

**DORNOCH HERITAGE SCOTTISH CHARITABLE INCORPORATED ORGANISATION
(DHSCIO)**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, HELD ON 9TH AUGUST
2018**

PRESENT ~ Jerry Bishop (Chair), Tony Rundle (Secretary/Treasurer), Brian Munro, Elizabeth Oakes, and Andrew Senior

IN ATTENDANCE FOR ITEM 1 ONLY ~ Joan Bishop, Cllr. J. McGillivray, Yvonne Ross and Peter Wild.

APOLOGY ~ Alison Davies.

1. ASSET TRANSFER PRESENTATION

Diane Campbell (DC), from DTAS' Community Ownership Support Service, gave a presentation regarding the service's role in helping community-based groups in Scotland to take a stake in, or own previously publicly-owned land and buildings. She emphasised that, although funded by the Scottish Government, COSS was a free independent advisory service.

The Chair explained that it had always been an aspiration of the founding Trust to own the Museum site. The Museum was running out of storage, display and meeting space and serious consideration was being given to an extension project. Ownership of the land would greatly assist any applications for funding. DC agreed that this was a very strong argument for ownership.

She referred to an applicant organisation's eligibility criteria for asset transfer ~ a community of interest, membership based and controlled with a minimum membership of 20 ordinary members (see minute 6b), and an incorporated body. The SCIO fully satisfied these criteria. She also noted that the SLF had now agreed the final revision of the SCIO's constitution.

Reference was made to the classification of the land as a Common Good Asset, rather than historically Common Good Land, and DC advised that the latter was still eligible for transfer, although the process was more difficult if the land was classed as inalienable. YR welcomed the clarification of the land's classification. DC stressed that it was important that the applicant body marshalled all its arguments, consulted fully with the community, and dealt with any objections prior to making any formal approach to the land's owners. DC also suggested that the SCIO might have to have the necessary plans and permissions for the extension in place prior to starting any formal transfer procedure.

She asked if there had been any indication of community support for the extension project, as this would have to be demonstrated as part of the transfer process. The Chair stated that the Community Council had already signified support for the project and the associated acquisition of the site. The SCIO and its predecessors had a 20 year record of managing the Museum as a successful community asset, and continued to do so through out-reach work with the local school, and residential homes. The provision of an extension would enable that work to develop even further. In this connection, Yvonne Ross confirmed that the Museum was a valuable history resource for the school, and this would be enhanced by an extension, whereby whole classes could be accommodated.

JMcG suggested that the CC might, in due course, submit an outline planning application for the extension project on behalf of the SCIO, which would be evidence of community support. There was discussion regarding the advisability of making a preliminary application to the landowners, and DC recommended that a much stronger case could be made if any application were delayed until all details were to hand, and consultations completed.

Reference was made to the time-scales for applications, and decisions by the land-owner. She referred to the HC's eligibility criteria, part of which required the preparation of a business plan by the applicant. She also advised that, through COSS, the SCIO could be put in touch with bodies which had made successful applications for asset transfer. The Community Learning Exchange (part of the Scottish Community Alliance) also facilitated this type of information-sharing, and provided funds for inter-community visits.

DC suggested that, in the first instance, a two page summary be prepared, setting out the SCIO's reasons for purchase.

The Chair stated that it was evident that the SCIO should delay any formal asset transfer application until such time as a plan for the proposed extension was firmed up, and a consultation exercise had taken place. He thanked Diane for a most valuable presentation, and her advice on the specifics of the SCIO's aspirations.

2. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 25th June 2018

The minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 25th June 2018 were confirmed as a correct record. It was **agreed** that matters relating to staff salaries referred to in those minutes should, in the public version, be redacted.

3. MATTERS ARISING

a) Rathbones Investment Account Members were reminded that it had been agreed, at the most recent meeting of the Board, 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. The Chair reported that, in the absence of one of the potential signatories to the necessary applications, this matter would be discussed at the next Board meeting.

4. FINANCE

a) Financial Up-date Members noted summaries of income and expenditure for the Museum, and the Heritage Society. TR reported that the SCIO's Annual Report and Accounts for 2017/18 had been approved by OSCR on 3rd July, and were now accessible on the SCIO web-site.

5. SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS

a) Historylinks Museum:

- Seasonal Assistant JB advised members that the post-holder had recently been hospitalised, and would be unavailable for the next seven or eight weeks. The post could possibly be covered for the remainder of the season by a re-arrangement of the curator's hours, and volunteer assistance. In the event of the post-holder not returning for the 2019 season, consideration would have to be given to advertising the post.
- Museum visitor numbers It was reported that, to the end of July 2018, 3,417 visitors had attended the Museum; an increase on 2017 figures for the same period. It had been suggested that the Museum would benefit from an enlargement and re-organisation of the Museum shop space, not only to reduce congestion in the reception area, but also to enhance sales.
- Guided walks After a modest introductory period, the most recent walk was attended by 24 people. Tribute was paid to the Curator who was currently leading the walks. It was **agreed** that consideration be given to making a charge for the 2019 season.
- Projects up-date The Chair advised members that, further to minute 4a of 25th June 2018, the Curator, together with Alison Davies and Anne Coombes, was progressing

the Longhouse Excavation Project with a view to securing HLF funding. There were the remains of other ancient settlements on the site, in addition to the longhouse.

b) Dornoch Heritage Society: EO reported on the Society's participation in the SCIO's stand at the Sutherland Show, and also on its 2018/19 talks programme, which had been published in the recent news-letter.

6. EXTENSION PROJECT

a) Museum land up-date Members agreed that this had been comprehensively covered in minute 1 above.

b) Constitution Reform The Chair referred to version 3 of the draft revised constitution, which had been circulated to all members, and which incorporated the SLF's suggested amendments. Further to discussion in minute 1 above, it was **agreed** that clause 7.4 be amended to read "The organisation shall have not fewer than 30 Ordinary members at any time; ..." and that clause 7.5 be amended to read "At least three quarters of the Ordinary and Honorary members of the organisation are members of the Community". Subject to these amendments, the revised Constitution was accepted for submission to OSCR, and subsequent consideration by the SCIO's Annual General Meeting.

c) Community Asset Transfer application Further to earlier discussion, it was **agreed** that work be undertaken to develop more detailed proposals for an extension to the Museum, and to carry out any appropriate consultation relating to this and the allied purchase of the Museum site, prior to an application being made to the HC during the spring of 2019.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 20th September 2018 at Whinhill. 2 p.m.