



Minutes of the CELM 2023/24 AGM held at Ionad Naomh Moluag 10 July 2024

Present

Jennifer Baker, Ailsa Clarke, Arthur Cross, Bob Hay, Sarah Jones, Anne Livingstone, Julie Livingstone, Archie MacColl, Duncan MacGregor, Michelle MacGregor, Ian MacKinnon, Memory McDonald, Peggy Nicolson, Noelle Odling, Mike Robertson, Pauline Ross, Douglas Thorburn, Sebastian Tombs, Catriona White, Carol Wormleighton, Julian Wormleighton.

Apologies

Caroline Bath, Douglas Breingan, Beth Campbell, Roderick Campbell, David Clarke, Morag Ferguson, Lesley Hamilton, Clare Haworth, Dorothea Hay, Andy Hough, Jane Hough, Mike Hyatt, Fiona Lees, Anita Livingstone, Ina MacColl, Katie MacGregor, Maureen Mitchell, Mark Newman, Stuart Ross, Eva Tombs, John Whitehead, Marilyn Whitehead,

Minutes of the 2022/23 AGM

Proposed Ian MacKinnon, seconded Julian Wormleighton. Accepted unanimously.

There were no Matters Arising.

Chair Report 2024 (Jennifer Baker)

Good afternoon everybody and thank you for attending our 2024 AGM.

2024 has, on the whole, been a good year for Comann Eachdraidh Lios Mòr. As it is 30 years since CELM was founded in 1994, we decided to commemorate the year by dedicating part of our exhibition to the decision taken then by our founders, which has led us to where we are now. The next paragraph I repeat every year, and I make no apologies for that because, without these volunteers, this place would not exist. It is important to remember how *much* work is done by them.

General administration (which is equivalent to running a successful business) managing and manning the shop and coordinating shop volunteers; carrying out essential maintenance of the buildings; painting and decorating; cleaning; grass cutting, path maintenance; marketing

and publicity; fundraising; organising events; liaising with other island groups; caring and cataloguing rare books and others in the David White library; carrying out genealogical searches; maintaining the website, Facebook and twitter; maintaining and updating the archive; mounting displays in the cottage and the museum, liaising with the school and island community and off island organisations – all and more done out of commitment to the principles on which this place was founded

Added to that, I must thank the generosity of people who, over the years, have gifted both the land that we are based on here at the Centre, and the 38 acres of land with historic Achinduin Castle. We also benefit hugely from people who have been generous enough to leave cash gifts in their Wills and to the MacDougall McCallum Foundation in USA who donate annually. And, of course, day-to-day donations.

In 2017 we had our first Taproot Festival – four days of music, poetry and story-telling with distinguished names from the mainland. In 2019 we had an even better one having learned from all the mistakes we made in 2017. In 2021 things were different. Festivals such as these take a year to plan and 2020 was not a year for planning anything. We didn't want Taproot to die, however, so in 2021 we decided to have a 'fragmented' version. This proved very popular so... it has grown. Twice a month throughout the winter on a Sunday at 4.30 we have had talks on diverse subjects, stories, films and superb musical evenings, finishing with the grand finale of Lismore Primary School performing *Sooty Scones* at the Cottars cottage – a sad tale of a game of football that ended in disaster. A true story. They also gave a fine performance on fiddle, song and artwork. Thanks to Jane Oxnard, their teacher and Debbie Hanley, head of school.

Many thanks are due to Davy Maddock. He had to leave the island for personal reasons but while he was here – and even for a time after he left he provided a programme of a huge variety of music – folk, jazz, electronic and more to the delight of audiences. We miss him and hope that Lismore has worked its magic on him and that he'll return to us some day. Many thanks, too, to Sarah and Dan. They opened the café on those Sunday evenings to provide coffee, tea, and other drinks so that we could chat about what we'd seen and heard afterwards.

I would like to make a special mention here of 3 valued members of the Board. Ailsa and David Clarke and Douglas Breingan. All three live off the island and yet their contribution to CELM has been, and continues to be, invaluable. Their combined knowledge of history, of the island and of the wider world has been of huge advantage to us. And while talking of the Board, and the background committee can I stress how lucky we are. Each and every one brings their specific skills and enthusiasms and each and every one is committed to CELM and what it means to the community.

And we welcome *two* new members to our Board: Michelle MacGregor and Julie Livingstone. Thank you both.

A wee teaser for next year. Our exhibition will be Lismore Water themed – a subject dear (or not) to all our hearts – by Dr Laura Major of Strathclyde University, Glasgow.

Two final thank yous: to Eva Tombs for the Jacobean rose she grew from rosehips near to Donald's Black's house which she has donated to the Centre. We have, of course, christened it the Donald Black Rose. Donald Black was one of our founder members and the first chair

of CELM. And to this exceptional island community for your support and goodwill. We couldn't function without it.

Stop Press.

Catriona and David White donated a turnip planter to the museum today. It's a handsome machine which will be displayed appropriately. Also a beautiful map book which will be an interesting addition to the library.

Website Report (Pauline Dowling)

The website is the digital Heritage Centre and is responsible for the recording of the history, heritage and happenings of the entire centre. It allows the diaspora, that vital group who support us in every way, to visit and experience what we experience. It is the same size as the entire centre. .

As I have been effectively the only person running it and social media for the last 12 years , it has been too difficult to do this adequately. I have concentrated on the writing and posting which leaves no time for anything else. Fortunately, VisitScotland pointed out the shortfalls. I have corrected as much of the content as possible so far and am happy to report the board is now addressing the inadequate staffing. At the next AGM we hope to report that the Digital Centre is as impressive and available to all as the one we are sitting in today.

A first step. Sarah MacDonald has agreed to manage the social media which is also extremely important as an advertising tool. Just and only that. There is enormous potential for the digital Heritage Centre to grow in many directions but alas we lack the staff. We are a small population with big plans. We will get there.

Treasurer's Report (Noelle Odling)

The accounts presented (previously circulated to members) were accepted unanimously. Proposed Noelle Odling, seconded Mike Robertson.

Curators' Report.

- We are pleased to welcome Morag Ferguson as the new Curator of Objects. Her induction into the work continues.
- The Archive Catalogue has been updated and printed. A copy has been lodged in the Library
- The supplies of handouts for graveslabs & the graveyard tour have been maintained.
- New acquisitions (1). Farm documents from Fennachrochain and Balure donated by Anne Livingstone and Julie Livingstone. The archive has a unique and expanding collection of documentation of farming and crofting on the island.
- New acquisition (2). Minute books of the Lismore Women's Guild, 1981-2017. Donated by Anne Livingstone.
- New acquisition (3). Odling artwork. Thanks to Noelle Odling.
- Publications: New edition of The Great Garden. Two articles on schools on Lismore around time of the 1872 Education Act.
- Archaeology: Over £16,000 secured for post-excavation analyses.

The meeting was informed that there had been some uncertainty about the renewal of Accredited Museum status, but that the Board would act to ensure renewal, as accreditation was central to the work of the Society.

Election of Board Members

In line with the memorandum and articles, Douglas Breingan, Arthur Cross and Clare Haworth retired as directors, and were unanimously re-elected. The meeting was delighted to welcome Julie Livingstone and Michelle MacGreor as new directors (Proposed Mike Robertson, seconded Ailsa Clarke).

Annual Membership Fee

It was agreed that this would remain unchanged until the next AGM. Proposed Mike Robertson, seconded Sarah Jones, accepted unanimously.

Catriona White Asked the Board to report to the next AGM on what CELM offers to members.

Independent Examiner

David MacGregor confirmed for a further year (accepted unanimously, proposed Noelle Odling, seconded Mike Robertson)

AOCB

No matters arising.

The members at the meeting expressed their gratitude to Jennifer Baker for chairing the meeting so well and for her service throughout the year.

