



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

24 August 2023
Gairloch Museum. 4.30pm.

Present Roy Macintyre; Pauline Butler; Jeremy Fenton; Peter Lynn; Irene Macintyre; Anne MacLennan; Sally Cameron; Jean Ross; Eilidh Smith; Scott Steedman; Allan Templeton; Ben Thomas (Zoom); Anna MacQuarrie (Zoom).

Apologies Neil Lebeter; Guy Seaman; Rachael Thomas.

1. Conflicts of Interest

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

2. Minutes of the Board meeting of 29 June

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 June were agreed to be a correct record, proposed by Jean and seconded by Irene. Matters arising:

- i) Duncan MacKenzie has confirmed that he is available for our AGM on 30 October. His presentation will involve some filming. It is hoped that Gairloch High School will be the venue, but it is proving more complicated than in the past to book the Hall there.
- ii) *The Curious Case of Osgood Mackenzie* had proved to be an interesting Edinburgh Fringe event. It is hoped that it can be performed locally in the autumn.

3. Curator recruitment update

After the interviews in the week of 17 July, the post of Curator was offered to Corinna Annetts, currently Collections Manager at Duff House in Banff (HES) and with previous experience at Penrith and Eden Valley Museum. She has agreed to the contract offered and should be joining us on 30 October. We look forward to welcoming her and family. It is important that we prepare a structured induction and Rachael will play an important role in that. The appointment is announced in this week's GDT and our monthly newsletter.

4. Financial report

Pete had circulated his report and figures for income and expenditure January to mid-August. Despite consistently highly complimentary feedback and visitor reviews, our income continues to be below that of last year across all streams and it is evident (from alcohol and Perfume Studio sales for example) that people are spending very cautiously.

Minutes had been circulated of the meeting held on 17 July to consider how to raise some funds. Allan is working on organising pub quizzes, but an autumn Ceilidh slot isn't available. Ideas already floated were raised again including: marketing to attract more group/tour visits; experimenting with the best location for the tap-to-donate equipment (internet signal permitting); increasing the fee/donations expectations for events; selling our surplus power to the grid; engaging members more directly to increase their involvement and generosity; and changing community perceptions to recognise the need for their ongoing support to sustain the Museum as a local asset. Another meeting will be held of the Finance Group in early September to see which actions are realistic and achievable in the short term, given our staffing (employee and volunteer) constraints.

5. Accreditation

We have now received the formal invitation to reapply for Accreditation, the requirements for which have been circulated to everyone. The deadline is early February. Pauline will do her best to coordinate the collection of evidence sooner rather than later to ensure that we are making good progress.

To inform a discussion on the breadth of the current composition of the Board with a view to Succession Planning, all members have completed an overview skills assessment. The gaps in what we can offer are clear - though, fortunately, most of these are covered by our employees or other volunteers. As always, we welcome potential Board members to attend meetings to see how they might contribute to our charity.

The next aspects of Accreditation preparation to be worked on will be: security, risk assessment and emergency procedures (Roy and Guy); group remits (chair of each working group); and access and audience development (Pauline). Rachael is updating the curatorial policies.

6. Curatorial update

Rachael's report, covering Collections, Projects and her attendance at a conference at the University of Stirling on our behalf, had been circulated. Further items raised:

- i) Pauline has circulated details of a paid opportunity offered by Museums and Heritage Highland to train as a 'climate ambassador' with the intention that those trained would then link to a group of museums to help each progress on this aspect - which is on our Forward Planning agenda.
- ii) It was agreed that we should become institutional members of the Museum Association as without it we cannot apply for any funding or awards that they offer.
- iii) Rachael will be asked to contact NMS to see what is possible, and at what cost, with respect to adding a stone seal to the Dixon case display.

We wish to put on record our appreciation of all that Jack has done, so willingly and ably, during his six month internship placement from Napier University.

7. Gaelic Development

Anna had circulated a report following her two days of research at the Museum earlier this month, which she had found very rewarding. She will present some specific plans to progress the project to the next Board meeting and looks forward to working with us more closely once Corinna is in post.

8. Events and outreach

Sarah provided an update on the 'Whatever the Weather' programme and other plans for the autumn. Discussions are underway with a potential benefactor who might support the costs of providing lunches for the Wednesday sessions through the winter.

To improve its accessibility to those with hearing impairment, the Board agreed that Sarah should seek information about the potential costs of carpeting the Activity Room and installing acoustic panels on the ceiling.

9. Exhibitions

The report of the Exhibition Planning Group meeting held on 3 August had been circulated. Given our current staffing circumstances it is not possible to hold the planned competition exhibition next summer and alternative arrangements are being planned. It was noted that we have already mounted a number of touring exhibitions and the potential for these is always being explored.

Jeremy now has the many folders of digital photographs which Mark Appleton took throughout the construction phase and is working on a loop presentation, with music. Further consideration needs to be given as to where it should best be made available to our visitors.

10. Operational matters

The summary Report circulated covered updates on Front of House, Marketing, Retail and Premises. Matters arising:

- i) Front of House: we will open Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays from 1 November 11am-4pm. Through January and February, it looks likely that the Museum galleries will only be open to the public on Wednesdays, returning to three days a week in March. It is hoped that we will also have sufficient volunteer support to be able to arrange a programme of events/workshops over and above the core activities which are ongoing all year round.
It was agreed that our 'thank you' end-of-year social would best be held as a lunchtime buffet in early December.
- ii) Café: the minutes of the most recent meeting of the Café group, 14 July, had been circulated. Jean will arrange the next meeting after the Finance Group has convened as staff deployment is critical to decisions to be made.
- iii) Premises: there is concern that damage is being done to the external skin of the building by equipment protruding from vehicles which punctures the membrane. Repairs will be undertaken. There are various electrical (mainly lighting) repairs to be dealt with. The kitchen boiler is also malfunctioning again, so contractors need to be engaged.

11. Any Other Business

- i) Organisation is in hand for the Open Doors Day on 2 September. Rachael will lead the 'Behind the Scenes' tours. Offers of baking would be welcome as the café will be staffed by volunteers.
- ii) Irene provided further information about the Ceilidh Partnership plans as they have developed this year. We may be able to host a ceilidh next season.

12. Date of next meeting

After discussion about the availability of various members, it was agreed to try Tuesdays to see if they work for more people. So, the next Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 10 October at 4.30pm.

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 6.50 pm.