

Meeting of the Stonehaven Tolbooth Association (STA)
Wednesday 22nd April 2026
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), Andrew Newton (AN), Gordon Ritchie (GR), Clare Thomas (CT), Neil Smith (NS), Louise Coates (LC1), Dennis Collie (DC), Douglas Cusine (DCu), Tony Dodd (TD), Mary Sutcliffe (MS),

Absent. Lindsay Petrie (LP)

1 Welcome.

CC welcomed the trustees to the first meeting since January.

2 Apologies. Lorna Collie (LC2)

3 Minutes of previous meetings.

a) Acceptance. The previous minutes of 14th January 2026 were accepted.

b) Matters arising.

Summary of Action Points

Summary of Action Points	Person	Report
Contact AU over student opportunities – on hold until later in academic year	LP	GR prepared a project case for a student and passed to LP. In LP's absence no further information is available.
Investigate funding for recording local history. To send email seeking help	LP/NS	NS explains that this is very difficult to obtain. Whilst funding is available there is a large number of organisations chasing a relatively small 'pot'. NS doubts whether the museum can present a strong case.
Examine panoramic system	TD	No longer required
Consider taking new images for fridge magnets	TD	Done

Contact Garlogie Group	LP	No information
Investigate guest speakers from Elphinstone Institute	CT	To be progressed
Book quiz night for 2026.	MS	To be progressed
Review and approve final CAT documentation.	GR	Done
Small leaflet holder	CT/DC	There are 2 holders available at moment in museum and DC has another on order.
Inquire about the schedule of cruise liner visitors	TD	Approx. 75 cruise liners are due to dock in Aberdeen during the 2026 season with an estimated 91 arriving in 2027. However, the point of contact for arranging visits to the museum is not the cruise ships but the tour operators. TD has found the latter to be elusive but will continue to try, perhaps in association with the Land Train.. NS suggested that the best way forward was to attend a tour conference at end of year.
Call upon additional help from volunteers during February and March	CC	Done
Purchase wooden shed	DC	Not pursued

Action Points

LP Update on student placement.

LP Contact Garlogie Group. Current situation unknown.

CT Investigate guest speakers from Elphinstone Institute.

MS Book Quiz Night.

TD Continue investigating tour operators.

4 Chair's Report (CC)

CC wished to thank all the volunteers who gave so much of their time during February and March removing artefacts to the container in the courtyard and then cleaning the museum and the artefacts before their return after the renovations. This was intensive hard work and CC is grateful for the volunteers' contribution.

5 Treasurer's Report (DC)

DC has spent most of his free time preparing the end of year financial report; as a consequence he has not had the time to provide an update on the recent finances for this committee. A full update will be provided at the June meeting. However, DC made two observations. From a casual glance at the donations it appears that a) the donation/footfall shows a significant increase as compared to historical ratios b) card donations now exceed cash donations.

6 Secretary's Report (AN)

AN recounted that up until 2024 Aberdeenshire Museum Services (AMS) had always provided the annual footfall of similar museums as a matter of routine. However, for 2025 AN was informed that these figures were no longer permitted to be provided except through a FOI request. This is a breakdown in trust and he sought permission to withhold the Tolbooth monthly figures until AMS re-consider. Committee concurred.

There have been continuing problems in STA operating the Clock Tower, e.g. a 9 week delay in the Fire Balls returning the keys. There are other issues concerning rights of access for other organisations and

insurance. AN proposed that STA terminates the current operational understanding with Aberdeenshire Council. There are no legal or financial implications in such a move. Committee concurred.

AN was given the authority to engage with Paul Mair (Tolbooth restaurant) over whether the latter wishes to use the outer courtyard this summer. These will be exploratory talks only.

The wooden sign that hung above the front door is broken and AN/DC will engage with the Men's Shed over a possible replacement.

The recent refurbishment highlighted the extreme lack of storage space as we had to hire a container to house many of our artefacts. We had previously looked at other possibilities, especially the vacant shed next to the new RNLI premises. A previous approach to the Council was rebuffed but the committee decided to try once more.

Action Points.

AN Stop providing monthly footfall figures to AMS.

AN Inform Aberdeenshire Council of operational withdrawal from Clock Tower.

AN Contact Paul Mair.

AN/DC Visit Men's Shed re signage.

AN Contact Council again over storage space.

7 CAT and Grants (GR)

GR informed the committee that the ground floor and courtyards were finally transferred to STA on 25th March. A copy of the Title Deed has to be signed by a trustee (CC?); GR also tabled the invoice from Ronald Forbes – our solicitor. Ronald has been very generous in restricting his charging fee and NS suggested that donating a bottle of whisky would not go amiss.

The transfer of utilities to STA is now underway. DC is handling electricity, AN is dealing with water although there is a slight problem in so far as there is confusion over which meter to use. GR/AN are pursuing building insurance. The latter requires the use of specialise brokers/insurers especially as the Council's costing of a rebuild of the entire premises is £1,890,000.

Action Point.

CC Sign Title Deed

8 Events Report (CT)

The Portlethen Over 50's Group visit scheduled for March/April had to be deferred but will be re-arranged.

12th May. Guides will visit (probably around 1930 hrs).

13th May. Two P1 Arduthie classes will visit. (0930 – 1200).

11th July. Corn Dolly Lady.

11th/12th July. Pauline Cordiner, Story Telling (as part of Folk Festival).

19th/20th September. Doors Open Days (museum only)

Potential Forthcoming events

Lace Making

Garry Brindley with stories and magic

Jack McPherson. Singing

29th/30th August. Wes Lewis – mackerel smoking ?

9 Collection Report (GR)

GR will re-convene the sub group.

A display panel is to be used in Catterline and in return we may get some historical items regarding Catterline.

Prior to the refurbishment GR took away all the reference items that were on display and he will now review the books/leaflets before returning appropriate items to the museum.

Gr mentioned again that the museum requires a lockable book case in which to house more valuable books.

10 Curator's Report (LC1)

Because many artefacts have been re-located LC1 will update the register. DC mentioned that some of the new paintings required labels.

11 Shop Report (LC2 via DC)

The shop has been re-vamped and more details have been provided regarding prices and the location of 'hidden' stock in the reception area.

It was recorded that Bill Emslie (Men's Shed) had visited with a further supply of slate coasters. Bill had indicated that the sale price of these items should be £4 (we sell for £6); DC disagreed as the wholesale price to ourselves was £3. To be investigated.

DCu commented that he had requests to purchase Archie Watt's book but refrain from selling as he was not sure of price. GR to review remaining stock and advise accordingly.

Action Point

GR Advise on price of Archie Watt's book.

12 Clock Tower Report (AN)

Closed. See Secretary report.

13 AOCB.

Railway Lamp. DC has been approached by a member of Ferryhill Railway Museum suggesting a swap of a railway lamp (owned by STA) for a nautical navigation lamp (owned by the Railway). Committee agreed.

Keys. Set of keys lent to Burns Construction have been returned. Keys provided to Jim Stephen are still outstanding.

Queen's Guide Award. CT has been approached by Shirley McGregor who is starting work towards this award. The work is based on organising community engagement for a particular organisation and Shirley has offered to make greater use of our media, design posters and generally raise the museum's profile. Committee agreed to proposal. CT to liaise with Ms McGregor

Facebook Page. The original password to access the page directly has been lost and this creates problems in updating the site. TD has expertise in this area and AN will research any connections with the museum's email address.

Ian's Bench. Jimmy Malcolm has created a memorial bench for Ian Balgowan and the initial idea was to install it on the Boardwalk but the Council raised objections. DCu and CC meet with Neil West (Council) and it was agreed that an appropriate site was outside the large white door facing the harbour. Ian's family have been contacted and are in agreement. The Council will lay a concrete base for the bench.

KDP Grassroots event. CC, DCu and NS attended this event which had one workshop in the morning (Volunteer support) and a second in the afternoon (Funding). The morning workshop was interesting as it highlighted many ways in which to support our volunteers and also where to look for new, and younger, volunteers. CC and DCu will contact Mackie to establish whether there are any mutually beneficial projects. The afternoon workshop highlighted the effort required to access additional funding.

Big Help Out. The museum has received an email from John Cruickshank (Horizon) stating that 21st - 23rd May will be the Big Help Out Day in Stonehaven. The museum will be open as usual. The Sea Cadets are hosting Open Doors on 23rd May and all volunteers are invited to join the Lord Lieutenant of Kincardineshire for a cup of tea.

Container. The container went off hire on Wednesday 15th April although it is still in the Courtyard.

Action Points.

CT Liaise with Ms McGregor

TD/AN Review password for Facebook page.

DCu/CC Contact Mackie Academy

14 Date of next meeting

Wednesday 3rd June

Andrew Newton

24th April 2026

Secretary

Stonehaven Tolbooth Association (Tolbooth Museum)

SC043279

Summary of Action Points	Person
Update on student placement	LP
Contact Garlogie Group. Current situation unknown	LP
Investigate guest speakers from Elphinstone Institute	CT
Book quiz night for 2026	MS
Continue investigating tour operators	TD
Stop providing monthly footfall figures to AMS	AN
Inform Aberdeenshire Council of operational withdrawal from Clock Tower	AN
Contact Paul Mair	AN
Visit Men's Shed re signage	AN/DC
Contact Council again over storage space.	AN
Sign Title Deed	CC
Advise on price of Archie Watt's book	GR
Liaise with Ms McGregor	CT
Review password for Facebook page	TD/AN
Contact Mackie Academy	DCu/CC

