

Aultbea Hall Management Committee

Tuesday 6 May 2025

19.00 hrs.

- I. Andy welcomed everyone to the meeting
- II. Attendees: Andy (Chair); Colin B; Joyce; Pauline; Bruce; Fee; Jean; Jen (Zoom); Heather (Zoom).
Apologies: Kerry Ann; Colin I.
- III. **Existing Business**
 - a) Financial Position - Bruce had circulated the income and expenditure figures for April 2025. The month had seen routine income but substantial expenditure, including a very high electricity bill, servicing and purchase of fire extinguishers and final project invoices for the electrical installation, joinery and paint.
 - b) Funding Applications - Pauline has submitted the fourth claim and the final evaluation report to the Highland Council. The CRF officers have now, without prior notification, asked for full details of every invoice paid throughout Phase II of the project, before they can authorise payment of the final part of the grant.
A summary report relating to completion of Phase II has been sent to the Hugh Fraser Foundation.
An overview of the finances of the project was circulated with the agenda. Even given the considerable grant support, we could never have completed the repairs and renovations to the extent we have achieved without the amazing support of individual and community donations, support of our fund-raising events, sponsorship and sales, not to speak of the unquantifiable amount of voluntary time given by so many. We have more than delivered the commitment we made to the community in 2022.
After a further funding application, North Highland Initiative have granted us £2000 towards the costs of the external painting (materials and labour). Jean will contact our professional to inform him that the paint should soon be arriving and the work can be undertaken at his convenience over the summer months. It is hoped that it will be completed by the end of September.
 - c) Minor Works Budget - Colin has been working hard on a number of repair and clean-up tasks and the back of the stage has been cleared. His list still includes replacing roof flashing at one end, blocking off the gable end to prevent bird entry (after nesting) and various repainting of the stairway and toilet walls. Materials and (once again) volunteer support are to hand.
 - d) Ongoing works - The benches have been completed, stained with Danish oil and cushion delivery is being organised, with placement of each allocated.
Andy will contact the steel support installers to check out some technical details.
 - e) Public Entertainment Licence/planned events - To our great frustration, and despite prompt submission of all paperwork required and follow-up emails, we still await Highland Council's approval of our Public Entertainment Licence request. The application for an Occasional Liquor Licence cannot be progressed without it. If nothing has been received by Friday of this week, it will be too late to organise the planned 'opening

dance' this month. If this is the case, Fee will enquire as to the availability of the band and helpers to reschedule.

Jean has updated event-related Risk Assessments in hand, and will prepare task sheets for fire stewards, so each knows their remit in the event of an emergency.

Andy has ascertained that Aultbea Hall's kitchen is still registered with the Environmental Health dept, even though the Hall was closed for 6 years and the organisation responsible for it in 2012 no longer exists. On checking, other local halls are not registered. We meet all known condition requirements.

Fee has organised window cleaning.

- f) IT and media - Jen has posted on Facebook recently to highlight the construction and fitting out of the benches, given a heads-up for the 'Not the Raft Race' (Flotilla Day) which is scheduled for Saturday 2 August this year, and promoted the VE Day celebration lunch event.
The extra details for booking the main hall will be added to the Bookings tab of the website and she will circulate her ideas for giving it a refreshed look.
- g) Fundraising - T-shirts continue to find buyers.
- h) Community engagement/use of Hall - Possible given that we have recently received the Building Control warrant, a 'last minute' booking has been made for a VE Celebration lunch on 10 May as local residents wanted to offer the older generation an appropriate recognition of the significance of the Hall to the war effort. Arrangements are in hand. Bualnaluib School is delighted to have the opportunity of a session in their new Hall on Wednesday 14 May. Jean and Kerry Ann are meeting to organise this.
After discussion, it was agreed that we would not expect payment for curriculum use of the Hall from the school. Jean will discuss with staff what other bookings they might be considering.
The Highland Third Sector Interface organisation has now booked Saturday 13 September for a 'West Fest' event in the Hall, which is pleasing.
We confirmed that we will charge £10p.h. for main Hall bookings for the time being, whilst we monitor electricity usage.
- i) Jean will update the risk assessment for the planned 'Flotilla' event. Fee has responded to requests from Aultbea Community Council for more information, as they have to sign off for insurance purposes as in past years.
- j) Procurement - Pauline has submitted a request to EDF for a VAT rebate and refund of the Climate Levy elements of our electricity bills since reconnection in 2023 until May 2025, given that most of the electricity consumption during that period has been 'non-business use' (i.e. grant-funded repairs and renovations) which would seem to be eligible for the claim.
A letter received from EDF claims that we owe for one invoice. (On investigation, Bruce has reference evidence that this was paid, so EDF are checking their records further.)
- k) Press release - A report on the Hall reopening should be in the GDT of 9 May. The Ross-shire Journal has published an article also, which has been widely re-posted on our local social media sites, with good responses.

The **next Committee meeting** will be on 10 June.

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 20.15 hrs.