

DORNOCH HERITAGE SCOTTISH CHARITABLE INCORPORATED ORGANISATION (DHSCIO)

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, HELD ON 25TH JUNE 2018

PRESENT ~ Jerry Bishop (Chair), Tony Rundle (Secretary/Treasurer), Alison Davies, Brian Munro, and Elizabeth Oakes.

APOLOGY ~ Andrew Senior.

1. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 9th April 2018

The minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 9th April 2018 were confirmed as a correct record.

2. MATTERS ARISING

a) Adlib system up-grade JBi stated that the up-grade had been completed, with a small number of minor problems being resolved with the company. A copy of the software and data would be installed on the front-office computer in due course, to facilitate access by the Curator.

b) Highland Council Revenue Grant TR reported that the first half of this grant had been received, in the sum of £3,137.

3. FINANCE

a) Financial Up-date Members noted summaries of income and expenditure for the Museum, and the Heritage Society. TR drew members' particular attention to the Repairs and Maintenance account, which was overspent due to the external painting of the Museum, and the recent installation of security lighting. He also reported that the SCIO's 2017/18 Annual Report & Accounts had been signed off, and were awaiting collection from VG-ES. It was noted that a very generous donation of £480 had been received from the charity shop associated with St. Finbarr's Church.

b) Rathbones Investment Account Consideration was given to an e-mail circulated to Board members by BM, in which he referred to the vagaries of financial markets, the possible future correction of current over-valuation, and the detrimental effect this might have on the capital element of the SCIO's investment. The Chair reminded members that both sub-committees had considered the matter in detail, and had agreed to each invest £10,000, money which was not currently earning any return.

BM stated that he was happy to recommend Rathbones, but he had received advice that it would be prudent to invest only half of the intended amount with Rathbones, with the remainder being placed elsewhere.

JBi stated that the £20,000 earmarked for investment had always been regarded as financial reserves which, he suggested, should not be accessed in the short term and only in the case of emergency. The Rathbones portfolio was also widely diversified.

It was **agreed** that preliminary steps be taken to a) initiate the opening of an investment with Rathbones, and b) further investigate the possibility of investing with the United Trust Bank. It was also **agreed** that a final decision on the detailed investment of reserves be made when more details (a & b) are available.

4. SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS

a) Historylinks Museum:

- Museum Performance JBi/TR reported on encouraging figures for museum admissions and shop takings, and it was noted that these were likely to be on a par with 2017.

Interpretation Boards It was noted that there was an outstanding requirement for the provision of boards regarding the labyrinth, plough and lamp-posts.

- Website Re-vamp Members were given a preview of work in progress to improve the SCIO web-site, particularly regarding compatibility with mobile phone platforms. The re-designed site would include a 360° “StreetView” facility, and other interactive elements, as well as previews of Museum films, and details of major exhibits.
- Projects Up-date AD reported on the current position regarding the following projects:-

Mural Project ~ following an unfavourable response from BoS, an application would now be made to another suitable funder. Regarding the two Young Curators’ Club applications, one (to the Maple Trust) has proceeded to the second stage. Other bids are still under consideration.

Longhouse Excavation Project ~ the site had been identified on the road to Loch Buidhe, and contact had been made with the landowners, Cambusmore Estate. Subject to funding (likely to be in the region of £30k) it was intended to survey the site in April 2019, with excavation taking place during June. It was recognised that a Project Manager would be necessary, and it was thought possible that Anne Coombes would be interested. Members also discussed a possible partnership with UHI to gain a complementary historical aspect to the project.

Restoration of Sheriff McCulloch Memorial ~ an approach to Tesco (Bags of Help) had been abandoned in favour of an application to MGS for a small grant, given the shorter lead-in time and the need to maintain good working links with the Rural Skills youngsters. LM had visited the site, and the landowner’s permission had been obtained. A positive link with the local school has now been established, with the SCIO now being recognised as an official partner of Dornoch Academy.

- Staff Appraisal The Chair stated that, to date, the Curator had not been involved in any appraisal of her performance, and it was intended to remedy this in the near future. In this connection, there was discussion regarding the salary attached to this post, and it was **agreed** that the Curator’s hourly rate be increased to £11.50, back-dated to 1st April 2018.

b) Dornoch Heritage Society: EO reported on:-

- the recent talk, by Graeme Muckart, about the Embo marriage stone;
- a very successful Coffee Morning, which had raised over £530 for Society funds;
- the cancellation of the proposed “Finds Day”;
- the programme of talks for the 2018/19 winter season.

5. EXTENSION PROJECT

a) Community Asset Transfer Request The Chair referred to previous discussion on this subject, and suggested that it now merited further consideration. He reported on his recent attendance at a meeting which had been held to discuss Common Good land in the Dornoch area, which had been attended by Community Council (CC) representatives and Cllr. McGillivray, as well as the Ward Manager, and members of the Community Assets team. He had raised the question of the SCIO’s purchase of the Museum site, and the HC’s officers had stated that the Council was unwilling to sell Common Good land. The Ward

Manager had suggested that the SCIO continue with the existing lease which, in his opinion, would not have any detrimental effect on applications for project funding.

JBi stated that the Scottish Land Fund (SLF) was only willing to assist if the SCIO owned the site, and an application could be made for a £10,000 “starter grant”. He referred to researched information which indicated that, from the outset, it had been the Heritage Society’s ambition to own the Museum site, but a lease had been entered into in the absence of adequate funds. There was also a possibility that the site was not, in fact, historically Common Good land.

It was **agreed** that an approach be made to the SLF regarding the purchase of the site, based on its recent informal valuation.

b) Constitution Reform JBi reminded members that, as previously reported, the SLF’s involvement was conditional on certain amendments being made to the SCIO’s constitution regarding definition of the membership area and its effect on the appointment of Trustees, associate membership outside that area and other membership qualifications. It would be necessary to place any recommended amendments before the membership at the 2018 AGM in October, and he suggested that the opportunity should also be taken to make other changes regarding the operational structure of the SCIO. It was **agreed** that any appropriate amendments should be drafted for consideration by the Annual General Meeting.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 9th August 2018 at Whinhill. 2 p.m.