Aultbea Hall Management Committee

Tuesday 15 April

19.00 hrs.

I. Andy welcomed everyone to the meeting

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

III. **Existing Business**

a) Financial Position - Bruce had circulated the income and expenditure figures for March 2025. Further invoices paid in early April (including electrical installations and electricity bill for December-February) have reduced the bank balance by £4K since. Further expenditure anticipated this month includes for the materials for the internal painting (the final invoice required to be paid relating to the Phase II CRF project grant) and the bench cushions manufacture, which Heather reported as being well underway.

b) Funding Applications - Highland Council paid the third claim for our Community Regeneration Fund very promptly. Pauline is now working on the fourth claim and the final evaluation report which is required before that payment can be made.
The 'completion of project' work reports have been submitted and acknowledged by both NHI (for their contribution towards the energy-efficient heating and lighting installation) and GAMS (for the various improvements to the accessibility of the Hall). NHI may then consider a further application for funding support this year, provided their criteria can be met - perhaps the external painting (materials and labour) would be eligible. A quote has now been received to support the request, which will be made this month.

c) Minor Works Budget - The most recent wood order has been delivered and paid for. Other recent purchases include screws, carpet tacks and paint.

d) Ongoing works - Further to our volunteer joiner completing the bench-making in the near future, tasks on the list include wrapping the rope around the steel supports, securing the now-redundant stage door and blocking off and weatherproofing the back stage door (external).
Pauline will inform the potential donors of the quantity of paint that would be needed to give the roof sheeting two coats of regulation dark green.
Bench cushions will be brought up from the dressmaker as possible over the next few weeks.
Other than the floors of the main Hall and kitchens, a thorough deep clean has been undertaken throughout, thanks to Jean and her volunteer helpers. She observed that the kitchen window needs repainting, with a view to replacement in due course.

e) Schedule and actions required for re-opening and events - The completion certificate from Building Control, which included lifting of the "dangerous building" notice, was received on 7 April. We appreciate Scott Ramsay expediting the final stages at very short notice. In Jean's absence, Pauline immediately sent the Completion Certificate and Electrical Installation Certificate, the final documentation required for the Public

Entertainment Licence, to the HC Licensing Team. No response has been received as yet, likely because of the Easter holidays. As soon as the PEL is authorised, Jean or Pauline will submit the application for an Occasional Liquor Licence, in the hope that all necessary permissions will be received in time to promote and prepare for the Crofters' Ball that has been pencilled in for late May. However, we cannot publicise our intentions until all due licences are issued.
Given the maximum hall capacity of 150 people, guidance indicates that a minimum of 7 stewards would be required. Fee will compile a list of experienced volunteers who would be available to help.
The necessary fire notices are on display, and our Hall booking conditions provide details of the procedures for fire safety. A briefing would be held before any event. The local Fire Service have recommended the removal of the yurt and the large tables that are currently stored behind the stage, as they could impede circulation in the event of an emergency. Proposals were discussed as to alternative storage.
Jean will review and revise our existing Risk Assessment (prepared for the Poolewe Hallowe'en ceilidh) for our proposed event.
The conditions imposed and implemented with respect to the catering provision in 2012 continue to be in place. Fee will check with other local hall(s) whether they have had to register with the Environmental Health department in order to offer their kitchen facilities for external, paying bookings.

d) <u>IT and media</u> - Jen will post on Facebook to highlight the construction and fitting out of the benches (Colin to provide photos), and to give a heads-up for the 'Not the Raft Race' (Flotilla Day) which is scheduled for Saturday 2 August this year.
Once we are open, she will propose some ideas for a revamping of our website.

e) <u>Fundraising</u> - Tote bags and T-shirts continue to sell. Aultbea Hotel have offered a space for T-shirt display, which we welcome.
The kindling, from our 'heritage' flooring, is now ready in generous 7kg+ bags and will be made available for donation contributions - Fee to provide a photo for advertising.
We propose to run the Flotilla Day on the same lines as last year. If we have a bottle stall, it will require a dedicated presence.

f) <u>Community engagement/use of Hall</u> - The AGM had gone smoothly and those attending were appreciative of the progress made on the project. Three new members were recruited.
Before any formal event, we want to give local people the opportunity to come along to see their renovated Hall so propose an open afternoon on Friday 16 May, 3-6pm, with an offer to be made to Bualnaluib School for a visit, activities, and refreshments on Wednesday 14th - Kerry Ann to contact the headteacher. Fee also has an activity group visiting on 15 May who would be grateful to use the facilities.
No further enquiries have been made by the Arctic Convoy Museum to use the Hall for their VE day commemorations. It was good to hear that the school is making banners for the event.
It would seem that the Active Schools programme for Aultbea is currently in abeyance.
An expression of interest has been received from the Highland Third Sector Interface organisation, with a view to holding a 'West Fest' in the Hall in September, one of a series of events. Kerry Ann has arranged to meet the contact to show her the facilities next week.

g) <u>Risk assessments/volunteer coordination</u> - Jean will ensure that there are appropriate risk assessments in place as the Hall comes back into community use.
A 'body spills' kit needs to be purchased to be added to our First Aid resources. Jean will undertake this and also check that the First Aid kits are complete.

h) Procurement - A big electricity bill has been received for December 2024-February 2025. Given the extensive work that was ongoing by our electrical and other contractors during that period, we can understand the costs but hope to recoup some of the VAT, and all of the Climate Levy element, through an application to EDF based on our charity status and the substantial amount of grant-funded project work to improve our energy efficiency. Colin will undertake checks of the energy consumption of some of our bookings to give a measure of the actual costs of the session compared with the fees we charge.
MacGregors are due for the annual fire extinguisher check. It is likely that we will need to purchase an additional extinguisher for the new switchboard cupboard. They will be asked to quote for the annual fire security alarm inspection, given the expense of our current contractors.

k) Press release - Pauline will draft a press release to announce the completion of the project and full re-opening of the Hall for community use, in the hope that it can go live in early May.

IV. **Any Other Business**
i) Jen wondered if there is an artist available to create a new backdrop for the stage. Fee will speak to a local graphic designer who may be interested.
ii) Andy will donate a plug-in lighting tripod for those dark corners!
iii) It was agreed that the only fair way to allocate the bench placing for each clan cushion would be by Heather drawing lots.

V. The **next Committee meeting** will be on 6 May.

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 20.25 hrs.