



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

17 February 2020
Gairloch Museum. 4 pm.

Present Roy Macintyre; Karen Buchanan; Pauline Butler; Nevis Hulme; Irene Macintyre; Alice Mackenzie; Susan Maclean; Dugald Macpherson; Willie Macrae; Marcus Simpson; Allan Templeton.

Apologies Stuart Caddell; Jeremy Fenton; Liz Forrest.

1. Conflicts of Interest

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

2. Minutes of the Board meeting of 14 January & Matters Arising

The minutes were agreed to be a correct record, proposed by Allan and seconded by Nevis.

Matters arising:

- i) The 2020 AGM will be on 6 April at the Gairloch Hotel. Adrian Cox has provided the title for his talk.
- ii) COG and the Exhibitions Planning Group have worked on their terms of reference, which has been very helpful. Owing to other priorities, and meetings of groups not yet having taken place, the remit of other groups has yet to be completed.
- iii) The Burns Night pub quiz had been extremely successful in all respects.

3. Treasurer's Report

Dugald reported that the current bank balance is in credit. The final LEADER grant has now been paid, but there are still several other payments outstanding, including the final 5% from HLF. Pauline will contact Mia to request an update on the monies due and when they can be expected. This information is needed so that we can schedule the paying back of our AHF loan, (their panel meets in early March to decide whether or not we can extend part of it), and to progress with the two major projects planned for this year, café and external works. Given the project expenditure envisaged, we will continue to deal with VAT on a monthly basis but should be able to change to a quarterly return next year. Dugald had hoped that EPOS would, by now, be linking with the accounting system, but this has not proved to be the case.

Dugald informed the Board that he is stepping down as a Director at the coming AGM, owing to the pressures of his other commitments. We are very grateful for all that he has contributed, throughout these very demanding project years. We need now to find a replacement treasurer as a matter of urgency.

4. Curator's Report

Karen presented her Report covering: Building and grounds; Administration; Collections; Interpretation and displays; Education and training; Miscellaneous.

Further points:

- i) Karen is finding it difficult to find the time to concentrate on what should be her priorities, particularly the new website and collections work, given the many other tasks which are deemed 'urgent' on a day-to-day basis. She was asked to identify specifically any jobs which could be delegated to volunteers who might well be able to offer more of their time and expertise, if they were aware of the need.
- ii) She requested guidance on what advertising we should undertake this year. After discussion, it was agreed that we continue to advertise via VisitScotland and NC500 but not to pay for publicity in newspaper supplements and similar.
- iii) We are due a VisitScotland reassessment any time now. Given the focus of this, Susan agreed to take the lead role in preparation for the front of house and volunteer-related sections.
- iv) The information about the schedule for our Accreditation resubmission has now been received. As both the criteria and our whole operation have changed, this will require a great deal of preparation time. A new 5-Year Forward Plan has to be written, agreed and implementation begun, and all curatorial policies amended to take account of our new location. The work involved to meet the requirements should not be underestimated: being successful is critical for future funding and status.
- v) There is already a busy schedule of events and exhibitions for February and March, including activities on Saturday afternoons to attract more visitors. Again, we should take advantage of any volunteers willing to offer more support.

5. Review of Museum policies and guidance

Drafts of the revised general Museum policies and guidance have been circulated to Board members to review. Four responses have been received. No substantive changes to content were proposed. Based on the feedback, Pauline presented a restructuring of the organisation of the documentation involved. Karen recommended that we incorporate our GDPR into the new framework. Once the Emergency Planning section is dealt with, Pauline will circulate the amended papers for final consideration before Board ratification.

To ensure adequate First Aid cover, it is recommended that Susan undertake First Aid at Work training as soon as it can be arranged.

6. Membership & Gift Aid

- i) There were 290 museum memberships in 2019 (184 families, 102 individuals, 1 life and 3 organisation), so the total of members was 474 which was almost double the 2018 tally of 246. The resulting income, including donations included with membership payments, was ££6500 (before VAT). The administration of membership was at no cost to GDHC.
- ii) 72% of memberships were eligible for Gift Aid, so the 2019 Gift Aid claim brought in another £2354 income to GDHC, once other donations (including for genealogy research and library use), the Pictish Fish Totalgiving and aggregated donations were integrated. Pauline expressed her gratitude to Jan for her 9 years of efficient and reliable effort in ensuring that Museum memberships and Gift Aid have made such a significant contribution both to our finances and in maintaining the loyalty of our supporters.
- iii) Jeremy is taking over membership administration. He will provide the information necessary to inform members of how to rejoin using the new Membermojo system. This must go out with the AGM papers in the first week of March.

- iv) Clarification is still required as to who is taking on responsibility for the management and administration of Gift Aid claims from now on.

7. New Museum project: updates and way forward

- i) It is hoped that the remaining snagging issues can be dealt with soon so as not to spoil visitors' experience when we are open on more days from 3 March.
- ii) Pauline had circulated more detail about the proposed 'outdoors Museum' developments and has already submitted funding applications to SSE and the People's Postcode Lottery. The SNH 'Coasts and Waters' application is due next week. Two more funders might be approached. However, if SSE does not choose to support us again, it is difficult to see how we can fund the project as an entity. It is intended to submit the E-planning application to Highland Council next week.
- iii) We are now entered for four awards: Campbell & Co. have put in for the Museums & Heritage Awards: Best Permanent Exhibition; LDN Architects for a Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors award; and Karen and Pauline have worked on the Art Fund Museum of the Year and the Scottish Civic Trust, *My Place*, Awards. Over the next two or three months we may well be visited by panels of judges and, if shortlisted for the Art Fund Museum of the Year, there are conditions with respect to being mentored as well as publicity and engagement commitments.

8. Commercial and retail operations

The Reports from the EPG meeting of 15 January and COG meeting of 27 January have been circulated.

- i) There was only one response to the advert for an Events and Publicity Coordinator. As a result of the feedback from Roy and Allan following a meeting with the applicant, it was agreed, after discussion, that she will work for GM for 8 hours a week on a consultancy basis for a two month period. The immediate priority will be to publicise the Bird Photography exhibition and Spring events programme. Karen emphasised the importance of implementing the marketing strategy.
- ii) After preliminary drilling, it is expected that the construction work on the café will begin w.b. 24 February and it is still hoped it will be functioning by Easter. An advert will be placed in the next GDT inviting expressions of interest to 'put the new Museum café on the map'.
- iii) EPOS has been adjusted to add in invoicing. Marcus wishes to find a way to ensure that records can be retrieved or saved to ensure they are not lost when EPOS is updated.
- iv) After further consideration, it was agreed that we should open in March as already decided.
- v) Allan confirmed the dates of the forthcoming exhibitions. As well as the preview, there is a workshop associated with Sheila Mortlock's *Memory of Place* exhibition in March. The prestigious Bird Photography Exhibition opens on 27 March and continues until 23 May. The cost to us has considerably reduced. It should attract visitors from across the Highlands. Allan proposed that the Museum should open on Sundays whilst it is on show, to give maximum opportunity for viewing. After considerable discussion about how Sunday opening would be received by our volunteers, community and staff, no decision was made as it was felt that there had not been sufficient focussed consultation as yet.

9. Date of next meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for 23 March 2020 at 4 pm.

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 6.20 pm.