

CAITHNESS BROCH PROJECT

Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Caithness Broch Project

Location Zoom
Date 16 September 2020
Time 1700

In Attendance

Members

Robin Herrick (Chairman)	Jay Brooks
Iain Maclean (Vice Chairman)	Kenneth McElroy
Alan MacIvor	Magnus Davidson
Alex Groves	Mark Gibson
Alison Smith	Pete MacRae
Anthea Atkins	Paul Turner
Carole Whittaker	Rita Baker
Catriona Lawson	Stewart Macintyre
Chris Aitken	<u>Non-Members</u>
Dawn Mackay	Anthony Olson
Ella Macqueen	Ans Elffrinck
Hank Pieter Sterk	Barry Hird
	Liana Weiland

Apologies

Joanne Howdle (Director)
Sara Herrick (Treasurer)
Lilly Hurd (Committee)
Alison Johnston
Andrew Appleby
Gail Ross
Jane Coll

Sent out prior to the meeting:

- 1) 2019 AGM minutes
- 2) 2020 Annual report
- 3) List of current directors and committee members
- 4) Director candidate biographies
- 5) Full accounts to 31 October 2019
- 6) CBP AGM guidance

Meeting commenced at 1900

1. **Timing of AGM**

- 1.1. Robin Herrick noted that the last AGM was in December and it was the intention of the board to bring forward the meeting date over the course of two years to align more closely with the company financial year and the subsequent production and approval of accounts.

2. **Approval of minutes**

- 2.1. RH asked if anyone had any topics to discuss regarding the last minutes, to which the answer was no. Chris Aitken proposed them and Pete MacRae seconded them.

3. **Chairman's report**

- 3.1. RH asked if anyone had any questions regarding the Chairman's report. There were none.

4. **Treasurer's report / accounts**

- 4.1. No questions regarding the accounts were received prior to the meeting or in the meeting apart from CA raised a question regarding the taxation of corporate profits in relation to funding for Ousdale. RH clarified that taxation did not apply to charitable funding, only to

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merchandise activities over certain thresholds. These are recorded in the accounts and we would be advised by our accountants if there is any tax to be paid.

5. Resolution

- 5.1. "CBP will sell its merchandise through retail outlets allowing them to retain a margin on the condition that the retailer buys the merchandise stock from CBP, thereby creating a clear difference between this arrangement and the current arrangement where selected retailers hold our stock and sell it on our behalf."
- 5.2. RH read the resolution regarding selling merchandise on commercial terms via retail outlets and explained the reasoning behind the resolution. RH explained that the existing merchandise sales are direct from CBP (primarily via the web shop) but also through a limited number of local retailers who sell our stock and directly transfer the proceeds without taking a margin. Expanding the range of retailers would allow for greater geographical coverage within the county, increase the range of stock on offer, and keep our supplier costs down by ordering in quantity.
- 5.3. RH asked the meeting for opinions. CA asked for clarification, whether the existing arrangement would exist in parallel with the new arrangement. RH said it would be up to the retailers as to whether they wanted to take the new terms. The resolution was passed without further discussion.

6. Election of directors

- 6.1. RH explained that all directors stand down from the committee and stand for re-election. Each director was elected in turn with no dissension, including PM as a new director.

7. Presentations

- 7.1. Presentation of Ousdale Broch Project by Iain Maclean and Robin Herrick.
- 7.2. Presentation of the Big Broch Build Visualisations by Iain Maclean.
- 7.3. RH explained that the process of siting, designing and building the replica broch is a long process but that it was worth spending time up front to make sure the right decisions are made before committing to what will be a long and expensive project. RH noted that the shortlist contained very different sites with no obvious front runners.
- 7.4. Stewart MacIntyre told the meeting about Bailies of Bennachie (a trustee group conserving an Aberdeenshire hill and its environs) who have produced a 3D app for mobile devices, VR headsets and web browsers, reconstructing and interpreting the Bennachie Colony.

8. Discussion about sustainable tourism in Caithness: what it looks like and what the Project should do

- 8.1. RH introduced this by saying that this is clearly a hot topic in 2020, not just for Caithness but for many areas in the UK not used to the visitor numbers (and demographics) seen this year. RH said that as well as the archaeological objectives, CBP aims to increase visitor numbers to Caithness. RH said he wanted to know what the members' views were on increasing tourism, what this would ideally look like in the future, and what CBP should be doing to not make the situation worse in terms of impact on the environment and the local population. RH noted that one or two bad events get a lot of media coverage, and that a lot of the damage to the archaeology of Caithness has been done historically by the people of Caithness.

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- 8.2. Alison Smith observed that there was no such thing as bad publicity. The events this year can be turned by the locals into enthusiasm to protect the assets of Caithness. AS thought that education, sustainability and environmental protection would overcome negative effects.
- 8.3. Magnus Davidson agreed with AS, indeed the Big Broch Build supports education and heritage, therefore should be seen as part of the solution, not exacerbating the problems.
- 8.4. PM said he hoped it would be a wake-up call to the authorities, seeing how popular attractions can be, therefore the facilities will have to be upgraded. So the long-term legacy of 2020 can be beneficial.
- 8.5. Alan McIvor said the authorities certainly know that improvements have to be made. AM questioned how much the authorities value heritage when there are competing demands on budgets and overall financial pressure for many years. People will tend to pick teachers over heritage.
- 8.6. RH noted there was a strategic aspect to local government spending, whether you cut back or invest, with the pendulum having swung from cuts to investment generally, and whether that will be true at a local level in Caithness.
- 8.7. AM asked if heritage groups should be meeting together with the local councillors. RH agreed and observed that it is not just heritage groups that have an interest in this, but hotels, restaurants, campsites and other businesses that benefit directly from tourism.
- 8.8. AS noted that the Northern Pilgrims Way has been supported by the council and the Countryside Rangers. They have found some landowners to be reticent, concerned about foot traffic, wild camping, etc. AS said everyone needs to work together, reassuring each other and producing benefits for everyone.
- 8.9. PM said the challenge for groups like ours to keep promoting the heritage of Caithness; businesses will support growing tourist numbers and see heritage as an asset that supports jobs and investment.
- 8.10. Kenneth McElroy said the Heritage Forum could organise the meeting suggested by AM.
- 8.11. MD noted that groups such as CBP can access funding that the council cannot, therefore it is not always a choice in investment between culture and heritage on the one hand, and school teachers on the other (for example).

9. Wrap up

- 9.1. IM thanked RH for chairing the project for another year.
- 9.2. KM thanked the members for supporting CBP and following progress on social media.
- 9.3. RH thanked those attending the AGM. RH noted that the online meeting format has worked well, and that people have attended who would not otherwise have been able to. RH proposed that this format be used for future AGMs.
- 9.4. RH said he was very happy that the Project now has 7 directors, with no directors stepping down for the last two years. Also, that the management committee continues to grow in numbers, and range of skills and interests. It is really appreciated how much work people put into the running of the project.

Meeting adjourned at 2015

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Minutes Approved By:

Robin Herrick,
Chair

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Iain Maclean,
Vice Chairman

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Ordinary Resolutions (50%)		
Members	(1) Merchandise	(2) Director Elections
Aitken, Chris	Yes	Yes
Atkins, Anthea	Yes	Yes
Baker, Rita	Yes	Yes
Brooks, Jay	Yes	Yes
Davidson, Magnus	Yes	Yes
Gibson, Mark	Yes	Yes
Groves, Alex	Yes	Yes
Herrick, Robin	Yes	Yes
Lawson, Catriona	Not present	Yes
Macintyre, Stewart	Yes	Yes
MacIvor, Alan	Yes	Yes
Macqueen, Ella	Yes	Yes
MacRae, Pete	Yes	Yes
Smith, Alison	Yes	Yes
Sterk, Hank Pieter	Yes	Yes
Turner, Paul	Not present	Yes
Whittaker, Carole	Yes	Yes
Result	Carried	Carried