

Applecross Community Hall Annual General Meeting (AGM) minutes

Meeting held on the 16th March 2021 at 7:00pm on Zoom

Minutes taken by Saara Viitanen

Present: Jack Marris (JM), Tom O'Halloran (TO), Rhona McPartlin (RM), David Davidson (DD), Sean KilBride (SK), Ishbel Ferguson (IF), Saara Viitanen (SV), Jo Ford (JF), Gerry McPartlin (GM), Fiona Mackenzie (FM), Chris Ward (CW), Frankie Ward (FW), Ann Helmore (AH), Megan MacInnes (MM), Jon Barnett (JB), Tony Jackson (TJ), Rose-marie de Loor (RDL), Elodie Matthews (EM), Kalie Wilkinson (KW), Alasdair Brown (AB), Zuzana Vojackova (ZV), Kirsten Glover (KG), Bronwyn Glover (BG), Annabel Macrae (Annabel M), Marion Gilroy (MG), Anne Macrae (Anne M), Alfie Edwards (AE), Judith Fish (JF), Duncan Fraser (DF), Sarah McCowan (SM), Duncan McCowan (DM)

Call to order

JM opened the meeting and introduced Jo Ford from the Skye and Lochalsh Council of Voluntary Organisations, who is helping the Hall committee with the investigation into becoming a SCIO.

Apologies

Apologies received from Kirsten Mackie, Aron Paramor, Sarah Paramor and Kirsteen Duffy.

Approval of the minutes of the previous AGM

Minutes of the previous AGM in 2020 proposed by RM, seconded by TO.

Chair's report

JM opened the meeting and updated those present on the past year.

- Despite the pandemic, the Hall committee has been continuing work behind the scenes.
- A new noticeboard has been put up outside the Hall. This was funded by the Scottish Government's Supporting Communities Fund via the Applecross Community Company.
- There will be some upgrades to kitchen equipment and gas safety. The current cooker hood is not in working order and will be replaced shortly.
- The committee has developed a new website for the Hall, available on www.applecrosshall.co.uk.

- Groundworks are ongoing to improve the drainage at the Hall car park. JM presented some photos of the progress.
- The committee has been considering the option to become a SCIO (discussed later).
- JM summarised that lots of positive improvements are happening at the hall and that he is looking forward to the future.
- JM also encouraged anyone living in Applecross to join the committee.

Treasurer's report

TO presented a summary of the accounts for the past financial year 2020-2021, ending on 31st January 2021.

- The Covid-19 pandemic caused the Hall to be closed for most of the year, which greatly reduced the usual yearly income.
- The Hall received a £10,000 discretionary grant (Covid-19 Small Business Grant) from the Highland Council due to being forced to be closed. This has enabled the committee to continue paying necessary costs, such as insurance and fire safety maintenance, and go forward with improvements which are in progress (groundworks at the car park, cooker hood replacement). The committee has applied for further Covid-19 discretionary funding from the Highland Council and is waiting for the outcome of the application.
- In 2018-2019, the Hall had also received £3,000 from SSE's community grant donated to the Applecross Community Council. This was for kitchen equipment upgrades but had not been spent yet.
- TO stepped down from the committee but noted that he has set up a system of bookkeeping for his successor(s). JM thanked TO for all his efforts and time given to the Hall and encouraged anyone interested to become a Treasurer to come forward to the committee.
- TO noted that becoming a SCIO would open the Hall for many more opportunities of funding.

Option to become a SCIO (Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation) – presentation

- JM noted that posters had been posted around Applecross about the proposal of the Hall becoming a SCIO, and Applecross residents had received a newsletter about the proposal.
- JM presented a summary of what a SCIO is and what benefits the Hall would get from becoming a SCIO:
 - At present, the Hall is an Unincorporated Association.
 - Unfortunately, accounts have not been submitted to OSCR (the Scottish charity regulator) in past years as required. Becoming a SCIO would grant a 'new start' to the Hall and restore the Hall's charitable status.

- SCIO is a legal structure for a membership organisation, open to all Applecross residents. As a SCIO the Hall would be accountable to its members.
- Members could elect Trustees (much like current committee members) who would manage the Hall's activities.
- SCIO is seen as a more stable structure to funding bodies. This would mean more opportunities for funding for the Hall for repairs, maintenance, events etc.
- SCIO Trustees would be protected from personal financial liability.
- OSCR recommends a SCIO structure for village halls.
- The process to become a SCIO is as follows:
 - Community members vote at the AGM. If the vote is positive, a new SCIO is set up. The committee would apply to OSCR to dissolve the current organisation and transfer the existing assets to the new SCIO.
- Drawbacks to continuing with the current structure (not becoming a SCIO) would be continued difficulties to find Trustees due to personal financial liability, and limited funding opportunities.

Option to become a SCIO – questions

- FM noted that the Historical Society and the body that would hold the Applecross community fund have also been investigating becoming a SCIO and that she has been involved in the process. She noted that the SCIO structure has good public accountability and simplicity in presenting annual accounts.
- JF noted that a SCIO is a legal entity that can enter into contracts in its own right, e.g. employing staff, which reduces personal liability and risk and gives protection to volunteers.

Option to become a SCIO – vote

The Applecross residents present voted on the question “Should the Applecross Community Hall become a SCIO?”. All (100%) voted yes.

Election of committee members

As per the constitution, the committee members stood down. JM invited those who wished to join the committee to raise their hands and all were separately voted in by a majority vote by community members present. New committee members include David Davidson, Rhona McPartlin, Jack Marris, Saara Viitanen, Jon Barnett, Kirsten Glover, Sean KilBride and Ishbel Ferguson.

RM asked what the maximum number of committee members is according to the constitution. SV clarified it is thirteen.

Any Other Business

No other business was raised.

JM thanked all for participating in the meeting and vote. JM concluded the meeting.