

**Minute of the Annual General Meeting of Groam House Museum,
held by Zoom,
on Thursday 19th December 2024, 7.30pm**

Present:

Trustees: Richard Hotchkis (Chair), Doug Maclean, Paul Pritchard (Treasurer),
Barbara Cohen, Sylvia Macdonald

Members: Jill Harden, Magdalene Maclean, Norman Newton, Rita Fabling, Jenny
Brogden, Jean Hogben, Steve Hogben

Apologies:

1 Welcome and apologies

The Chair welcomed those attending and introduced the agenda. The agenda had been sent to members prior to the meeting, and both the draft accounts and Trustees' report had been made available on-line through the Groam House website. Apologies were given as noted above.

2. Minute of previous meeting

The Chair presented the minute of the previous meeting held on 13th December 2023 and asked for any corrections or comments. There being no objections or corrections the minutes were proposed for acceptance and accepted unanimously.

3. Reports

3.1 Trustees' report for the year 2023/24

The Chair presented a report on the activity of the museum on behalf of the board. The report had been made available on the website in text form, but the Chair used a PowerPoint presentation to deliver the key points.

The Chair introduced himself having taken over from Doug Maclean during the year.

The board at the end of 2023-24 was:

Richard Hotchkis (Chair)
Paul Pritchard (Treasurer)
Doug Maclean

Barbara Cohen
Sylvia Macdonald
Alastair Morton

Adviser: Helen Avenell

This was unchanged from the end of the previous financial year.

He gave a brief summary of his background in museums.

He then summarised the changes in personnel at the museum. Jo Clement left to pursue other opportunities after many years work on the George Bain collection. Charlie Leggatt left to work in Cromarty but remains a volunteer. Cindy Campbell then joined us but after a year had to resign as she was moving away from the area for personal reasons. Our new manager is Aila Scafer who introduced herself later in the meeting.

The Chair noted that a 5-year strategy plan has been approved by the Board and is available on the museum's website. It sets out our strategy not only in terms of what we hope to achieve in terms of exhibits and collections but also that the Board is determined to make sure the museum is financially resilient. It was noted that such plans are essential for Groam House to secure future funding.

It was noted that visitor numbers were just a bit less than 4,000 and that the museum continues to be hamstrung by a shortage of volunteers which restricts our opening hours. The shop continues to do well with a new till and better stock control. Our lecture programme goes from strength to strength thanks to the efforts of Alistair Morton. Thanks were also given to Jenny Brogden and her fund-raising team for another successful year in raising funds for the museum.

The Chair also noted our collections will be moved from Rosehaugh to Arndene. This was necessitated by the end of our lease at Rosehaugh and the rental of Arndene at no19 High St in Rosemarkie at the same terms as Rosehaugh. The cost of this move will be funded largely by grants from MGS and NHLF.

Finally the Chair thanked all those who make the museum possible:

- All the members for continuing to support us
- Our volunteers for making us what we are
- Our paid workers for supporting us so wholeheartedly
- Our Trustees for achieving so much in difficult circumstances
- Everyone who makes Groam House great!

3.1 Treasurer's report

The Treasurer had provided the accounts for the period ending 31 March 2024 through the website and opened the meeting for questions. He advised that the year was a more normal one as previous years were affected by the Covid pandemic.

The museum is still struggling to achieve a level of visitors and income compared to the pre Covid period. One reason is that the Museum is only open in the afternoons compared to both morning and afternoon pre Covid. This is due to insufficient volunteers available to open both periods. As a consequence, the museum ran a

deficit in the year of just over £6,000. This was unsatisfactory and it is a key policy of the museum to eliminate deficits and make the museum financially resilient.

KEY POINTS ON ACCOUNTS TO 31ST MARCH 2024

Reserves

- Unrestricted Reserves at £26,067 (2023: £32,310)
 - Of which £15,000 in a Designated General Reserve
- Restricted Reserves at £23,584 (2023: £2,995)

Income

- General activities £12,287 (2023: £11,185) – an increase of 10%
- Shop activities £18,637 (2023: £11,178) - an increase of 67%
- Unrestricted Grants £8,992 (2023: £8,257) –an increase of 9%
- Restricted Grants for specified projects £20,589 (2023: £1,524)

Expenses

- General activities £41,425 (2023: £47,661) – a decrease of 13%
 - Employees £22,139 (2023: £21,406) – an increase of 5%
- Shop Activities £12,062 (2023: £7,078) – an increase of 70%
- Restricted Grants on specified projects £0 (2023: £1,524)

Main continued Financial Impacts on Income

- Donation income £10,554 (2023: £10,163) – an increase of 4%
- Group Visit Fees £1,132 (2023: £1,021) – an increase of 11%
- Events & Lectures £7,328 (2023: £5,225) – an increase of 40%
- Shop Margin £6,575 (2023: £4,100) – an increase of 60%

Operational Result

- The net incoming/outgoing resources showed a shortfall for the year of £6,243 compared to a deficit of £17,369 in the previous year.
- 2023/24 was a more normal year than earlier years and such a deficit if repeated would drain the museum of its financial reserves. This is unsustainable and the Trustees have made it a priority to make the museum financially sustainable.
- The forecast result for the financial year to 31st March 2025 is that there will be a deficit of c£12,000.

The accounts as presented were noted.

4. Trustees standing down under the three-year rule

Alastair Morton and Paul Pritchard were due to stand down this year. They were immediately re-elected.

5. Appointment of New Trustees

There were no candidates for appointment.

6. Plans for the future

These were largely covered in the Trustees' report. The Chair invited suggestions from the floor. As far as the museum was concerned the immediate plans were to complete the move of the collections from Rosehaugh to the new property on Rosemarkie High Street, and to start using that property for workshops and other activities which would increase the relevance of the museum's collections for local people and visitors. We will be very active in pursuing grant opportunities to help us in achieving those aims.

7. Re-appointment of Tim Wickens, FCA, MSc, Chartered Accountant as Independent Examiner of the Museum's Accounts

The Chair once again paid tribute to the valuable assistance of Mr Wickens and recommended his re-appointment. The meeting agreed unanimously to the re-appointment of Tim Wickens.

8. AOCB

The museum's new manager, Aila Schafer, was given the opportunity to introduce herself and to set out her plans for the future, which was much appreciated by the meeting.

There being no other business, the meeting closed. The chair thanked everyone for attending.