Aultbea Hall Management Committee

Tuesday 2 April 2024

19.00 hrs.

I. Andy welcomed all to the meeting, particularly Colin I to his first one after election at the recent AGM.

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

III. **Existing Business**

a) Financial Position - Bruce had circulated the income and expenditure figures for 2024 to date. There has been somewhat more activity this past month, with grants received and Phase II invoices paid. The Easter Gathering brought in a very useful £1000, (before bills are paid), and there have been generous donations both from two individuals and from Aultbea Hotel (Jam Jar) from their quiz nights last year.

b) Funding Applications - Payment of the grant from the Hugh Fraser Foundation has now been received.
As required, a report on progress was submitted to the Sylvia Waddilove Foundation, a year after they made their grant. They commended the resilience of our project and the community, wishing us well as we move forward.
Pauline will submit a request to the North Highland Initiative for a grant towards the planned installation of energy-efficient heating and lighting in the main Hall as soon as we have received a revised quotation for the equipment costs.
Also, once we have quotations for the work envisaged, we will put together a request to GAMS for support towards improving accessibility, both inside and out. Colin B. will discuss this with our joiner.

c) Ongoing Works - Our electrician has confirmed that the lighting in the Crow's Nest cannot be dimmed, so we will investigate alternative ways of meeting the requests for more subtle illumination on occasion.
Volunteers have cleared the main Hall, ready for the start of the structural repairs and some exploratory floor work has been undertaken. Any equipment/material costs incurred will be reimbursed on invoice.

d) IT and media - The Easter Gathering provided opportunity for social media activity and a GDT article. Contact has been made with a reporter from the *Ross-shire Journal*, and information provided about the Hall story and project for future use.

e) Fundraising - The Easter weekend events were blessed with mainly good weather and there was excellent community support for both the Egg Hunt and the Gathering. A new volunteer has been recruited for future face-painting.
Several T-shirts have been sold of late, and there are still stocks for the summer.
'Not the Raft Race' is scheduled for Saturday 3 August. There will be a 'grand raffle' and Heather already has a donation of an excellent Hearach (Harris) whisky for a '100-square' activity. There was debate as to the logistics of the 'Flotilla' event - what works best where - based on experience of the past two years.

Thereafter, we will have a better idea as to what is feasible for the Christmas/New Year period. We are keen to ensure that there will be opportunities for family events.

f) Community engagement/use of Hall - The AGM was very well attended and there are no issues arising. Our annual report and accounts have now been submitted to OSCR.
7 new members were recruited in March and all are accepted by the committee. Inevitably, a handful of members have left the area so the current membership is a healthy 125. We will organise a community mail drop in due course, to inform all households of project progress and invite more applications for membership.
The Gift Aid claim has been submitted to HMRC. We await payment, or a response.
Jen will use Facebook to promote use of the Crow's Nest over the summer months.

g) Risk assessments/volunteer coordination - Jean had prepared the necessary risk assessment for the Easter Gathering. She will ensure that there is appropriate documentation for the forthcoming volunteer work in the main Hall.

h) Procurement - The baby-changing table has been purchased and installed. We agreed to purchase and wire in a trickle heater to add to its comfort!
We have been offered two PAT tested microwaves. One of these would be a better size than the current model in the top kitchen.

IV. **Phase II**
The committee have concluded that the quotation from James Evans and Sons offers better value for money for the enhanced steel work repairs now required than the recent one from a local contractor, whom Andy will contact to inform. The contract has therefore been agreed and a deposit paid. Jon and Colin B. have arranged a meeting with the Dingwall company for 5 April and it is hoped that a template can be manufactured soon to check for fit. Access for the contractors will be via the side door.

V. **Any Other Business**
i) We have yet to receive stickers for the new bin collection period. Fee will check to see whether she can find any communication about this from Highland Council.
ii) Despite more than two years of correspondence, EDF are now requiring a statement from the trustees that Joyce is authorised to act on behalf of the organisation. Pauline will write on headed paper to confirm her role.
iii) The Fire Alarm is still going off without due cause, probably because of over-sensitivity to dust in the fitting in the upstairs toilet. Colin is working to resolve the problem.
iv) Should the Loch Ewe Brewing Company progress with setting up an occasional local pizza delivery, we are happy for it to operate near the Hall.
v) We discussed the possible licence requirements, and related implications, for selling alcohol at Hall events in the future.

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

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 20.10 hrs.