

**DORNOCH HERITAGE SCIO**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Trustees**  
**Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> August 2024**

1. **Present:** Alison Davies (Chair), Andrew Senior, Jerry Bishop, Fiona McKinlay (Minutes), Richard Hickson. Fiona Hampton  
**Apologies:** Peter Wild  
**In Attendance:** Lynne Mahoney
2. **Declarations of Interest**  
None
3. **Minutes of meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2024**  
The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.
4. **Matters Arising**
  - a: *Proposed Witchcraft Project:* - LM met RH and his wife, Zoe, who has agreed to carry out some research. RH is exploring the possibility of having an AI driven hologram, with which visitors can have a conversation, installed by a firm that is currently developing the software. FH has been offered a projector by Mather & Co. who will donate it to the museum. AS has spoken with Philip Paris who is willing to give a talk. The Board expressed an interest in all these proposals. The location of the project within the museum is to be decided. Suggestions include the current children's room or the 'old' kitchen. It was agreed that this project should be postponed until 2027 to coincide with the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Janet Horne's death.
  - b: *Pinehurst Link:* - AD reported that letters had been exchanged between RDGC and Pinehurst and that the latter had mentioned Historylinks at some length.
  - c: *VIP Official Opening:* - AD has approached agencies representing Lucy Worsley and Alice Roberts. Their schedules for next year are not yet known but neither turned down the invitation. If neither is available, AD will approach Bettany Hughes' agent. Laura Kasim has been very helpful in identifying the agencies.
  - d: *Succession Planning:* - AD will approach David Bell now that his captaincy has finished. FH reported that My Future, My Success is considering how to engage with young people in this area. RH suggested involving senior UHI students. LM has already discussed this possibility with David Worthington. There are logistical difficulties as most are based in Inverness. He is currently on secondment for several months but will be approached again on his return.
5. **Reports**
  - a: *Museum Financial Reports*  
JB presented data to show that footfall in July and August to date is down compared with 2023. Gifts and book sales were significantly down in July but gift sales have risen again this month, as has Gift Aid income. LM will ensure that front desk volunteers are thanked for their input.

FM and JB had updated the spreadsheet detailing project funding positions. The *MGS Outreach* project has finished. LM has submitted the report and so the final balance of funds is now due. The *MGS Community Curation* grant funds Flora's salary and the provision of two cabinets in the Heritage Hub, the second of which will be delivered shortly. The Community Regeneration grant that is funding the *Community Engagement Officer* post will add funding for 5 hours per month for 12 months to the *Young Curators' Club* finances.

- b: Museum Committee Report:* - the latest draft minutes had been circulated.
- c: Royal Burgh Charter:* - King Charles I signed the charter on 14<sup>th</sup> July 1628 and so the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary is in 2028. AD will approach the provost to suggest that a committee is established to plan celebrations in which the whole town can participate. King Charles III will be invited to attend. RH will approach his office through an intermediary.
- d: HAS and Highland Council:* - AD and Anne Coombes met with representatives from both organisations to discuss the post excavation programme. The museum has budgeted £600–700 for sample tests and HAS/HC has suggested multiple samples are tested. The HAS report will be amended to reflect this proposal and its expected cost.
- e: BID Update:* - the Museum Committee has raised concerns that HL is losing potentially significant footfall from coach passengers due to lack of signage in the car park. AD had raised this at the public meeting when the response was that there were plans to improve signage. She has since raised the issue again in writing but no response has been received to date. JB reported that DACIC are erecting a billboard between the car park and the MUGA on which advertising will be displayed. Meanwhile, JB has costed a banner for display in the car park. AD will suggest that BID should pay for this due to their failure to follow through on their commitment to improve signage.

## 6. Governance

- a: Annual Report, Annual Accounts and AGM:* - JB has received annual reports from AD and AS. JB informed the Board that due to our higher turnover in this financial year, VGS are unable to inspect our accounts. He has arranged for a Tain firm of accountants to inspect and sign them off for a fee of £100 + V.A.T. They will be submitted shortly. The AGM will be held at 7.30pm on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2024 in the Heritage Hub Community Room. FM and RH will stand down and then stand for re-election as per the constitution.
- b: Governance Review:* - the date for the meeting with the consultants has still to be finalised but is expected to be 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> September. RH and FM submitted their apologies in advance.
- c: Business Plan:* - AD suggested outsourcing the Business Plan but RH and JB have volunteered to produce one together over the winter months.

## 7. Heritage Hub

- a: Construction Costs Update:* - JB presented an updated financial spreadsheet. Final costs are awaited from the contractor, and the balance of funds has still to be received from several sources, but JB's forecast shows a significant estimated surplus that can be used for fixtures and fittings. Suggestions include a defibrillator, mobile shelving for the archives, and CCTV.
- b: Progress of New Exhibits:* - LM reported that everything is well underway, including the construction of the railway carriage.
- c: Opening:* - The tapestries should be available to us mid-September for display in the Community Room. The opening date has been set for 21<sup>st</sup> September with the focus on the Tartan Fantastic exhibition. The Co-op is providing a crepes van, the Pipe Band will play and there will be Highland dancing.

*d: Open Day:* - Susan Kruse, ARCH, requested an open day for participants in the Dornoch History Project she led earlier this year which produced a folder and display containing local memories of the town and surrounding area. The Board agreed to hold this on 12<sup>th</sup> October with free entry for all visitors but inviting donations. Flora will market this event widely.

**8. A.O.C.B.**

No matters raised.

**9. Date of next meeting**

8 October 2024, 10.30am. Historylinks Museum Community Room.