



**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Edinburgh Sutherland Association
held at 7pm on Tuesday 28 June, 2016
at the Royal Overseas League, 100 Princes Street, Edinburgh**

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Sandra James and Stewart Chalmers, Bill and Marie Manson, David Mackay, Stephanie Anderson, Rachel Haworth and Matthew Williams.

Those present were:

Andrew Mackenzie, Steven Anderson, Anne and Willie Macintosh, Lorraine and Christine Smith.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST AGM

The Minutes of the last AGM had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Minutes were duly proposed by Andrew Mackenzie, seconded by Christine Smith.

3. PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

Andrew Mackenzie noted various fundraising events. He said:

"We held an Autumn Ceilidh on 24 October. The ceilidh attracted 40-50 people. We paid for the band, which included piper Neil John MacPhail. In addition to myself, we had guest singers, including a gold medal winner from the children's National Mod. We raised around £155 before an additional donation of £200 from Architectural Practice Scott Brownrigg.

We held a pub quiz in Edinburgh on 11 November. I was unable to attend, but understand that there was a small but perfectly formed turnout. We raised £134 for good causes in Sutherland, which included the winnings prize donated from the winning team. I am grateful to Matthew Williams, our quizmaster.

We held our Christmas dinner at the Royal Overseas League on Princes Street, overlooking the castle, on 5 December. We had a very enjoyable dinner, followed by a song from me and entertainment from Andy Sanders and Willie Macintosh. Christine Smith donated the raffle prize, and the event raised £232 for good causes in Sutherland. I am grateful to Steven Anderson for coordinating the event. We will return to the same venue this year.

We held our annual ceilidh in Loanhead, near Edinburgh, on 11 March. Around 70 people attended, with music from the Dave Husband Scottish Dance Band, a song or two from me, and special guest Joan Mackay from Skerray. We raised an impressive £546 for good causes in Sutherland, so a great start to our 150th anniversary celebrations. I am very grateful to Anne and Christine for all their work organising this event, especially the coordinating of the buffet.

We held a pub quiz in Edinburgh on 19 April with quizmaster Matthew Williams. A good turnout and tight race to the finish made it an excellent event, despite my team coming a very close second. We raised £154 for good causes in Sutherland.

We held another Sutherland ceilidh this year to mark our 150th anniversary. We went to Scourie on 11 June and enjoyed a very successful trip. We danced to the Rogart Ceilidh Band, and enjoyed piping from Calum Millar. I gave a couple of songs, and other guest artists included Neil MacDonald, Lisa MacDonald, Matthew Bulch and the Scourie School Band. Raffle prizes were donated by various individuals and organisations, including Loch Duart, Scourie Hotel, Kylesku Hotel, The Anchorage, Clashmore Holiday Cottages and David Mackay. It was great to see most of the committee making the trip north, and seeing old friends in the county. We witnessed a good turnout and raised an impressive £750. I am hugely grateful to the Scourie Hall Committee and Sheila Cunningham for the support we received."

He went on to note that we have had a busy year with a number of enjoyable and successful fundraising events, culminating in our great ceilidh in Scourie. He said:

"We have received some good media coverage, with the Northern Times covering my attendance at the unveiling of our plaque on the eco-bench we funded in Dornoch in March and the Am Bratach publishing my historical piece in June.

In December we wrote in support of the Glasgow Sutherland Association continuing, in response to its proposal to disband. I am delighted that the majority of GSA voted in favour of its continuation and understand it held a successful ceilidh in Glasgow in May and plans another one in Stoer in August. We will continue to support where possible and hope some representatives of the GSA will attend our proposed grand anniversary ceilidh in the Autumn/Winter.

We wrote to various landowners requesting support with 150th anniversary, but have not received any funding as a result. However, we have had the offer of donations of prizes from Skibo, Diageo and Glenmorangie.

In terms of that grand ceilidh, I am keen to involve other associations, such as the Edinburgh Caithness, the Edinburgh Argyll, Edinburgh Orkney, Edinburgh Shetland and Bothan Dun Eideann, as well as ones in Glasgow, such as the GSA. Steven and I attended the Edinburgh Caithness, Orkney

and Shetland Ceilidh in April in Leith Town Hall, and consider it a suitable venue. It also gave me an opportunity to meet with senior committee members from on those three associations.

We launched the bake-off in April. It is meant to end in June, but I am only aware of one event so far. We need to do more the push this fundraising initiative, and should extend it beyond June. We also launched our grand raffle draw in April, so will continue to sell tickets until the draw in December.

I would like to thank everyone who assisted this year and for your continuing support. I am particularly delighted that new members, such as Christine, have been actively involved. However, we must attract more new members to the committee to ease the burden for us all.”

4. TREASURER'S REPORT

Summary report from Treasurer:

Anne Macintosh noted that the Association ended the accounting year with a balance of £2,325.85 in the current account and £2,922.30 in the NS&I account, meaning a total of £5,248.15 as against at £3,737.76 at the end of last year.

The increase in income due to the additional functions we held the Ceilidh in Rogart and the one in the Overseas League. The Bake off has not realised the same interest as last year, so we have only raised £311 as at the end of April. Donations were kindly received from Andrew's parents (£250 after their wedding anniversary) and £200 from Steven's firm Scott Brownrigg. Five new Life Members and seven Annual Members were added this year and we received £169.75 in Gift Aid as compared to £67 last year. We made donations of £1,850 which are listed on page 5 of my report. The £350 to Sutherland schools pipe band was sent in April last year and thus had to be shown in last year's accounts. Anne passed round letters of thanks.

NS&I interest rate on our account will be 0.45% gross as from 1 July the current rate is 0.75%, so consideration is to be given to an alternative account.

The report was proposed by Andrew and seconded by Lorraine.

5. DONATIONS

Steven Anderson handed out the summary of applications for funding received this year through the application page of the website and by email. These came as a result of the call for applications spread through word-of-mouth, via the Northern Times and through our Facebook page and website.

The following group applications were discussed and were awarded funding from the Association as follows (amount agreed to award in brackets):

Feis Chataibh (£270)

The money will be used to provide two new keyboards (of the six they require) for the children who attend Feis Chataibh. All the children in Sutherland that attend Feis Chataibh will benefit from the funding. It costs a lot of money to run these events and they only receive 40% funding for the projects and have to raise the final 60% themselves.

1st Golspie Girl guides (£250)

Money to buy a tent for camping trips. The girl guides now have the support and leadership to allow them to go on camping trips and pack holidays. On these trips the girls can learn about tent building, team work, outdoor cooking, campfire building and safety, camp building and much more. The guides after re-starting has gone from strength to strength and in the last five years has shown stability in numbers and has new girls joining every term.

Shannon Young (£100)

Contribution towards rent, food and accommodation when Shannon goes on placement for her nursing degree. Shannon is from Farr.

West Sutherland Fisheries Trust (£200)

The money will be a contribution towards attendance at public events. The Trust attends several events over the summer period, running information stalls and showing the participants some of the

life existing within the Sutherland waters. The Trust is an independent charity, providing impartial advice and assistance to landowners and resource users with regards to the management and protection of the aquatic environment of west Sutherland. They work with all stakeholders in a bid to ensure that Sutherland remains a thriving and beautiful area.

North Coast Connection (£280)

Otago sessions for fall prevention for the elderly. Money will pay for ten sets of 1kg ankle weights plus ten light resistant bands.

Fèis an Iar Thuath (£300)

To help towards the cost of their annual two day event in February 2017. Fèis Bheag, for children aged four to seven years will be led by a Gaelic speaking tutor and will be involved in drama, art and music. Workshops in fiddle, accordion, tin-whistle, drums, guitar, keyboard and Gaelic drama will be provided for those aged eight to 18 years. Fèis an Iar Thuath continues to attract around 40 participants from Lairg, Durness, Kinlochbervie, Durness, Scourie, Stoer and Lochinver.

Sutherland Sessions (£300)

Funding for music workshops. Sutherland Sessions is a newly-formed membership organisation. They aim to provide opportunities for young local musicians to gain performance experience, by running and promoting gigs at eclectic venues across Sutherland. They plan to build on the excellent work of the Feis movement and other great music tuition in the area and provide the next step for talented young people interested in developing their skill in music further. They plan to run a series of gigs throughout the year, in a variety of venues, moving around the area to ensure that opportunities to attend a local gig are available.

Billie Houldsworth (£200)

The money will be used to support a student with a year overseas volunteering in South Africa. Whilst she is there she will be working in an Outward Bound Centre teaching disadvantaged and deprived children a variety of Outward Bound Sports. After the year overseas she will also receive a qualification in Outward Bound Sports teaching which she can bring back to Scotland and use here.

The Assynt Fallen 1914-18 (£150)

The money will be used to pay for attendance at Scotland's People (£15 per day) and computer printouts there and at the National Archives in London to assist with a project. The aim of the project is to research the background to the men of Assynt who fell in 1914-18. The project is being undertaken by Dr and Mrs Bangor-Jones. The project aims to bring together genealogical information, historical records, including those of the Sutherland estate, and information from relatives. The intention is to identify the occupation, family background and, where possible, the house orcroft.

Glasgow Short Film Festival (£300)

The money will be used to take a film to Lochinver. In 1956 Glasgow-based socialist filmmaking collective the Dawn Cine Group embarked on Lost Treasure, an ambitious project confronting the rural depopulation crisis in the Highlands. Although forty minutes of footage were shot across Sutherland and Caithness, the film was never finished, and the footage remained unseen. In 2016 Glasgow Short Film Festival commissioned musicians Drew Wright and Hamish Brown to create a new musical score responding to the abandoned film, carefully reassembled by filmmaker Minttu Mäntynen. After a successful tour of seven venues across Scotland, GSFF wishes to bring the performance 'home' to Lochinver (much of it was shot at Achmelvich Bay), with a performance in Screen Machine on 25th August. The sum requested will go towards paying travel, accommodation and subsistence for the two musicians. The local audience will benefit from seeing extraordinary sixty year old footage of Sutherland and Caithness, never screened publicly before this year.

Rosehall Primary School (£150)

The funds will pay for the Eden Court Creative worker to come to the school. The money will cover two sessions; one session to work out how Green Screen works, to talk about ideas, write a script, work out directions, work on acting and costumes and another session to film their idea. The children, with their families, will make their own costumes. The resulting Green Screen film would be shown to parents and the local community in Rosehall Village Hall.

In summary:

Feis Chataibh	£270
1st Golspie Girl guides	£250
Shannon Young	£100
West Sutherland Fisheries Trust	£200
North Coast Connection	£280
Fèis an Iar Thuath	£300
Sutherland Sessions	£300
Billie Houldsworth – Project Trust	£200
The Assynt Fallen 1914-18	£150
Glasgow Short Film festival	£300
Rosehall Primary School	£150
TOTAL	£2,500

This means the total donations from the Association this year amounts to £2,500

It was also discussed that the wording within our award letter and cheque to the above applicants should include a request that where possible the Association's contribution should be credited in any literature/ reporting from the applicants.

6. FUNCTIONS 2016/17

150th Grand Ceilidh

Andrew Mackenzie led a discussion on upcoming functions, primarily focusing on a potential 150th Anniversary Grand Ceilidh perhaps in October or November this year. He has been in contact with Bothan Dun Eideann who have said they would be happy to work with us. Alex from Bothan said they could put £250 in pot or even more to contribute to a higher profile band. On this, Andrew has also been discussing the potential for Dochas to come back together - Carol-Anne and Julie Fowlis - although timings and work commitments for Julie Fowlis may make this difficult. Andrew agreed to follow up and report back to the committee.

The committee then discussed how ESA can link up with other associations for this event such as the Glasgow Skye Association, Edinburgh Caithness and others. This was welcomed in principle by all. Anne and Steven stated that with some associations there may be an expectation that we profit share at any combined event, but this would depend on to what extent other associations were involved in the organisation of the event. Andrew then stated his preference would be not to profit share and simply to encourage other associations to attend and for ESA to retain control of any events overall.

Christine stated that it is really important that we set a date for such an event soon so that in the first instance the committee can plan to be available to help out – and not miss it due to pre-booked holidays.

Steven stated that any such 'special' event where we might expect to attract a larger number of attendees we should also consider advertising in local Edinburgh newspapers.

150th Anniversary Bake off

Andrew noted that this has been slow on the uptake this year and we need to promote and push more, especially with committee members as there is currently only one bake off result registered on the totaliser. Steven stated that he has extended the deadline for the Bake Off until November 2016 – this has been promoted on the website and Facebook page.

February 2017 Loanhead Ceilidh

Anne to look into booking hall and band again. Andrew stated an early March date would be preferable if that was an option.

Autumn 2016 Quiz night

It was hoped that Matthew would organise another quiz night, but it was not discussed further as Matthew was not in attendance.

Christmas dinner 2016

This has been booked for Saturday 10th Dec 2016, Royal Overseas League, Princes Street.

150th drive

Andrew suggested an online fundraising 150th anniversary drive whereby we could ask all our 'likers' on Facebook and Twitter to make an online payment of either £1.50, £15.00 or £150. Steven agreed to look into the setting up of this via My Donate and the Facebook page report back.

7. ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS

It was agreed that the following would remain in their current positions:

President – Andrew Mackenzie
Honorary President – Sandra James
Vice-President – Willie Macintosh
Treasurer – Anne Macintosh

Committee Members:

Rachel Haworth, Christine Smith and Lorraine Smith opted to remain on the committee. It was noted that Gordon Black would happily remain as Honorary Auditor.

David Mackay – proposed onto the Committee by Andrew seconded by Steven Anderson.

Stephanie Anderson – proposed onto the Committee by Andrew seconded by Christine Smith.

8. AOCB

Anne noted rates on savings accounts were going down. Steven to discuss with Gordon to get advice best interest account for ESA. Steven noted that he plans to scan thank you letters and photos for website. Steven noted that he plans to look into scanning in selected archives from files and upload onto the website.

Andrew Mackenzie thanked everyone for attending and brought the meeting to a close.