

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE
DORNOCH HERITAGE SCOTTISH CHARITABLE INCORPORATED ORGANISATION
(DHSCIO), HELD ON 27TH SEPTEMBER 2012**

PRESENT ~ Jill Barnes, John Barnes, Jean Birkett, Catherine Charlish, Peter Fairgrieve, Sue Higgins, John Luckie, Mary Luckie, Fiona Macdonald, David Maclean, James Melville, George Munro, Christine Murray, Elizabeth Oakes, Tony Rundle and Peter Wild.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Robin & Ullabritt Ashby, Mr. & Mrs. Ken Bromage, Ursula Dawson, Margaret Gordon, Willie & Jennifer Morrison, John Muir, Jim & Shiona Stuart, William Sutherland, and Sally Wild.

2. MINUTES OF INAUGURAL MEETING, HELD ON 10TH NOVEMBER 2011: The minutes were accepted as a correct record of the meeting. Proposed ~ Jean Birkett; Seconded ~ Christine Murray.

3. UP-DATE BY DHSCIO CHAIRMAN: John Barnes gave a report on developments in the formation of the SCIO since the November 2011 inaugural meeting. He referred to ~

- the Stage Two application to OSCR, and the formal incorporation of the SCIO on 22nd November 2011, following decisions taken at the inaugural meeting;
- OSCR's requirements for the preparation of final accounts for DHS and Historylinks, documentary evidence of the transfer of those bodies' assets to the DHSCIO, and production of a lease in the name of the SCIO. In this latter connection, he referred to on-going negotiations with the Highland Council;
- the first accounting period for DHSCIO being 31st January 2012 to 31st March 2013.

Jimmy Melville asked why it had not been possible for the museum land to be purchased, and was advised that the land was Common Good land, and an offer to buy the land had been refused by the Highland Council in 2011.

4. REPORT OF DORNOCH HERITAGE SOCIETY COMMITTEE: George Munro gave a report on behalf of the committee. Reference was made to ~

- the main business during the preceding year being the formation of the new SCIO organisation;
- the departure, from the committee, of Cliff Reddiin and Rick Bramley. He welcomed Fiona Macdonald, now acting as Membership Secretary, to membership of the committee;
- various fund-raising activities, including coffee mornings, post-lecture raffles, film nights and the Taste of Burns evening;
- the summer outing to the Drovers' Exhibition at Dingwall;
- the role undertaken by Robin Ashby in the production of the DHS newsletter;
- preparatory work which had been carried out in connection with a re-print of the Recipe Book which project had, sadly, not come to fruition.

In closing, he thanked members of the committee, on which there were vacancies, and stressed the need for the membership to be more supportive during the coming year.

5. REPORT OF HISTORYLINKS MUSEUM COMMITTEE: Peter Wild gave a report on behalf of the Historylinks Museum Committee. He referred to ~

- a “mixed” season, during which the museum’s Highland Council grant had been reduced;
- a much smaller than anticipated reduction in visitor numbers;
- an increase in shop sales, which he coupled with appreciation of Sue Higgins’ buying expertise;
- the committee’s decision to make a small increase in admission charges;
- the generous assistance given by volunteers assisting in the operation of the museum and, regrettably, a decrease in their numbers;
- the continuing success of the on-line Image Library, on which there were now almost 11,000 images;
- the recent “School’s Out” exhibition;
- the publication of the Evelix River booklet, which would be marked formally at the next meeting of the Society;
- the recent renewal of the museums 5* rating by VisitScotland;
- re-printing of the museum’s publicity leaflet;
- out-reach work carried out with the local primary school, and plans to co-operate with Dornoch Academy’s up-coming 100th anniversary;
- the publication of a local Police Diary from the 1870s, pending the addition of illustrations;
- plans to borrow and digitise the local Register of Sasines, currently stored at the Courthouse;
- a proposed exhibition, finishing in May 2013, to mark the 100th anniversary of the publication of the Dewar Report;
- general arrangements being made to recognise 400 years of golf in Dornoch.

He also referred to the museum’s accreditation process, which was due to start again in January 2013. John Barnes added that this process was now recurring every two years. He also mentioned that the museum had, amidst very favourable comments, attracted an unwarranted and derogatory statement on Trip Advisor, and emphasised the need for such sites to be monitored.

6. FINAL ACCOUNTS ~ DHS AND HISTORYLINKS MUSEUM: The Society’s Receipt and Payments account, and Historylinks’ Balance Sheet and Statement of Financial Activities were circulated for consideration by the meeting. Members were reminded that the accounting period for these accounts was 1st April 2011 to 31st January 2012. Reference was made to the surplus achieved by the Heritage Society, and the somewhat precarious financial position of the museum, due to uncertainty over the level of Highland Council grant. 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 meeting was advised that, on this occasion only, the incumbent Trustees, namely Robin Ashby, John Barnes, George Munro and Tony Rundle, would be retiring en-bloc, and were all willing to stand for re-election. There being no other nominations, It was **agreed** nem con that the above named be re-elected.

b) Dornoch Heritage Society Committee: The meeting was advised that the following members of the Committee, namely Robin Ashby, Jean Birkett, Ursula Dawson, Flora Macdonald, David Maclean, Jimmy Melville and George Munro were willing to stand for

re-election. There being no other nominations, It was **agreed** nem con that the above named be re-elected.

c) Historylinks Museum Committee: The meeting was advised that the following members of the Committee were willing to stand for re-election ~ John Barnes, Peter Fairgrieve, John Muir, Tony Rundle and William Sutherland. In this connection, the Chairman stated that, after serving on the Dornoch Heritage Society Trust (Historylinks Museum) and the museum committee for two successive four-year terms, Christine Murray had decided to step down. He paid tribute to the invaluable contribution which she had made to the development and operation of the museum, and mentioned her wide local knowledge, and involvement in research and proof-reading. He proposed that she be made an Honorary Life Member of the Heritage Society, in recognition of that service. The proposal was seconded by Jimmy Melville, Peter Wild et al. There being no other nominations, it was **agreed** nem con that ~

- a) the above named be re-elected as members of the Historylinks Museum Committee;
- b) Christine Murray be made an Honorary Life Member of the Dornoch Heritage Society.

John Barnes emphasised 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.

9. AOCB ~ Refreshments: Jimmy Melville asked whether it would be possible to supply simple refreshments after DHS lectures, particularly as some speakers travelled long distances to attend. Following discussion of alternative lecture venues, the meeting was advised that there were adequate kitchen facilities on the ground floor of the Carnegie Building, and it was **agreed** that the provision of refreshments at the conclusion of lectures be investigated.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting.