Aultbea Hall Management Committee

Tuesday 23 January 2024

19.00 hrs.

I. Andy welcomed all to the first meeting of 2024, wishing us a 'Happy New Year'.

II. Attendees: Andy (Chair); Colin; Joyce; Pauline (Zoom); Kerry Ann (Zoom); Bruce; Fee; Jean; Heather (Zoom).
Apologies: Jon; Jen.

III. **Existing Business**

a) Financial Position - Bruce had circulated the final income and expenditure figures for 2023 and these accounts have now been signed off by our independent examiner. He also detailed financial transactions for January 2024 to date. It was agreed that the original 'Trust' bank accounts could now be closed.

b) Our independent examiner had also requested information about various operational procedures to ensure we are meeting the requirements of our SCIO constitution. These related to our registers of members and trustees, giving due notice for the AGM, and potential future policies for both sub-committees and financial reserves. Our current arrangements were deemed to be compliant.

c) Funding Applications - Now that the Highland Council has processed the Building Warrant, (and without imposing any unforeseen conditions), Pauline has written to the Hugh Fraser Foundation to request the redemption of their funding pledge. This will be considered at their next meeting which is end January.
Andy, Pauline and Fee had an online meeting last Friday afternoon with Mark Crowe, who is the Project Officer now allocated by Highland Council to be our link for the Community Regeneration grant. Having considered the explanations provided in writing, he has advised that we do not need to secure additional quotes for the various elements of the Phase II project. He has also agreed that we can claim for the drainage work undertaken since the grant was awarded and can use some of the contingency allocation for the unexpected consultancy costs of securing the SER certificate required. Pauline hopes to be able to submit the first claim against invoices soon, which will help our cash flow.
Once the fund reopens, we intend to apply for up to £2K from the North Highland Initiative to support the installation of more energy efficient heating and lighting.
There was considerable discussion as to what precisely is required for fire doors/exits.
Finally, GAMS have made a very welcome offer to consider an application for funding support of c.£15K (maybe more) for improving disabled access to the Hall. Various works were proposed that would achieve this which are over and beyond what was proposed for Phase II. Specific quotes will be needed to support the funding request.

d) Ongoing Works - The drainage work is proving its worth as water is no longer coming into the Hall foundations. Highland Council are currently working on their own drainage scheme in the Hall vicinity and do not, we understand, intend to use our soakaway.

e) IT and media - Jen is maintaining active and engaging Facebook posts. Pauline mentioned that we need photos of the Hall work in progress for reports to funders and these could double up for social media, keeping the community informed. A more wide-ranging press release will be published once there are Phase II achievements to report.

f) Fundraising - There are ongoing T-shirt sales and this initiative has contributed to our general fund-raising very usefully over the past year.
Events are being planned for the Easter week-end with a parent-organised Easter Egg Hunt on the Friday, and a car boot sale and range of activities for the Saturday, including BBQ and tea-tent. Various suggestions made will be considered. Andy is investigating the possibility of enabling mobile online payments into our bank account at such events. It is proposed to organise another Flotilla day on Saturday 3 August.
Lynn Jury has offered a painting for the Hall, in due course.

g) Community engagement/use of Hall - We agreed that our 2024 SCIO AGM should be on Tuesday 19 March at 7.30 pm in the Crow's Nest. Pauline will send out the related documentation in good time. To encourage attendance (and new members) it would be good to have some other attraction to follow the formal part of the meeting. Suggestions were made!
Current elected and co-opted trustees all stand down at the AGM but can be re-elected. If everyone currently in post continues to be willing to serve on the committee, we can still recruit two more co-opted members.
More bookings are coming for the Hall from community groups, the Active Schools Coordinator and a drawing class, which is all very pleasing.
Joyce has submitted an electricity meter reading for 22 January.

h) Jean will prepare any risk assessments required for the Easter happenings.

IV. **Phase II**

The CRF (HC) project officer has requested a revised schedule of work, updated quotations where costs have significantly increased (particularly the steelwork), and sight of the contractors' public liability certification. Colin offered to make contact with those this concerns and request that the documents be copied over to Pauline for her to forward.
It was agreed that the steel supports work was the absolute priority but that it might be possible to progress the kitchen floor coverings in the short term. Pauline will provide Joyce with the original quotations for her to follow up (including the floor preparation).
If we need to make cost savings on Phase II, Colin suggested that one possibility to consider would be the repairs envisaged for the stage area.
Colin, Jock and Chris have been looking at maintenance which needs to be undertaken, including replacing some damaged plasterboard with plywood. This they are willing to do on a voluntary basis, for which we are very grateful.

V. **Any Other Business**

i) Fee was concerned that her early morning turning on of the heating for the Tuesday Yoga class was an unnecessary expense. Kerry Ann offered to do it a little later (but still in good time). She will be provided with a key.
ii) Andy explained the online training that is available should anyone be willing to become the holder of a personal alcohol licence.
iii) Colin, Fee and Jean have all been doing some cleaning. As the Crow's Nest is becoming better used, we agreed that we ought to ensure clear communication as to who is doing what, when.

VI. The next Committee meeting will be on Tuesday, 20 February, 7pm.

The meeting ended at 20.20 hrs.