

Scottish Local History Forum

Scottish Charity Number: SCO 15850

MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

A K Bell Library, Perth

24th OCTOBER – 2014

Present

John Irvine (Hon Chair)
Jan Bateman (Hon Secretary)
Don Martin (Hon Vice Chair & Publications Board Chair)
Finlay McKichan (Trustee: Governance)
Diana Webster (Trustee: Events)
Douglas Lockhart (Trustee: Journal Sales)
Anthony Cooke (Trustee)
David Ritchie (Trustee)
David Affleck
Cherry Allan
John Anderson
Sheena Andrew
James Boyd
Maira Brown
Graham Clark
Donald Cowell
Jack Davis
Anne Fiddes
Jane Harris
Peter Hoad
Margaret Hubble
Bill Inglis
Les Jenkins
Dorothy Kidd
Constance Kinnear
Agnes MacPhillimy
Cathy Montgomery
Bill Morrison
Peter Pearson
Rosalind Pearson
Joan Pilling
Rosemary Potter
Sandra Purves
Bill Purves
Alison Ramsay
George Robertson
Judith Russell
Bill Sadler
Eric Simpson

Edward Stewart
Margaret Whyte

Apologies

Nanette Anderson
Seamus Coleman
Iona Roberts
June Brebner
Stephen Bunyan
Eric Graham
John G Harrison
Helena Koumbouzis

Minutes of Last Meeting

Proposed: Tony Cooke
Seconded: David Ritchie

Annual Report – John Irvine (Hon Chair)

John began by extending thanks to the Publications Board, and particularly Don Martin, for their splendid and considerable efforts in continuing the Forum's Journal in its current format which has been complimented by so many of our members. In 2014 we have issued journals in the Spring and Autumn with another to follow later this year. We have managed to sell 3 pages of full colour advertising from appropriate organisations for each journal during 2014 – this met our target and helps fund the improved Journal and other initiatives such as the website redevelopment.

Thanks were also given to Diana Webster for her skills and the considerable effort involved in arranging the Forum's conferences. The 2013 Conference was held in the Trades Hall in Glasgow based on the Trades and Crafts in Scotland. Tours of the Trades Hall were also given and enjoyed by all who attended. This was an outstanding success with a full attendance. The 2014 Spring event – a visit to Trinity House in Leith and a guided walk around Leith – was a great success too and was actually over-subscribed. These events give attendees the opportunity to circulate and interact with fellow members.

Diana is also editor of the e-newsletter Clish-Clash which provides timely news. It is produced approximately every 2 months and is sent to all members who have provided us with an email address. It is also available to everyone to download from our website.

Eric Graham & Jan Bateman do an excellent job as treasurer and secretary respectively. Our finances are in excellent shape and during the year we utilised some of our accumulated reserves for a long overdue investment in our website redevelopment which now takes online credit card payments for events, membership and back-issues. Our membership figures remain good, despite

the economic climate, cut backs in public bodies such as libraries and archives, and the inevitable “ageing” of our individual membership base. We expect the ability to pay online to attract overseas members.

Thanks were also expressed to Douglas Lockhart who has been a great asset helping recruit new members and selling back numbers of our journal. The income from the latter has more than doubled in the last year. We have attended new events to promote the Forum: including history fayres and fayres of sister organisations. Sales of publications to non members (at retail price of £6) improves our visibility and hopefully encourages the reader to join us (we include membership leaflets in all Journals) and we have been heartened by the continued support of select organisations (such as National Library of Scotland, National Galleries of Scotland etc) with whom we have retail arrangements. Due to these combined efforts our membership has risen slightly.

Finlay McKichan has kept a careful watching brief on governance matters, being instrumental in organising, setting up and chairing the Advisory Committee (AC) which first met in November 2012. The AC consists of representatives of member organisations and is designed to facilitate consultation by the Trustees and to ensure that the Forum reflects the needs of this important element of its membership. More members of the Advisory Committee are sought. Meetings are held approximately every six months in Edinburgh.

As we are well aware the sources of revenue for a small charity such as ourselves are fairly limited. In addition to continuing our strict control of costs, we continue to promote advertising the Journal and we hope to increase the number of outlets for retail sales of the Journal by one or two in the coming year. New this year, we are exploiting the online payment functionality of our website to sell author published books we think will be of interest to our members, earning us a small commission. The Trustees have also agreed to seek appropriate sponsors for the conference in future years. We also intend to hold smaller focused workshops in different areas of the country in collaboration with appropriate organisations, such as local member societies and museums.

One of our main focus for this and the coming year is the need to continue to improve our visibility and to increase membership. We plan to place promotional type articles in other publications and gain exposure at other events. Firstly we had a mention in the recent issue of History Scotland which was freely distributed at the family history conference in Glasgow in August. Deceased Online and Angus Council and Scottish Monumental Inscriptions took our membership leaflets for their stands at the SECC Glasgow at the same event. We are in discussions with DC Thomson Newspapers regarding an article on the Forum in the Scots Magazine.

Perhaps our biggest initiative recently was the further development of our website. This is the main public face of the Forum and will be key to attracting new members – particularly of the younger generation and overseas members (who can now more easily pay for their membership). Members are encouraged

to go online to submit details to promote their organisations and events. An index of all articles published in the Journals (plus some sample articles) are also available online to whet appetites.

We are particularly keen to attract more volunteers to get involved – either in specific projects, to act as Trustee, to join the Advisory Committee, and to contribute papers for the Journal.

Accounts for the Year 2011–2012 – Jan Bateman (Hon Secretary)

Copies of the accounts were distributed to those present and are available online on our website. We have been accumulating reserves over the last few years to enable us to invest in our website which we have now done. Our reserves have therefore reduced, but are still sufficient (our policy is to have sufficient funds to produce 2 issues of the journal plus hold an Emergency AGM). Our revenue for the year was £14845, up slightly again on last year (£14168) and despite our investment in the website (and late payment of several large invoices which will therefore fall into the current year), we ended the financial year (31st July) with comfortable reserves of £8122 (compared with £11239 last year).

Subscriptions for 2015 – 2016

It was proposed by the Hon Secretary Jan Bateman, seconded by Ed Stewart and George Robertson (and unanimously agreed by those present) that the annual subscription fee for all categories of membership be increased by £3 next year to contribute towards the significant increase in the cost of postage over the last few years. Our subscription rates have not increased for some years. Fees for the year 2015/2016 will be as follows:

Individual member: £23
Organisational member: £29
Organisational member (2 copies): £37
Student member: £13
Overseas member: £43

Election of Officers and Trustees

The following were unanimously re-elected as officers and Trustees of the Scottish Local History Forum:

John Irvine (Hon Chair)
Eric Graham (Hon Treasurer)
Jan Bateman (Hon Secretary)
Don Martin (Hon Vice Chair)
Finlay McKichan (Trustee)
Diana Webster (Trustee)
Douglas Lockhart (Trustee)

David Ritchie (Trustee)
Anthony Cooke (Trustee)

The following was unanimously elected as a new Trustee:
Graham Clark

The following were unanimously re-elected as members of the Advisory Committee:
Linda Clark
Seamus (James) Coleman
Helena Koumbouzis
Alan Provan

The following were unanimously elected as new members of the Advisory Committee:
Graham Roberts
David Smith

Appointment of External Examiner

The External Examiner for the accounts 2012–2013 was Mark Gallagher, EQ Accountants, CA. John Irvine (Hon Chair) proposed that Mark Gallagher was again appointed as External Examiner for the year 2014–1015. It was seconded by Jan Bateman and agreed unanimously.

Any Other Business

The date for the next AGM will be advised and advertised on the website. There being no other business raised, the AGM was declared closed by the Honorary Chair, John Irvine.