of a single masterpiece loan is also being explored. The proposed revision to the Exhibitions Policy (confirming free entry to both galleries) was ratified and will be posted on our website.

11. 'Ever Greener' task force

Planting of tatties and trees, the latter with considerable help from the tree nursery team at Beinn Eighe, together with the monthly grounds' clearance work, has kept the group busy outdoors. A catch-up meeting is to be held on 16 May to deal with admin and finalise the 'Wonderful Weeds' family trail leaflet.

12. Operational matters

- i) Front of House: covering for recent holiday absences has been a challenge but staffing looks to be less stretched for the next few weeks. Good weather in April has likely impacted on the visitor numbers, though retail spend remained on a par with last year.
- ii) Café: notes of the meeting held on 24 April have been circulated. The new team is working very well and has generated various new initiatives to increase custom, including a longer opening time, additional signage, the purchase of more tables and plans to build a bench on the balcony. After discussion, it was agreed to accept the quote received for the labour aspect of this, but to purchase the materials through our own accounts. It is hoped to recoup the cost through donations.
Gordon and Roy will initiate communication with HIE (Portree office now) to explore ways in which they might be able to support the commercial aspects of our business development plans.
- iii) Facilities and Health & Safety: Updated lists of current building issues and necessary repairs have been circulated. Some are long-standing and need urgent remediation. Roy continues to press our architect and the project contractors to visit to propose how best to resolve ongoing snaggings, including repair of the external concrete render.

13. Any Other Business

- i) Gordon enquired as to any links with the museums in Nova Scotia. Liz had visited in 2005. He will endeavour to establish connections when he next visits. It was suggested that there could be a guest feature in a future members' newsletter.
- ii) Eilidh and Sarah have reviewed the updated Disclosure Scotland legislation to see if we need to change any of our registration procedures. They await a response to one query but believe that no action is required. Reviews are required every 5 years.
- iii) Aultbea Hall, repaired and renovated, is now fully open and would welcome collaborative activities with Gairloch Museum.

14. Summary of Action Points

- **Corinna** to explore the viability of making an application for a further BnaG grant (3 year post) and circulate her recommendation
- **FSG** to finalise the draft marketing strategy for Board ratification
- **Corinna and Pauline** to circulate a draft of 2025-2028 Forward Plan before the next Board meeting
- **Eilidh** to post the revised Exhibitions Policy on the website
- **Gordon and Roy** to initiate contact with HIE with a view to future business support
- **Building Maintenance Group** to progress the list of repairs required as a matter of priority
- **Gordon** to be our ambassador and invite a museum in Nova Scotia to establish a direct link with us.

15. Dates of next meetings

The next Executive meeting will take place on 27 May.

The next full Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 9 July at 4.30pm.

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