

**Meeting of the Stonehaven Tolbooth Association
Wednesday 21st October 2015
Resource Centre**

Agenda

- 1 Welcome
- 2 Apologies
- 3 Minutes of previous meeting
 - a) acceptance
 - b) matters arising
- 4 Chair's report
- 5 Treasurer's report
- 6 Secretary's report
- 7 Curator's report
- 8 Shop report
- 9 Events report
- 10 Clock Tower
- 11 AOCB
- 12 Date of next meeting

Minutes

Present. Andrew Newton (AN), Gwynne Stewart (GSt), George Strang (GS), Cressida Coates (CC), Dennis Collie (DC), Clare Thomas (CT), Ian Balgowan (IB), Tom Walker (TW)

1 Welcome. CC welcomed the Trustees to the first meeting after the AGM. Bill Emslie had indicated that he was willing to serve on the committee and in his absence he was unanimously co-opted as a Trustee.

As this was the first meeting after the AGM new elections had to be held for post holders. Members of the committee proposed the *status quo* and with the consent of the existing post holders the office bearers for 2015/16 are:

Chair - Cressida Coates
Secretary - Andrew Newton
Treasurer - Dennis Collie

The other positions of responsibility also remain as previous:

Curator - George Strang
Shop - Gwynne Stewart
Events - Clare Thomas
Tolbooth Times - Tom MacPherson

2 Apologies. Jim Bruce (JB), Tom MacPherson (TM)

Absent.

3 Minutes of previous meeting.

a) **Acceptance** The previous minutes of 26th August were accepted.

b) Matters arising

Action Points	Person	Report
Provide contact details to CC.	CT	Completed
Commission the drawing up of plans etc and the production of a poster	AN	Completed
Seek external funding to help pay architects	AN	One successful application and waiting outcome of second
Circulate 'flyer' to Trustees	AN	Done
Send list of members to CC	AN	Done

4 Chair's report (Cressida Coates)

CC began by mentioning what a success the Harbour Festival had been, albeit the day was enhanced by great weather. During the summer visitor numbers have held up well and this has extended into the current school holidays.

Diane Fleming has requested more quiz sheets, both kids and the older version, and CC will deliver these to the museum on Friday.

The issue of extending the opening hours was raised but although this would provide visitors with a greater opportunity to visit the museum it might entail more volunteers on duty or increasing volunteers' hours. This may be a step too far for many volunteers and the committee are reluctant to increase their burden. One suggestion was that there should be no increase in core hours but if any volunteers wished to work longer than that would be permitted. This topic will be re-addressed before the next summer season.

The Invercarron Resource Centre is changing the procedure for obtaining keys to the Centre and CC is happy with the new arrangements.

The Yale lock at the museum jammed and has been replaced by Aberdeenshire Council contractors. GS has arranged the cutting of keys.

5 Treasurer's report (Dennis Collie)

Since the AGM meeting (September) Income of £1411 has been achieved with an Expenditure of £103.

So far the museum has been open for 12 days in October and the footfall is 1003.

AN inquired on the progress in obtaining the independent examination of the accounts for OSCR but DC has had no response from the treasurer of the Mearns Camera Club. AN will chase at the next meeting of the Club.

Action Point. AN to contact treasurer Mearns Camera Club.

6 Secretary's report (Andrew Newton)

The main topic reported by AN was the proposed extension to the Tolbooth. DC, GS and AN had met with the architects who have just completed a full survey of the existing building. This survey was necessary as previous plans supplied to STA and the architects proved to be inaccurate. The next stage is for the architects to produce preliminary designs for the internal structure of the enlarged museum and the first floor. These will have to include visitor access and circulation, location of the shop etc.; at the same time retaining the ambience of the existing museum. The committee approved DC, GS and AN acting as the sub-group with the responsibility of engaging with the architects with the proviso that all plans are discussed at committee level before final approval. The committee will almost certainly seek comments from all the volunteers before making final decisions.

Negotiations have been started with an Edinburgh based fund raiser who has indicated that he is prepared to spend a day at no cost with STA and their architects in order to understand the project better and perhaps become involved in producing all the necessary paperwork.

In order to facilitate the building of fire escapes from the extension it is imperative that ownership of some land adjoining the Tolbooth is ascertained. Both AN and IB are making enquiries.

Aberdeenshire Council have produced an Access Agreement to cover the next 3 years commencing 1st April 2016 and the committee approved the document, which had been circulated prior to this meeting, with a couple of minor amendments. The agreement will be returned to Carol Leathley for signing.

Action Point. AN to return Access Agreement for signature.

7 Curator's report (George Strang)

It has been fairly quiet on the curatorial side. A couple of stones have been donated and JB has produced a couple of items to augment the fishing display.

On 28th October GS and JB will attend a day long event at Alford. The morning session is devoted to fund raising whilst the afternoon's will be a local 'networking' event.

Dave Ramsay has circulated a calendar of events taking place in the Mearns over the next two months.

GS questioned whether the poster and banner publicising the extension were in the correct place and whilst the committee agreed with GS's sentiments there was no consensus on the most appropriate locations. To be re-visited.

GS asked about the success of the AfterDark Paranormal visit in August and AN reported that 25 people attended and that the company seemed satisfied with the night's events. However, AN was under the impression, rightly or wrongly, that on this occasion fewer contacts were made with the spiritual world. The company have promised a video report.

GS also mentioned that a significant number of visitors make enquiries about their ancestors and wondered whether there was an opportunity for the museum to 'tap' this market. However, it was noted that there were a number of genealogists working in the area and that there had been a recent dedicated show in the Town Hall.

8 Clock Tower (Andrew Newton)

CC reported that Diane Fleming had opened the Tower this morning and promptly banged her head on the access gate to the internal staircase. The gate had been left 'hanging' by persons unknown (third party contractors working on the clock ?) and was a safety hazard. The Tower was closed for the day due to concerns over public safety. Diane also reported that the Fire Balls donation box was jammed with coins. AN offered to contact the Council and investigate the donation box. It also transpires that the only instructions to operate the Tower reside in a cupboard in the Tower and are not generally available. CC undertook to circulate the instructions to all the volunteers and place a copy in the museum.

AN reported that the refurbishment of the Tower is still not complete but the external iron railings will be replaced by wooden rails before Christmas. A further requirement to alter the position of the lock on the front door is in hand but completion date is unknown. The delay in completing the renovations is caused by the original contractor going into liquidation and the number of people involved within the Council.

Action Points. AN to write to Council and repair donation box.

9 Shop Report (Gwynne Stewart)

The stock is gradually going down although GSt believed that there was enough to get through the winter months.

One of the volunteers had provided an example of stamps issued by Universal Mail (UK) that can be used on postcards going to international destinations. However, the committee believed that the stamps were physically too large for postcards and as there is no profit margin for the museum it was decided not to pursue this option.

The committee agreed that this was an appropriate time to rationalise the shop stock and GSt will undertake this over the next month or so.

Action Point. GSt to rationalise stock and its location.

10 Events (Clare Thomas)

The only recent event was a visit of 7 students from the 3rd Age University; during their visit an additional 40 'casual' visitors entered the museum.

IB, GS and AN are committed to speaking at the Aberdeen Probus Club in January/February 2017 and GS has invited this club to visit the museum at a mutually convenient time.

CT has been in contact with the Rector at Mackie Academy and information about the museum has been passed to the 'relevant teachers'. In addition CT is raising awareness of the museum at a meeting with local Guide and Brownie leaders.

CT is planning to highlight shop products on the museum FaceBook page and Liz Johnstone is planning similar publicity on the Stonehaven Festival FaceBook page.

11 AOCB

TW inquired whether the museum had a qualified First Aider and was informed that STA did not and that there was no legal requirement although we had two First Aid kits.

DC highlighted the fact that he is following up his previous Mearns Memorial booklet with a publication on locals that fell during WW1. He is anxious to tap into local knowledge and would welcome any help in sourcing material and compiling the new book.

12 Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on **Wednesday 2nd December** at the Resource Centre at 1930 hours. This will be the last committee meeting in 2015 but will be followed by a social gathering on Wednesday 16th December.

The committee decided to open the museum on 27th, 28th, 30th and 31st December. The first 3 dates will have the normal opening times of 1230 - 1530 hrs. CC will check on extended hours for 31st December.

For the New Year the museum will be open on 1st, 2nd and 3rd January and again CC will check on opening hours for Friday 1st January.

Action Point. CC to confirm opening hours for 31st December and 1st January

Andrew Newton
23rd October 2015

Secretary
Stonehaven Tolbooth Association.
(Tolbooth Museum)
A Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SC043279)

Summary of Action Points

Action Points	Person
Contact treasurer Mearns Camera Club.	AN
Return Access Agreement for signature	AN
Write to Council and repair donation box	AN
Rationalise stock and its location	GSt
Confirm opening hours for 31st December and 1st January	CC