

Meeting of the Stonehaven Tolbooth Association (STA)
Wednesday 22nd November 2023
Tolbooth Museum
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 CAT and Grants - update
- 8 Events report
- 9 Collections report
- 10 Curator's report
- 11 Shop report
- 12 Clock Tower report
- 13 AOCB
- 14 Future date

Minutes

Present. Cressida Coates (CC), Dennis Collie (DC), Douglas Cusine (DCu), Clare Thomas (CT), Liz Ritchie (LR), Gordon Ritchie (GR), Andrew Newton (AN), Lindsay Petrie (LP)

1 Welcome.

CC welcomed the Trustees to the November committee meeting.

2 Apologies. Louise Coates (LC), Mary Sutcliffe (MS), Ian Balgowan (IB)

3 Minutes of previous meetings.

- a) **Acceptance.** The previous minutes of 25th October were accepted
- b) **Matters arising.**

Summary of Action Points	Person	Report
Continue work on display panels	GR	Work continues. The panel on Dunnottar Castle has been completed and is now awaiting lamination. Design work has started on the history of the Tolbooth.
Inquire about castle brochure	LP	The Custodian is not keen on paper brochures as the Castle is aiming to go digital. No further progress envisaged although a stock of leaflets 'How to get to the Castle' has been discovered in the museum and these are now available to museum visitors.
Organise Induction Day	CC	Ongoing
Contact STP over loan of painting	AN	Made contact with STP who were supposed to arrange a meeting to view the painting but no communication to date. To continue.
Proceed with Inner Courtyard planning permission.	DC/AN	See AOCB

Contact Globus re fee	CT	See Events
Update inventory	LC/LP/ DC	Ongoing. See Custodian
Review Fire Safety Procedures document	GR	GR has received some suggestions from DC and is now preparing a final draft.
Circulate information on forthcoming webinars	AN	Two circulated in last month. Now a standard procedure.

Action Points.

GR to continue work on new panels

CC to organise Induction Day

4 Chair's report (CC)

Another volunteer has been recruited; the third in the last few weeks.

The December rota was discussed and the Committee agreed to open as usual on the Saturdays and Sundays. Boxing Day is on Tuesday 26th and it was decided that if volunteers wished to open on this day it would be welcome but it was stressed that this would be entirely voluntary. Hogmanay is on Sunday 31st and CC will explore the possibility of extended hours with split shifts. The traditional Nippy Dip will be held at 1430 on 1st January; CC will consider opening times.

St James's Hall is booked for a Christmas Gathering on Saturday 16th between the hours of 1600 to 2022. More details later. The hall hire is £15 per hour.

Action Point.

CC to decide opening days and times over festive season.

5 Treasurer's report (DC)

DC reported on finances for October.

Income		Expenditure	
Cash Sales	£175.90	Stock	£93.34
E card receipts	161.15	Event costs	48.00
Barrel donations	194.05	Total	£141.34
Event	583.00		
Total	£1,114.10		

6 Secretary's report (AN)

Nothing to report

7 CAT and Grants (GR)

Earlier today GR, CC and AN met with representatives of the Council at Viewmount. The Council officials were Tim Stephen (Area Manager), James McKay (Principal Solicitor), Brian Holden (Senior Solicitor Conveyancing), Chris Murphy (Service Manager Live Life Aberdeenshire), Jane Sanders (Property Team Leader) and Diane Henderson (Project Officer). The discussion lasted about 45 minutes and focused on 5 areas:

- *The status of the Tolbooth in regard to the Common Good.* Despite STA's belief that the building is Common Good James McKay was strongly in disagreement. However, he was unable to back up his assertion with legal arguments and seemed unclear about the legal history of the Tolbooth since 1933. He agreed to read the legal opinion from DCu.

- *The provision of the restaurant's new lease.* Despite a previous statement that the lease had been sent to Edinburgh for registration it transpired that this was not the case. The lease has been signed and copies are now held by both the Council and the new tenant. Unfortunately the tenant's solicitor has not yet agreed to release the document. This is strange because after signing it becomes a public document and Brian Holden was himself unable to understand and/or justify the current situation. STA was asked to contact the Council mid next week when the latter hope to have resolved this issue.
- *The origins of the Tolbooth fund worth £55,459.* Again the origins and fate are buried in the mists of time but both sides agreed that it was probably set up when the Tolbooth had a tea room. Guardianship of the fund was not discussed.
- *Use of the fund.* It is agreed that the fund is ring fenced for use solely on the Tolbooth. To this end STA had previously provided the Council with a list of defects identified by Squire Associates. The Council has reviewed the list, and the associated costs, and deemed the costs to be on the low side. In addition the new Tenant of the restaurant has complained about water ingress at the eastern gable and the Council are of the opinion that they (the Council) have to effect a repair. GR pointed out that the Tenant was liable for repairs and maintenance, not the Council or the Tolbooth fund, and they should check the terms of the Lease.
- *Valuation.* Before proceeding to a final decision by the Council the value of the building has to be assessed. Previously there had not been clarity on who should be commissioned to undertake this assignment but today it was agreed that a joint approach would be made to the Valuation Office Agency. The report will be funded 50/50 by the two parties and STA will receive a copy of the report. It is slightly disturbing that the Council stated that the Agency had little experience of valuing hospitality establishments but they thought that the Council may have 'individuals with some experience'. Their words.

General thoughts. STA representatives believe that Tim Stephen wants the whole CAT issue resolved by the deadline of 19th February but they were not impressed with the knowledge and skills displayed by the Council team. At times they seemed out of their depths and ill prepared for a meaningful discussion.

There will probably be another meeting before the February decision.

8. Events report (CT)

CT gave a talk to Fetteresso Church Guild based on material provided by LR.
IB also gave a talk; this time to Kinneff WRI

The Christmas tree will be erected in the museum next week.

Globus Tours have been in touch and would like to continue their visits to the museum in 2024. They have provided a list of dates (Wednesdays and Sundays) starting on 21st April and ending on 29th September. CT will respond positively together with the agreed Committee decision of £30 per visit.

CC wished to record the thanks of the Committee to all the volunteers who have worked so hard to organise and staff all the events throughout 2023.

9 Collection Report (GR)

GR is still working on the panels and DCu has been helping with captions for the re-digitised photographs. There are still about 200 to be processed and Sharper Images will produce them in A4 format.

GR asked whether the Visit Scotland report had been analysed in detail (see AOCB).

10 Curator's report (LP)

LC will be home early December and will finalise recording all the artefacts in the North room on 18th and 19th December. LP will join her on these dates and hopefully the Register will then be completed.

Previously there had been concerns over the preservation on a 1940's uniform and LP had received advice that the best treatment was to spray with Tyvex and use a soft brush.

11 Shop report (LR)

A substantial stock of Sea Salt tins have been acquired in advance of the suppliers being out of the country on holiday.

Alistair Lawrie has placed 5 copies of his most recent book in the museum for sale at £10 per copy. The Committee were unsure of the financial arrangements and LR will seek clarity from Alistair.

GR has discovered a limited supply of old SHS publications and these will be offered for sale in the museum at an appropriate price.

With a move towards the sale of more publications the shop would benefit from some modifications. LR and DC will collaborate.

LR will re-stock the pencils used for the Dinosaur Hunt.

Action Points.

LR to contact Alistair Lawrie re book sale arrangements

LR/DC to discuss shop modifications

12 Clock Tower report (AN)

The Tower is now operational but DCu remarked many volunteers are unaware/do not open the Tower. A reminder would be useful.

13 AOCB.

Stanehyve Times. GR and LR will bring out a Christmas edition in the next couple of weeks.

Stonehaven Harbour. GR and DCu are collaborating on a publication that will record the development history of Stonehaven harbour. The first draft is around 24 pages but more research is necessary.

Web based sales. With the retirement of CC from her 'proper job' the issue was raised whether she still wished to despatch orders but CC confirmed that she was happy to continue.

UoA Museum Studies Placement. The museum has been approached by University of Aberdeen about the potential of offering a student placement study in 2024. LP agreed to take the lead on this and one of the options that she will consider is a critical review and a follow up action plan of this year's Visit Scotland report. LP will also consider alternative themes for the student. A placement offer has to be made to the University by 31st December.

Paving of Inner Courtyard. DC reported progress. A pre-planning application had been submitted and the Council response has been favourable; subsequently a planning application and listed building consent has been submitted. The fee is £300 and so far there have been no architect fees. STA have also requested a water and electrical supply to the Courtyard. During his survey of the Tolbooth the architect commented on the use of PVC products to replace original cast iron features – unexpected on a Grade A listed building. STA believe that this was done in the last days of the previous restaurant tenant and the Council was informed by STA at the time.

Storage space. GR will make an approach to Ron Leiper with regard to future of his shed in the Backies.

Action Points.

LP to work up a placement study scheme for UoA

GR to contact Ron Leiper

14 Date of future meeting

Wednesday 17th January.

Andrew Newton

27th November 2023

Secretary

Stonehaven Tolbooth Association (Tolbooth Museum)

A Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SC043279)

Summary of Action Points

Summary of Action Points	Person
Continue work on display panels	GR
Organise Induction Day	CC
Decide opening days and times over festive season	CC
Contact Alistair Lawrie re book sale arrangements	LR
Discuss shop modifications	LR/DC
Work up a placement study scheme for UoA	LP
Contact Ron Leiper	GR