

Aultbea Hall Management Committee

Tuesday 11 November 2025

19.00 hrs.

- I. Andy welcomed everyone, including Ffyona Mackenzie from HTSI, to the meeting.
- II. Attendees: Andy (Chair); Colin B; Joyce; Pauline; Kerry Ann; Bruce; Jean; Jen (Zoom); Heather (Zoom); Amelia; Mel; Ffyona Mackenzie.
Apologies: Colin I; Fee.

The meeting was informed that, because of ongoing health issues and his other commitments, Colin I had tendered his resignation. Pauline will respond expressing our understanding of the circumstances, and our appreciation of all he has done for the committee and of his willingness to continue to help whenever possible.

III. West Fest 2026

Ffyona outlined some of her thoughts for West Fest 2026, which she very much hopes will be held in Aultbea Hall again, possibly earlier in the year. She will consider what activities might be possible outside, including use of marquees, and how the food offer might be broadened. Once it's known who is participating, we can resolve any extraordinary issues such as electricity usage. Everyone agreed that the first West Fest had been a very worthwhile occasion and, as further planning is undertaken, we can work through how best to support the initiative.

IV. Existing Business

- a) Village Halls Inspiration Award - Pauline was thanked for putting in the submission which brought us second place and a prize of £1500. She stressed that the award is a national recognition of everyone's contributions to so many aspects of generating community support, and delivering such successful fund-raising activities and events. We agreed that the prize money should be the start of a reserved fund towards Phase IV - renewal of the stage facilities and curtains.
- b) Financial Position - Bruce had circulated the financial figures for October 2025. It was the best month to date for Hall rental income and there was a most unexpected and generous individual donation, which will be committed to the stage project. Most of the expenditure had been on the purchases recommended at the last meeting - lamps, soup kettles, other kitchen equipment and crockery, and signage.
Highland Council has confirmed that no business rates are payable.
- c) Funding Applications - Pauline has informed our key funders of the Village Halls Inspiration Award. Both NHI and CRF have indicated that they would consider further funding requests from us for a criteria-valid project. So, Pauline will begin to scope the remit and costs of the desired stage renewal, discussing this initially with those known to be interested locally. Various individuals were suggested who might be able to contribute to the planning.
- d) Minor works - Colin has a list, which he shared, of relatively minor (though necessary) repair work. Much of it is related to leaks and ongoing water ingress, together with a tap repair and wiring-in of two trickle heaters.

- e) Ongoing Works - Internally, gloss painting of doors, windows and skirting boards has continued. Most significantly, Don worked tirelessly up on the scaffolding for 8 days, with Colin, Matt and James supporting him at ground level, to complete a 3 coat painting of the ceiling. It is understood that Roddy has prepared a quotation for a full replacement of the rotten metal sheeting on the vertical section of the roof. Andy will look out for it. Poles have arrived for the window curtains in the Hall. However, family illness has delayed the completion of the making, though it is well underway. We hope that installation will be completed by the time of the Family Christmas Ceilidh. It was agreed that the surplus stable door should be fitted for the Crow's Nest entrance.
- f) Licenses - Heather will be the nominated person for the Hogmanay dance and will liaise with Andy to submit the Occasional Liquor licence (before 28 November).
- g) Risk Assessments - Jean will finalise the risk assessment for the Family Ceilidh; that for the Children's Christmas party (12 December) will be updated from last year.
- h) IT and media - Posting of the news of the *Village Halls Inspiration Award* generated many supportive comments and new followers. Painting, and the several Christmas period events, are providing Jen with ample material to keep the Facebook page busy. Pauline has an article ready for the next GDT, to celebrate the Award, the completion of the ceiling painting and to promote December's events.
- i) Fundraising - Heather has replenished the T-shirt & tote bag stock at Aultbea Hotel. Tote bags are selling well at present. There is still kindling available.
- j) Hall events - We have four events in planning for December: Children's Christmas Party on 12th; Christmas Fayre and Table-top Sale 13th; Family Ceilidh on 20th and Hogmanay Dance on 31st. Various details were clarified. Andy will need confirmation of the drink purchases needed by 9 December.
- k) Community engagement / use of Hall - In the light of experience, the Conditions of Let and Booking Form have been revised. The changes proposed were ratified. The form will be re-issued from January to all existing regular groups as well as new bookings. Bualnaluib School's first Friday morning session using the Hall (7 November) was very successful and they intend to build this into their regular schedule. A talk has been arranged on 15 November as part of the Wester Ross Dark Skies Festival. Pauline offered to meet another new group organiser on Saturday 22 November in Kerry Ann's absence, but will need some induction herself as to the Fire Alarm system. Joyce will prepare a checklist of procedures for general information as the alarm in the ladies is still going off, without due cause, at inconvenient times!
- l) PVG - Jean, as Safeguarding Lead, has ascertained that Aultbea Hall can be registered, at no cost, with Volunteer Scotland. She continues to work through the complexities of the online admin needed to register herself, Kerry Ann and Mel on the system.
- m) Procurement - Pauline will check the original commissioning date of the Fire Alarm system for Joyce to inform Logic Alarms when we contract with them early 2026. As yet, no MacGregor orders have been placed to see how their online ordering works.

V. Any Other Business

- i) The Events Group is planning a Talent Show for 20 June 2026. Kerry Ann will check whether we can borrow the extra 10 round silver tables which will be needed.
- ii) Andi Neate is making the 'clan label' plaques for the Hall benches.

The **next Committee meeting** will be on Tuesday, 9 December.

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 20.30 hrs.