

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE
DORNOCH HERITAGE SCOTTISH CHARITABLE INCORPORATED ORGANISATION
(DHSCIO), HELD ON 25TH SEPTEMBER 2014**

PRESENT ~ John Barnes (Chairman), and Jill Barnes, Jean Birkett, Janette Bremner, Hazel Cameron, Ursula Dawson, Peter Fairgrieve, Sue Higgins, Andy Kirby, Fiona Macdonald, Marion Madge, Graeme Muckart, Gwen Muir, John Muir, George Munro, Christine Murray, Elizabeth Oakes, Tony Rundle, William Sutherland, Muriel Urquhart and Peter Wild.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Ken & Mary Bromage, Shirley Fagg, Stuart & Susan Gardiner, John & Mary Luckie, David Maclean, Judi Sutherland and Margaret Wight.

2. MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, HELD ON 26TH SEPTEMBER 2013:
The minutes were accepted as a correct record of the meeting.

John Barnes referred to Minute 2, concerning the outstanding registration of the Museum's lease. He reported that, in March 2014, a Land Certificate had been received registering the lease in the title of the DHSCIO, and that the Museum had complied with a further Highland Council requirement, in May, that an appropriate entry be made in the Book of Council and Session Extracts.

Proposed ~ Graeme Muckart; Seconded ~ Jean Birkett

3. UP-DATE BY DHSCIO CHAIRMAN: John Barnes reported that one DHSCIO Board meeting had been held since the 2013 AGM, on 23rd July 2014, to consider and approve the Organisation's accounts, and to make a recommendation on the level of subscriptions. The accounts had been approved and submitted on-line to OSCR, and registered on 13th August. The Board had received a consultation document from OSCR concerning Targeted Regulation, to which a response had been made, particularly asking that regard be had to the scale of resources available to museums.

Ursula Dawson had joined the Board since the 2013 AGM.

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

1. the Chairmanship of the DHS sub-committee, which he had undertaken since the 2013 AGM, initially jointly with David Maclean;
2. talks, on a wide variety of subjects, which had been given during the past winter season;
3. two coffee mornings which had been held, the most recent at the Social Club. Parking at that venue had presented a problem, but both events had been successful. He emphasised the need for volunteers to come forward to assist with the up-coming November coffee morning, when the sub-committee would be providing activities for children;
4. the Burns Supper, which had been another very successful event, and which it was intended to continue in the future. He thanked Jimmy Melville and David Maclean for their involvement;
5. the Film Evening;
6. the omission of a Society outing during the past summer,
7. the first talk in the coming winter season, which would be by Mike Hook, on the subject "Dornoch, WW1, and me", followed by Jennifer Bruce (Border Shepherds), a Film Evening showing the "Summer Walkers", followed by an evening with traveller Essie Stewart and concluding with a talk by Anne Coombes (Embo Fishing Fleet);
8. the Society's presence at the Sutherland Show, which had been financially successful, as well as being a valuable public relations exercise;

9. the wide range of financial assistance given to the Museum, in particular the funding for the employment of the Seasonal Receptionist;
10. the support given by his colleagues on the DHS sub-committee.

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 on 29th July 2014;
2. the Inspector's immediate observation that the Museum had barely achieved the 5* standard;
3. the receipt, on 24th September 2014, of VisitScotland's detailed written report which
 - noted favourably the Museum's efforts to carry out those improvements suggested in the previous year's report;
 - provided positive and valuable pointers for continued improvement. In this connection, John Barnes commented on the value of "a fresh pair of eyes";
 - recommended the addition of a TravelineScotland public transport journey planner to the SCIO website, which had already been implemented;
 - stated that some painting and display up-grading was required. The Chairman stated that help would be appreciated in completing this substantial task during the winter period, and that anyone wishing to assist should contact Sue Higgins.
4. the slight increase in visitor numbers (up 2% in the current financial year to date), although there had been a notable dip in numbers since 2011;
5. the continuing important contribution made to the Museum's finances by its shop, whose sales had increased by 10% to date during the current financial year. He also referred to the introduction of an electronic cash register and bar-code reader, which had facilitated both counter admission and sales procedures, and stock control;
6. the employment of Vhairs McKay as the Museum's Seasonal Receptionist who, in addition to reception duties, had been able to undertake a range of administrative tasks. The meeting was advised that she was now relocating to Australia for at least a year;
7. the publication, in conjunction with Parkdean Grannies Heilan Hame, of a booklet on the history of Embo, and the production of the DVD "A Year in Dornoch 2013" by Peter Wild, copies of which were selling well in the Museum;
8. outreach activities, which included
 - the annual project with Dornoch Primary School, which related to the effect of the First World War on the lives of local people;
 - two projects associated with the "Year of Homecoming 2014", namely "Storymap", which was the translation of captured stories and memories from workshops at Oversteps and at the Museum, on to images placed on an idealised map of Dornoch, and "Needed on a Journey" which was a travelling exhibition on loan from Inverness Museum highlighting objects taken by people on their journeys away from the Highlands. The project would culminate in an event at Culloden, incorporating the display and also StoryMaps from participating local museums;
 - the "Story of Cairns" project, undertaken in conjunction with the Woodlands Trust, as part of Archaeology Week;
 - the organisation of summer holiday activities for Allsorts, financed by Easyfundraising;
9. the creation of two new permanent displays relating to
 - Land Use, covering the way in which the local landscape had been shaped and utilised by man over the centuries, and
 - the First World War, which would be up-dated each year;
10. the introduction of motion sensor video displays covering the Children's Room, World War One, and the Vikings, which had been financed by MGS grants;
11. exhibitions covering "Border Shepherds in Sutherland and Caithness", and a Forestry

- Commission display revealing techniques used in the plotting of archaeological sites on the Commission's land, in addition to the current "Needed on a Journey" display;
12. successful bids made by the Museum for local Treasure Trove items, for which it was hoped to provide a new display cabinet, and the diversity of other acquisitions, ranging from an album of early family photographs to a mummified cat found in local reconstruction work;
 13. the use of on-line media, including
 - an active Historylinks presence on Facebook, with currently 358 "likes";
 - the success of the Historylinks Blog, with 61 posts to date, and the current inclusion of extracts from the Captain Rose War Diary;
 - the availability of over 11,500 images on the Image Library, with 1094 comments received since 2008;
 - the value of the web-site, in that it had facilitated a request from the Dean of Glasgow Cathedral for the inclusion of extracts from the Captain Rose War Diary, and its Corporal.Honeyball postscript, in the WW1 Commemoration Service held on 4th August;
 14. the effectiveness of the Easyfundraising web-site which had raised £160 to date, and which funds had paid for several children's projects;
 15. the financial benefits accruing from the installation of solar panels, in connection with which John Barnes reported that a letter had been sent to SSE, requesting that consideration be given to the introduction of a Power Purchase Agreement in relation to surplus energy exported to the grid;
 16. the sterling service given to the Museum by the Curator, and all its volunteers, in continuing to carry out essential reception, administrative and maintenance roles.

6. FINAL ACCOUNTS ~ DHS AND HISTORYLINKS MUSEUM: The Receipts & Payments statements of the two organisations for the period 1st April 2013 to 31st March 2014 were circulated for consideration by the meeting. Members were reminded that the accounting period for these accounts had now reverted to the usual 12 month pattern, (compared with the 2012/13 accounting period of 14 months) and, accordingly, there was some distortion in comparison of the two periods. The DHS' Treasurer commented on the various sources of income for the Society. Its major outgoing had been funding the employment of the Museum's Seasonal Receptionist. Investment funds had been re-invested in March 2014, yielding interest of approx. £360 p.a., and the DHS current account stood at approx. £8,000.

The Museum's Treasurer also drew the meeting's attention to the alteration in the presentation of the accounts under consideration, in that a simplified format of Receipts & Payments had been introduced for 2013/14. He stated that, although it was accepted that there had to be heavy reliance on external financial assistance for Historylinks, including generous and readily-available grants from the Heritage Society, every effort was made to ensure that the Museum was operated on a proper commercial basis.

The Chairman stated that the full statutory accounts, which had been submitted to, and accepted by OSCR in August, were of a far more complex nature. He commented that, overall, the SCIO had suffered a shortfall of only £50 for the FY 2013/14.

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 was that no change should be made in the level of annual subscription. It was **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. He had, accordingly, indicated that he would be standing down, whilst eligible for re-election under Para.54 of the Organisation's constitution. **Agreed** that the existing members of the Board, namely John Barnes, Tony Rundle, Jean Birkett and Ursula Dawson, be re-elected ~ proposed: Christine Murray seconded: Peter Wild

b) Dornoch Heritage Society Sub-committee: The meeting was advised that David Maclean had indicated that he was standing down, and did not wish to offer himself for re-election. Elizabeth Oakes had offered herself for nomination to the sub-Committee. The remaining members of the Committee, namely Jean Birkett, Ursula Dawson, Shirley Fagg, Fiona Macdonald, and Peter Wild, were willing to stand for re-election. It was **agreed** nem con that Elizabeth Oakes be appointed to the sub-committee, and that the members listed above be re-elected.

c) Historylinks Museum Sub-committee: The meeting was advised that John Muir had indicated that he did not wish to stand for re-election. The remaining members of the Committee were willing to stand for re-election, namely John Barnes, Peter Fairgrieve, John Muir, Elizabeth Ritchie, Tony Rundle, William Sutherland and Peter Wild. Graeme Muckart had offered himself for nomination to the sub-committee. It was **agreed** nem con that Graeme Muckart be appointed to the sub-committee, and that the above named be re-elected as members of the Historylinks Museum sub-committee.

9. CLOSING REMARKS: John Barnes reiterated the importance of people coming forward to assist Historylinks, and the need for there to be some element of succession in the museum's operation. There being no further business, the Chairman thanked members for their attendance, and closed the meeting.