

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE DORNOCH HERITAGE
SCOTTISH CHARITABLE INCORPORATED ORGANISATION (DHSCIO),
HELD ON 24TH NOVEMBER 2020**

PARTICIPATING VIA ZOOM ~ Jerry Bishop (Chair) and Jill Barnes, John Barnes, Joan Bishop, Anne Coombs, Alison Davies, Stuart Gardiner, Sue Gardiner, Annie MacDonald, Margaret McKay, William McKay, Lynne Mahoney, Heather Martin, Gwen Muir, Paddy Murray, Elizabeth Oakes, John Rosenfield, Tony Rundle, Andrew Senior, Lorna Senior, Caroline Seymour, Judi Sutherland, Sue Jane Taylor, Ian Westacott, Peter Wild and Sally Wild.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Gary Bethune, Kem Bromage, Mary Bromage, Angela Godfrey, Andy Kirkby, Fiona Macdonald, Sandee Mackintosh, Willie Mackay, Willie Morrison, Brian Munro, Susan Munro, Moira Rennie, Margaret Ross, Kim Tulloch, Norman Tulloch and Trish Weekes.

2. MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON 10TH OCTOBER 2019: It was proposed by Heather Martin, seconded by Sue Gardiner, and **agreed** that the minutes be accepted as a correct record of the meeting.

3. TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20: The Chair of the Board reported on the SCIO's activities during the FY 2019/20. He stated that all had gone well until late March 2020. Although the Museum had been specially opened early to coincide with Fibre Fest, the restrictions imposed by the Covid-10 pandemic had prevented the Museum from re-opening as planned for the 2020 season. However, thanks to extensive risk-assessment and procedural changes, it had been able to open in mid-July.

He stated that 2019/20 had been a period of consolidation for the Museum, with the retention of its 5* status, footfall increased by 5%, earned income up by 2%, a large number of acquisitions and objects added to the Museum's collection, and the mounting of a successful summer exhibition featuring Policing in Sutherland.

The Heritage Society's membership had increased by 14% over the same period, with the usual holding of the Winter Talks programme, Coffee Mornings and other social events.

He referred to the phenomenal success of the Young Curators' Club (YCC) and congratulated Lynne Mahoney, Caroline Seymour and Peter Wild on their involvement. He also briefly reported on the Sutherland Longhouse Project, the completion of a new out-door display, and the Museum's involvement in Fibre Fest 2020.

He asked the meeting to recognise the major contribution made by the Museum's staff and volunteers in coping successfully with the operational problems caused by Covid-19. Monthly meetings of the SCIO's Board had been held during 2020, with a particular emphasis on the revision of the Charity's policies, which not only assisted with its effective operation, but was also a part of the Accreditation Process. He reminded the meeting that two vacancies existed on the Board of Trustees, and invited attendees to consider membership of that body.

4. REPORTS OF SUB-COMMITTEES:

Museum Sub-committee: The Chair, Alison Davies referred to ~

- a) The role of the sub-committee;
- b) The resignation of Jane Mason, and the co-option of Anne Coombs;
- c) The continuation of sub-committee meetings, since March 2020, through the Zoom facility;
- d) The re-opening of the Museum in July, following a detailed risk-assessment process;
- e) The successful conclusion of the Sutherland Longhouse Project;
- f) The decision to remain open during the 2020/21 winter season, albeit with reduced days per week;
- g) The sterling work carried out by the Curator and Museum Assistant.

In this connection, an illustrated presentation on the Museum's operation was given by Lynne Mahoney. Reference was made to ~

- i) The Young Curator's Club activities, including the operation of a Museum stall at the Vintage Coffee Morning, a Halloween event, the successful production of a film telling the story of Janet Horne, and involvement in the Longhouse Project;
- ii) The delivery of four workshops for S1 and S2 Dornoch Academy students, relating to the two World Wars;
- iii) The successful conclusion of the Sutherland Longhouse Project: the project had incorporated the delivery of 28 events over four months, and the involvement of 126 people in relevant craft and academic workshops. In this connection, she paid tribute to the Project Manager, Caroline Seymour;
- iv) The continuing loan of the Katherine Gray dress;
- v) The purchase of new environmental recording equipment;
- vi) The construction of a new hut in the Museum's grounds, to house an exhibition of domestic objects which had previously been in long-term storage. She referred to a major Northern Times illustrated article about this and other projects, and the valuable work carried out by Brian Munro, who acted as the SCIO's press contact;
- vii) The major contribution to the Museum's operation made by its volunteers, both on reception, and (working from home) on archiving;
- viii) The increased promotion of the Museum's retail operation, both locally and on-line;
- ix) Activities which had been organised for the YCC in the absence of regular meetings;
- x) The intention to carry out an audit of the Museum's archive during the 2020/21 winter season, as part of the Accreditation Process;
- xi) Involvement in a virtual project organised by Museums and Heritage Highlands (MHH) entitled *Highland Threads: A History of Fashion in the Highlands*.

Dornoch Heritage Society Sub-committee: Peter Wild, Chair of the sub-committee gave a report on the Society's activities, in which he referred to ~

- a) The wide range of subjects covered by the 2019/20 programme of winter talks, albeit with the cancellation of the March and April 2020 talks due to the pandemic restrictions. He stated that these were well attended, and aided the Society's funds through the raffles. He thanked the RDGC for generously hosting these talks;
- b) The two main social events, the Film Night and the Burns Supper which, again, were of major assistance to the Society's finances;
- c) The unfortunate cancellation of Society events since March 2020;
- d) Angela Godfrey's decision to stand down from the sub-committee, and the co-option of Gwen Muir;
- e) The current membership of the Society, which stood at 239.

He stated that he was indebted to the members of the sub-committee for their support and active involvement, and that the Society was, as always, delighted to support the work of the Museum.

5. ACCOUNTS:

a) **Review of 2019/20 Accounts:** The meeting considered the accounts of the SCIO for the period 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020.

It was **agreed** that the accounts be noted and approved.

b) **Appointment of Independent Examiner:** The meeting was informed that the Board had recommended that Voluntary Groups Sutherland (VGS) continues to act as the Independent Examiner of the SCIO's accounts. **Agreed**

c) **Annual Subscriptions:** In accordance with the Board's recommendation, it was **agreed** that the level of members' subscriptions remain at £10.

6. ELECTION OF TRUSTEES: The meeting was informed that, in accordance with the constitution, Alison Davies and Brian Munro were standing down, but were offering themselves for re-election. The remaining Trustees, namely Jerry Bishop, Elizabeth Oakes,

Tony Rundle and Andrew Senior were standing for re-election. It was **agreed** that all the above-named Trustees be re-elected to serve on the Board.

7. EXTENSION PROJECT: Following a brief résumé of progress made since the start of the project, the Chair reported on the present position. A major grant had been made from the Dornoch Common Good Fund, which had enabled the SCIO to appoint a local architect to progress the matter. Designs had been drawn up, considered by the Board and the Museum sub-committee and, subject to some amendments, had been circulated to SCIO members prior to this meeting.

He stated that the designs were sufficiently developed as to permit the submission of a preliminary planning application before the end of the year. Subsequent to that, an application would be made for a Building Warrant, tender documents obtained from a Quantity Surveyor, and applications made to major funders for the construction stage of the project.

General satisfaction was expressed concerning the internal layout and general appearance of the proposed extension, and Sue Jane Taylor confirmed that she was liaising with Peter Wild regarding the creation of murals. However, it was suggested that a diagonal roof-support pole on the east side of the building might cause problems for passers-by, and the Chair undertook to discuss this with the architect.

8. CLOSING REMARKS: There being no further business, the Chairman thanked members for their participation, and closed the meeting.