



DORNOCH HERITAGE SCIO
Trustees Board Meeting, 10.30am Tuesday 8th October 2024
Community Room, Historylinks Museum

AGENDA

1. Welcome and Apologies

Co-Chair Andrew Senior welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Present; Alison Davies, Andrew Senior, Richard Hickson, Jerry Bishop, Fiona McKinlay,
In attendance: Peter Wiid, Lynne Mahoney, Curator

Apologies - Fiona Hampton

2. Declarations of Interest

None

3. Minutes of meeting held on 20th August 2024 were approved.

4. Matters Arising

- (i) VIP for Official Opening
Interest been shown by Paul Murton. However if no confirmation by end of October it was agreed to contact Sally Magnusson.
- (ii) Invite to local dignitaries etc. – After the success of the soft opening it was agreed to hold an informal soiree for key people in Dornoch on 1st November. Amongst those who supported the Heritage Hub project including David Bell, Jim McGillivray, Cath MacAngus/Community Council, Paddy Murray, the owners of the Caravan Park. Others to be identified.
- (iii) Succession Planning – Given that Trustee role descriptions are part of the Governance Review recommendations, AD to contact DB and explain that we are undertaking the review which will add clarity in terms of what we are going to ask future trustees to do.
- (iv) Royal Burgh Charter Anniversary – Nothing further to report at present,

5. Museum Financial Report –FMcK/JB

HISTORYLINKS COUNTER INCOME - SEPTEMBER 2024

| | 2019 | 2023 | 2024 | Diff |
|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------|
| VISITORS | 738 | 626 | 657 | 5.0% |
| ADMISSIONS | £ 2,244.00 | £ 2,246.25 | £ 2,434.72 | 8.4% |
| BOOKS | £ 210.00 | £ 381.28 | £ 573.96 | 50.5% |
| GIFTS | £ 479.00 | £ 378.33 | £ 461.26 | 21.9% |
| DONATIONS | £ 31.00 | £ 24.00 | £ 82.00 | 241.7% |
| GIFT AID | £ 56.93 | £ 190.44 | £ 109.00 | -42.8% |
| | £ 3,020.93 | £ 3,220.30 | £ 3,660.94 | 13.7% |
| SPEND/HEAD | £ 0.93 | £ 1.21 | £ 1.58 | |

HISTORYLINKS COUNTER INCOME : MAY to SEPTEMBER

| | 2019 | 2023 | 2024 | Diff |
|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------|
| VISITORS | 4771 | 3789 | 3796 | 0.2% |
| ADMISSIONS | £ 12,523.20 | £ 12,210.32 | £ 13,943.76 | 14.2% |
| BOOKS | £ 1,372.07 | £ 2,113.16 | £ 1,888.20 | -10.6% |
| GIFTS | £ 2,962.60 | £ 2,960.02 | £ 2,939.91 | -0.7% |
| DONATIONS | £ 35.96 | £ 677.48 | £ 537.00 | -20.7% |
| GIFT AID | £ 287.22 | £ 772.11 | £ 813.25 | 5.3% |
| | £ 17,181.05 | £ 18,733.09 | £ 20,122.12 | 7.4% |
| SPEND/HEAD | £ 0.91 | £ 1.34 | £ 1.27 | |

JB presented the Museum Counter Income from May to September 3 months and as compared with years 2019 and 2023.

It was reported that September had been a good month. It was noted that Gift Aid was variable and we should continue to encourage volunteers to ask the Gift Aid question. Although we have many foreign tourists to whom it is not applicable we seem to be missing out on some UK tax paying residents. The fall in numbers since 2019 was queried and it was agreed there could be a number of explanations. It is planned to increase the admission charge next year. It was agreed that a Marketing strategy was a priority and this could be one of the Trustee role descriptors arising from governance review. A package for cruise liner passengers is being put together and MM is attending meetings. The plan is for groups

of 20 to be split between the Cathedral and museum, Addressing these type of opportunities will be part of the Business Plan.

6. Reports

- (i) Museum Committee – latest draft minutes (3/9/24) had been circulated and AD invited questions. The main issue recently has been the staff resignation which affected both the CC project and the team approach to implementing the Activity Plan. LM explained the staff member had resigned to take on a permanent position with school hours which was more suited to her circumstances. AD is liaising with Heritage Lottery and Highland Council to negotiate a condensed Activity Plan.
- (ii) HAS and Highland Council - Post Ex programme – AD will contact Highland Council with a deadline to agree the proposal.
- (iii) DHS Committee– latest draft minutes (30/9/24) had been circulated. PW said the first talk was very well received though numbers attending were slightly down.
- (iv) BID update – It was understood the manager position was under offer, the website is up and running. LM will check if we get the Newsletter and forward to Board members.

7. AGM

The SCIO members will be circulated with the Annual Report, previous minutes and Annual Accounts. Mailing to go out this afternoon.

We will include the link to all the financial accounts which JB has put on the website.

The members will be asked to approve the change in accounts inspection arrangements, re-elect retirees from the Board and note that we are looking for a new Treasurer commencing October 2025.

AD will note in 'Updates' that Trustees are considering the recommendations of a governance review.

It was suggested that members could attend the AGM by Zoom using a conference camera. It was further suggested that the date of the AGM might be brought forward to make the annual reporting more up to date.

It was noted that the quorum was 25 members.

8. Governance Review

- The Report and Executive Summary had been circulated. AS asked Trustees for an overall response to the report. There was a consensus that the consultants had been listening carefully in the one to one interviews, had compared our processes to good practice in the sector, and it was a fair and accurate report and the recommendations were positive and reasonable. Discussion included the three-pronged organisational structure which reflected the way we currently work however it was recommended in the report that the overlap between Trustees and Museum Sub Committee be addressed. Chair of Museum Committee to take this forward in consultation with the Museum Sub Committee.

- It was agreed to consider further the suggested changes to some of the committee titles in order to make the roles and responsibilities clearer and more readily understood eg by dropping the SCIO part of 'Dornoch Heritage SCIO', and DH 'Supporters' might better reflect the role of the current DH Society sub committee. Role descriptions for Trustees was agreed to be a useful idea which should help recruitment and an American trustee was also thought to be potentially very useful. If there are any changes which require constitutional change then a member survey and/or a General Meeting would be needed.

In the light of the Trustees' broad acceptance of the report it was agreed the further meeting with the consultants was unnecessary and AD will contact Wendy West to this effect

Next steps on the review will be considered at the next Board meeting.

9. Heritage Hub and Financial Overview

- (i) Update and finance position – see attachments

JB is now in receipt of final price (£16,185 + VAT) from contractor and he has sought advice from the architect and QS regarding this figure. It is more than expected and does not include any deductions for penalties for the contract being 9 weeks late. This has meant loss of income for the Museum and volunteers have had to compensate for work not being carried out timeously. Therefore the possible surplus is not finalised as yet.

- (ii) Heritage Hub bank account: need to consider further when project finally wound up.

(iii) JB and RH have exchanged Business plan templates to start up this work. It will be developed with reference to the strategy for DH SCIO/Historylinks Museum as set out in the MGS Forward Plan,

(iii) Weekend opening up until Christmas. The Board considered this useful for profile and as an income generator. The availability and number of the tapestries is still unknown and LM will try to expedite with Amy from inverness Castle team. Frustration expressed at the delays and inference that we do not have the competence to care for the tapestries.

10.A.O.C.B.

- (i) Proposed Penn state project –Trustees considered that this was a project capable of enhancing our reputation provided it did not draw down overly on our resources. LM commented that it may be possible to include it in the Community curation programme as the students will be required to engage with the community. It is expected that Dr Jim McPherson will be leading from UHI. RH noted that Penn State Uni had a significant alumni body. LM noted that land use and movement of people could be suitable topics.
- (ii) **Date of next meeting -Weds 4th December 2pm.** It was agreed that a calendar of Trustee meetings should be put in place and that the meetings could be in the evening if that better suited future Trustees who might be working in the daytime.