

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE  
DORNOCH HERITAGE SCOTTISH CHARITABLE INCORPORATED ORGANISATION  
(DHSCIO), HELD ON 10TH SEPTEMBER 2015**

**PRESENT** ~ John Barnes (Chairman), and Jean Birkett, Joan Bishop, Janette Bremner, Hazel Cameron, Mora Douglas, Helen Fairgrieve, Peter Fairgrieve, Mary Gall, Stuart Gardiner, Jane Hamilton, Val Hawkes, Sue Higgins, Andy Kirby, Fiona Macdonald, Marion Madge, John Muir, George Munro, Annabelle Murray, Elizabeth Oakes, Tony Rundle, William Sutherland, Tom Tew, Peter Wild and Sally Wild.

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Anthea Bannatyne, Jill Barnes, Jerry Bishop, Ken & Mary Bromage, Ursula Dawson, Gill Evans, Shirley Fagg, Sue Helal, Judi Sutherland and Margaret Wight.

**2. MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, HELD ON 25<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2014:** Subject to the deletion of the words "John Muir" from line 4 of minute 8 (c), the minutes were accepted as a correct record of the meeting.

**3. UP-DATE BY DHSCIO CHAIRMAN:** John Barnes reported that the DHSCIO Board had held two meetings since the 2014 AGM; on 24/10/2014 to approve the proposal to appoint VG-ES as Independent Examiner of the SCIO's accounts, and on 30/06/2015, to sign-off the 2014/15 accounts, and to make a recommendation on the level of DHS subscriptions.

**4. REPORT OF DORNOCH HERITAGE SOCIETY SUB-COMMITTEE:** Peter Wild gave a report on behalf of the Sub-committee, referring to ~

1. lecture evenings which had been held during the previous winter;
2. the sub-committee's intention to review the holding of a November coffee-morning;
3. a very successful "Christmas Festive Fun" event which would be repeated;
4. a very enjoyable and profitable Burns Night, in connection with which he thanked Jimmy Melville and Judi Sutherland for their assistance;
5. the Society's presence at the Sutherland Show, with respectable sales of goods from the museum shop;
6. Ursula Dawson's retirement as the Society's Treasurer after a number of years in the post, for which he thanked her ~ he reported that the current membership of the Society stood at 177;
7. financial assistance given to the museum, to facilitate the employment of the seasonal supervisor, and the sub-committee's pledge of £500 towards the community's commitment in support of the Courthouse project;
8. the Society's programme of winter lectures and social events for 2015/16, commencing on 15<sup>th</sup> October. These were The Mound Causeway and Sluices; The Embo Fishing Fleet (19/11/15); Films, Mince Pies & Festive Fun (17/12/15); Burns Night (21/01/16); TBA (18/02/16); Skibo and the Great War (17/03/16); Campaign for Woman's Suffrage (21/04/16); and the Society's Coffee Morning on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2016.
9. the assistance given to him by the DHS sub-committee, and numerous other supporters.

**5. REPORT OF HISTORYLINKS MUSEUM SUB-COMMITTEE:** John Barnes gave a report on behalf of the Historylinks Museum Sub-committee. He referred to ~

1. the confirmation of the Museum's 5\* VisitScotland grading, following an inspection on

20<sup>th</sup> August 2015. He thanked all those volunteers whose work, conducted during the winter, had contributed to this success;

2. further difficulties facing visitor numbers and shop sales, and the decision to increase admission charges w.e.f. 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015;
3. the continuing availability of a diverse range of items donated to the museum, in particular a desiccated cat, which had been discovered during building work at the Free Church. As a result of a project on local shops, a number of old photographs had been donated. He also referred to the ongoing work associated with the museum's Image Library;
4. the Historylinksdornoch Blog which, in collaboration with UHI, was proving to be of enduring interest;
5. the museum's FaceBook page, which provided a valuable showcase for the collection, special projects, and general publicity;
6. the museum's website, which continued to attract interest, and extend a network of contacts. He mentioned the recent approach by Magdalen College, Oxford in connection with research being carried out concerning college alumnae who had served in World War One, which had been instigated by the website's Captain Rose War Diary;
7. outreach activities which, during the year in question, had focussed on the older members of the community. These included regular visits to Oversteps, to look at old photographs, and the major community project, proposed by Val Hawkes, looking at Dornoch shops in the 1940s, the material from which would be amassed for exhibition next year. Also, the children's room at the museum had been given over to an "Edwardian Shop" exhibition mounted by senior pupils (S4,5,6) who were members of DIGIT. He stated that, to mark the 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Golf in Dornoch in 2016, the museum would be working with the Primary School on a seasonal display;
8. the contribution made by EasyFundraising donations to minor projects. He appealed to members to sign up with the facility, which was associated with online shopping;
9. the sterling work carried out by Sue Higgins (Curator), Lynne Mahoney (Seasonal Supervisor) and the team of volunteers who manned the reception area during the season.

**6. FINAL ACCOUNTS ~ DHS AND HISTORYLINKS MUSEUM:** The Receipts & Payments statements of the two organisations for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015 were circulated for consideration by the meeting. Tony Rundle advised the meeting that he had been appointed as the DHS' Treasurer, in addition to carrying out the same duties for the Museum. He commented on the various sources of income for the Heritage Society, including membership subscriptions from 166 members, and fund-raising activities. Its major outgoing had, again, been the funding of the employment of the Museum's Seasonal Supervisor and, in this connection, he referred to the substantial assistance given to the Museum by the Heritage Society. Interest of £311 had been earned on investments, and the DHS current account stood at approx. £9,900. However, excluding interest income, the Society had barely broken even during the period in question.

The Museum's Treasurer drew the meeting's attention to an apparently generous surplus for the year, but advised that approximately £3,860 of that surplus was the unspent balance of a ring-fenced bequest. In response to a question about the museum's solar panel installation, the Chairman reported on his continuing efforts to obtain some payment for excess electricity generated at the museum. He also referred to the proposed reduction in local government funding, and action which he had taken to contact the local MP and MSP. It was accepted that the museum faced a period of financial uncertainty. It was suggested from the floor that approaches might be made locally for financial assistance, and the Treasurer stated that it was intended, during the winter season, to examine a number of fund-raising options.

The Chairman stated that the full statutory accounts had been submitted to OSCR in August, and they had been accepted that day (10/09/15).

It was agreed that the accounts be noted and approved.

**7. DETERMINATION OF LEVEL OF ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION:** The Chairman of the Trustees advised the meeting that the recommendation of the Board, from its 30<sup>th</sup> June 2015 meeting, was that the level of individual annual subscription be increased to £10. The Treasurer stated that the subscription had not been increased since it was first introduced. It was suggested that efforts should be made to attract new Heritage Society members, perhaps through the medium of the website. Proposed by Stuart Gardiner, and seconded by John Muir ~ it was unanimously agreed that the Board's recommendation be accepted.

**8. ELECTIONS:**

**a) Board of Trustees:** The Chairman stated that the SCIO constitution required that one of the Trustees should stand down each year, whilst being eligible for re-election. It was noted that Ursula Dawson was standing down. Agreed that the remaining members of the Board, namely John Barnes, Tony Rundle, and Jean Birkett be re-elected, and that Elizabeth Oakes be elected to serve on the Board.

**b) Dornoch Heritage Society Sub-committee:** The existing members of the Committee, namely Jean Birkett, Shirley Fagg, Fiona Macdonald, Marion Madge, Elizabeth Oakes and Peter Wild, were willing to stand for re-election. It was proposed that Anthea Bannatyne be invited to join the sub-committee. It was agreed that the members listed above be re-elected, and that Anthea Bannatyne be elected to serve on the sub-committee.

**c) Historylinks Museum Sub-committee:** The meeting was advised that the present members of the Committee were willing to stand for re-election, namely John Barnes, Peter Fairgrieve, Graeme Muckart, Elizabeth Ritchie, Tony Rundle, William Sutherland and Peter Wild. It was agreed that the above named be re-elected as members of the Historylinks Museum sub-committee, and that Val Hawkes be elected to serve on the sub-committee.

**9. AOCB:**

A general discussion took place on ways of improving the museum's visibility and accessibility in the town. Reference was made to the effectiveness of new signing, and the possibility of visitor attractions engaging in reciprocal referrals. The Chairman mentioned a recent meeting which had been held with the businessman involved with the Courthouse project, which had been most constructive. It was also hoped that 'bus and coach parking might be re-sited, which would be to the museum's advantage.

**10. CLOSING REMARKS:** There being no further business, the Chairman thanked members for their attendance, and closed the meeting.