



Minutes of the Annual General Meeting Meeting of Comann
Eachdraidh Lios Mòr held in the museum room at Ionad Naomh
Moluag, 27 May 2017

Present: Jennifer Baker, Norma Black, Douglas Breingan, Arthur Cross, Duncan Drysdale, Davy Garrett, David Gloag, Laura Gloag, Lesley Hamilton, Bob Hay, Anne Livingstone, Archie MacColl, Margaret MacDonald, Mary MacDougall, Archie MacGillivray, Duncan MacGregor, Hugh MacPherson, Barbara McDougall, Memory McDonald, Noelle Odling, Sara Robin, Stuart Ross, Sebastian Tombs,

Apologies were received from Helen Crossan, Peggy Nicholson, Mike Robertson

Jennifer Baker in the Chair

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 23 July 2016

Accepted as a true record. Proposed by Davy Garrett and seconded by Lesley Hamilton

Report from the Chair (Jennifer Baker)

Welcome everybody and thank you for turning out to support our AGM on this very busy Saturday. I hope you'll take time to look around this wonderful exhibition of the works of Ted and Elizabeth Odling. Many thanks to Noelle and Douglas Breingan for the extremely professional display.

This year we celebrated the 10th anniversary of the opening of the Centre on 17th March 2007. Many old friends came to dine and reminisce. It was wonderful listening to stories about the beginnings of the museum and the birth of the whole idea. Some there were moved to tears as they remembered the disasters and triumphs.

As always, our year has been full of challenges but I think we manage to rise to most of them. You will have read the Newsletter, I'm sure – (if you haven't there a few copies available) so I won't bore you by going through every event individually but it's important to say that we are going through a transition at the moment. The café is in its second year as a community enterprise and is going from strength to strength thanks to the hard work and enthusiasm of Dan Johnstone and his able staff. Dan and Sarah have now purchased a house so we welcome them again as new residents.

The Achinduin Assemblage has at last arrived at its proper home. We had a preview on the Open day in January and it will form the museum display next year. Thanks to Bob Hay for his terrier like tenacity in achieving this and it's important to note that this could never have happened had we not been awarded Renewal of National Accreditation of Museum and Archive.

Work with the church on The Nave Project is also hugely important and fulfils the mission of this place. The shop and the café are working successfully and making money but the vision of the founders of Comann Eachdraidh Lios Mor was to research and preserve the unique Gaelic Language, Culture and History of Lismore and this we continue to try to do. I'll come on to language later. The Nave dig this year is from 15th – 22nd July.

Children too are so important. On the advice of Visit Scotland we asked visiting children to fill in a questionnaire. We analysed the results to discover that 78% made use of the audiovisual displays – no surprises there - and 83% wanted to visit again. They also provided us with great ideas which we will take up in the future Our own children have a whole day to themselves here during Book Week with visiting poets and authors.

We also carried out a SWOT analysis on the Volunteers' night - an enjoyable night when we thank our volunteers with food, wine and music – and an exercise to do! Under the circumstance, this was not conducted with robust academic rigour, however some good ideas for opportunities came out of it, including the expansion and development of the Book week into a Festival of Music and Literature – which is fully concentrating minds at the moment! Dates for your diary 14th – 17th September.

Our main strength is, of course, this Centre but there is always a threat in potential lack of funds for maintenance, paid staff, expansion.

However, we have hope in the form of Hisez – Highlands and Islands Social Enterprise Zone who, when they visited this place and saw what we are trying to do, offered us help to develop as a social enterprise - to work towards economic growth and increased sustainability.

At the moment they are:

- Writing us a Business Plan, which can and is being used to apply for funding.
- Applying for funding for an awning to go over the café terrace to increase covers.
- Working with Business gateway and the Third Sector to try and secure funding for a Gaelic Access Officer. Our fear is that the Gaelic emphasis of the Centre is being lost and that mustn't happen.

A weakness, of course, is our dependence on the goodwill of volunteers. That won't, can't go on forever. We must be aware of that and work towards a more sustainable solution This is second top of our list of priorities.

However, a huge debt of gratitude is due to these volunteers: general administration; manning the shop; carrying out essential maintenance of the building; painting and decorating; cleaning; grass cutting, path maintenance; marketing and publicity; fundraising; organising events; liaising with other island groups; maintaining the public library; caring for rare books and others in the David White library, carrying out genealogical searches; maintaining the website, facebook and twitter; mounting displays in the cottage and the museum – all and more done out of commitment to an ideal.

A special thank you goes to the off island volunteers who come to help us. They make a huge contribution to the smooth running of this place. We owe a debt of thanks, too, to Laura Gloag who coordinates the shop volunteers – not an easy task.

Finally – and very importantly, what is our place in this community? I am aware of some antipathy from a small section of the community which I simply don't understand. There have been complaints to Companies House, John Lewis and OSCR which involve us in huge amounts of time consuming paperwork. Time which could be profitably spent elsewhere. Our volunteers are aware of it – it arose under the SWOT analysis. And it arose in the Bachuil Project questionnaire. And it arises when we ask for volunteers –often – 'I'd love to help but I can't face the hassle'. Obviously this causes us distress as well as huge amounts of stress and we would dearly like to have clear knowledge of whatever it is that makes some people so against what we do. An AGM is a meeting to deal strictly with formalities so this is not the forum for such a discussion. I hope that the members here and others who might wish to join in, would be interested if we had a "meet the board" discussion evening, at which people would be free to raise and talk freely about things that concern them; allow them to be openly discussed, and hopefully find satisfactory answers. Comann Eachdraidh belongs to all of us on the island, and , as far as we possibly can, we want it to work for all of us .

Goodwill and an understanding of this place working well and in harmony with others is top of our list of priorities.

Treasurer's Report

Noelle Odling presented the 2016 accounts (attached), which had been circulated before the meeting. There were no questions.

The Accounts were accepted as a true record. Proposed by Duncan Drysdale and seconded by Arthur Cross

The reappointment of David MacGregor as independent examiner for 2017 was agreed. Proposed by Bob Hay and seconded by Norma Black

Curators's Report

On behalf of the curators of objects, documents and images, Bob Hay reported briefly on:

- The 2016 Display: Remembering WW1 On the Island of Lismore, designed by Jana Flieshart of the University of Stirling, which attracted many comments on the Memory Tree

- The Survey of Children visiting the museum and plans to make it more Child-Orientated
- The Community Archaeological Dig of the Cathedral nave
- The award of the Achinduin Artefacts under Treasure Trove regulations
- The Accession of the Carmichael Achinduin bible with its genealogical detail
- The continuing featuring of items in the collection through website pages: Object of the Month and Image of the Week

The Cottage

Freda Drysdale's very full report on the cottage in 2016/7 can be found in the 2016 Newsletter. The importance of museum accreditation, for example in relation to gifts from other museums (such as the models from Paisley Museum), was emphasized. Memory McDonald was thanked for her help in setting up for 2017.

David White Library

Barbara McDougall reported that there were now 650 books in the specialist library, all bookplated, with a note of the donor, where relevant. There was a full database of acquisitions and CELM had funded rebinding as necessary. She would like to encourage more use of the resource, including by Lismore Primary School. In 2016, she and Bob Hay hosted a school visit to study the 1868 diary of Mrs MacGregor, wife of Rev. Gregor MacGregor.

Genealogy

Laura Gloag drew attention to the full report she had made in the 2016 Newsletter. Her recent work has involved quite a lot of correcting faulty family trees, including incorrect information available on Amnesty.com The Emigrant Register of 2009 has been expanded, and it was time to present some of the extensive Lismore family trees in the Centre.

Jennifer Baker then vacated the chair and Bob Hay acted as substitute for the election of directors.

Election of Directors

Following the Memorandum and Articles, three directors retired: Anne MacLean Fleming, Lesley Hamilton and Memory McDonald.

The remaining directors: Jennifer Baker, Douglas Breingan, Arthur Cross, Helen Crossan, Davy Garrett, Clare Howarth and Mike Robertson had agreed to stand for 2017. Their nominations *en bloc* were accepted. Proposed by Duncan Drysdale and seconded by Archie MacColl.

The Board was asked to seek actively for additional potential directors; and to consider the appropriateness of the existing regulations for appointing directors.

Jennifer Baker resumed the chair

Membership Fee

It was agreed to maintain the fee at the 2016 level.

AOCB

Jennifer Baker was warmly thanked for all of her work as Chair in 2016.