

# DORNOCH HERITAGE SCIO

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES HELD ON 11<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2023

**PRESENT:** Jerry Bishop (Chair - JB), Alison Davies (AD), Andrew Senior (AS) & Fiona McKinlay (FM).

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Peter Wild (PW) & Richard Hickson (RH)

**1. APOLOGIES:** Tony Rundle.

**2. MINUTES:** The minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2023 were confirmed as a correct record.

**3. MATTERS ARISING:** None

### **4. TRUSTEES:**

a) Update: The Chair welcomed Richard Hickson to the meeting as a prospective new Trustee. However, JB also noted the upcoming retirement of Tony Rundle as Treasurer/Secretary as he has indicated he will be leaving the area over the summer. It was agreed that an event to mark his retirement and to thank him for his immense contribution to the Charity over many years should be held once the exact date for his moving had been confirmed.

b) Office Bearers: It was unanimously **agreed** that JB would step down from his position of Chair at the end of the meeting, to be replaced jointly by AD and AS. It was further **agreed** that JB would assume the role of Treasurer of the Charity, to work with the two new sub-committee Treasurers already appointed. The role of Secretary was left vacant to be discussed at the next meeting.

c) Skills Audit: There then followed a brief introduction from all attendees, outlining their diverse backgrounds, wide range of skills and work experiences.

**5. FINANCE:** The Board noted summaries of the latest balances for the various Museum and DHS accounts. JB noted that although Easter had been busy for the Museum, the following weeks had been slightly disappointing in terms of visitor numbers. A general discussion on monitoring/reducing running costs ensued.

### **6. PROJECT UPDATES:**

a) Energy Saving Project: JB reported that Phase 1 of the renewable heating (Offices) had been installed on time and on budget, funded almost entirely by a £10k grant from the MGS Resilience Fund. An application had now been submitted to the Energy Saving Trust SME Loan scheme for funding to complete Phase 2 of the project (Museum exhibition area) and a decision on this was expected shortly.

b) Heritage Hub Project: A report on the latest funding position showing over £400k already secured was distributed before the meeting. AD outlined other applications which had been made, referring specifically to the Coastal Communities Fund (£46k) and the Dornoch Common Good Fund (£43k) which were both due to be discussed at a Council meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> May. The Chair reported that given this financial position the construction sub-committee were minded to progress to the Tender phase of the project. It was **agreed** that the financial implication of this step should be determined as soon as possible.

### **7. COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

a) Museum Committee: AD reported that the Museum had reopened on 1<sup>st</sup> April and that the new temporary exhibition on the life of William (Chris) Murray had been extremely well supported. AD also reported that Karen Buchanan had left her position at Gairloch Museum and may not be able to continue in her role as mentor to our Curator without payment. After some discussion it was agreed that an approach be made to MGS to enquire if a replacement mentor was necessary, given Lynne's experience in the role, and a discussion about the YCC and its lack of leader followed. JB reported that a new accounts software package was now in place thanks to assistance from Vicki Fairburn.

b) Heritage Society: PW reported that the latest talk (the history of Strathpeffer by Arthur Scott) in the Council Chamber had been very well supported, but that the next talk (Cromarty through the ages)

would return to the Golf Club on April 20<sup>th</sup>. He also outlined the arrangements for the Coffee Morning on May 13<sup>th</sup>, which were well in hand thanks to the endeavours of an enlarged sub-committee. AS reported that he had taken on responsibility for Memberships and that he was hoping to become familiar with the current 'database' system with a view to ensuring timely payment of renewals.

#### **8. AOCB:**

a) Provost's Chain & Robes: JB reported that the ownership of these artefacts had now been confirmed as the Dornoch Area Community Council (DACC) and so new loan agreements would need to be signed to replace the existing ones. It was **agreed** JB would pursue this with DACC.

b) Dornoch Business Improvement District (BID): JB explained to the meeting that a steering group of local business members had been formed to investigate the possibility of creating a BID in Dornoch to carry on the work done by DACIC volunteers for the past 10 years. Details of the exact implications for the Museum were lacking at the moment, but JB offered to report back on any developments as and when they happened.

c) Donald Ross/Pinehurst link: There has been an approach from the Mayor of Pinehurst (NC – USA) looking to develop closer relationships with both the town and the Museum. A discussion on possible opportunities for the Museum, including greater recognition for Alec Ross, winner of the US Open in 1907, followed and it was agreed that once more information was available from the Community Council and the Golf Club AD would endeavour to follow this up on behalf of Historylinks.

d) Dornoch Station Hotel: JB notified the Trustees that a meeting had been requested by Marine & Lawn, new owners of the Station Hotel, to look at possible partnership opportunities. A Zoom meeting involving the hotel's marketing team, the Museum Curator and himself had been arranged for the following week and a report of the outcome would be available at the next meeting.

**9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:** Monday 5<sup>th</sup> June, 2pm at Whinhill