

**Applecross Community Hall Annual General Meeting 26/02/2024 at 7pm (Applecross Hall & online)
Minutes - draft (unapproved)**

Minutes taken by Saara Viitanen

Present: Barbara Gillies (BG), Saara Viitanen (SV), April Maria Hingley (AMH), Sean KilBride (SK), Daniella Joyce (DJ), Rhona McPartlin (RM), Christian Burgin (CB), Agnes Rymowicz (AR), Elodie Matthews (EM), Anne Macrae (AM)

Apologies: Ishbel Ferguson

Agenda items

Approval of minutes from previous AGM on 27/02/23

BG proposed, RM seconded.

Chair's report

Thanks

BG thanked all for supporting the Hall in various ways over the last year:

“We’d like to say a big thank you to all who supported the Hall this past year in many different ways. Special thanks to the hall committee volunteers and all those extra Applecross folks who contributed their time and energy to help with all the fundraising, routine hall maintenance and the running of community events throughout 2023. We are very grateful to Sean who will be stepping down from the committee for the coming year for all his contributions to the maintenance of the building throughout his time on the committee and also all the technical support he has provided with our new projector and so many of our gigs. Also a huge thank you to Saara for offering to stay on as our Secretary as an Associate Member after her move south.

We are also grateful for having a great wee team of paid staff we have accumulated this year (Debs, Jill, Dave and George) who help us to look after the cleaning, bar and general repairs.

This year we have been particularly grateful to Alisdair Ferguson at Kishorn Port Ltd for his help championing a substantial donation to the hall from KPL, Gael Force and Applecross Trust. Northwind Engineering also kindly covered the hall hire costs for Lunch Club for all of last year which was a huge help.

All the many performance events this past year have been possible due to the support of our wonderful local business – we are grateful to the Inn and Walled Garden for feeding all our performers and providing so many raffle prizes, the Campsite too for prizes and sending us customers! Also thank you to all the other local businesses, crafts folk and Applecross residents who chipped in with much needed prizes for our many raffles.

We are grateful to Applecross Gallery for donating our posters, the Inn and locals for donating accommodation for performers, the Duathlon team for their donation from funds raised. We are grateful for funding we've received from Highland Council, Scottish Government, Highland Third Sector Interface, North Highland Initiative, Age Concern (for their support of our Lunch Club), Vegware (for donating biodegradable cups and containers), the Touring Network, Film Hub Scotland, Albyn Housing. Also Applecross Community Company for their guidance and support.

And anyone else who has supported us this past year who I've forgotten to mention!"

Policies and Licencing

BG reported that the Hall was granted its Public Entertainment Licence to officially host various events. This is due for renewal in 2026.

BG reported that Gas and Fire safety checks are carried out annually and 6 monthly and remedial repairs completed. George has fixed all the fire doors. The committee have copies of the Risk Assessment documentation from the fire safety check completed in July 2023 (next due in 6 months).

BG reported that copies of the Fire Safety, Equal Opportunities, Health & Safety policies are in the black document holder on the bookcase in the Lounge. The Accident Report forms are kept on the shelf beside the kitchen door. The Child Protection Policy is attached to the hall noticeboard. Agnes Rymowicz is the Hall's nominated safeguarder.

BG reported that the bar premises licence holder is now Tom O'Halloran. Anne Macrae has also got her personal licence. The committee are grateful to all the volunteers who have assisted in looking after the bar for us this year.

BG reported that the Hall has renewed its Gambling Licence for holding raffles (though didn't run any lottery events this past year) and our Phonographic Performance Licence (PPL) & Performing Right Society (PRS) is up to date. The Cinema Club is ensuring that film licences are in place for public screening events.

Improvements

On the various improvements made to the Hall over the year, BG noted:

“George Graham is the hall handyman on an as and when required, self employed basis. Grant funding from North Highland Initiative enabled us to get a bin store to stop the recurring problem of the bins being blown over, get shelving into the store cupboard to improve storage, fix the boiler room ceiling. Albyn Housing’s grant and our talented seamstress Rhona McPartlin and powerhouse cleaner-come painter Debs Carr have transformed the small lounge. Money from the Community Regeneration Fund enabled us to purchase an assisted hearing system for use in both the main hall and smaller lounge.”

Events and new initiatives

BG reported:

“2023 saw a wide and varied range of events with traditional music performances, American Blues, African, several ceilidh dances, a theatre performance, storytelling, puppet show and astronomy 360 degree experience, in addition to a Burns Supper, seniors’ Christmas dinner, Historical Society talk, Christmas Market and of course monthly Producers’ Markets and Strupags.

We introduced the ‘pay as you can afford’ option to all our events. We are looking at how we make this as comfortable as possible for folks to use.

We have been very grateful to the Inn for all the meals to performers they have donated, and when they have been closed or an extra night’s meal has been required, the Walled Garden have happily stepped in. The Inn also donated accommodation for the band at New Year.

Applecross Cinema Club launched this winter and has 21 members – it’s looking on track to cover its costs but we have been promised an extra £400 from Film Hub Scotland when we finish. Cinema licences are expensive! We included funding in the Adult Mental Health Grant for film licensing so that will be a helpful backstop going forward.

Anne & Agnes launched “The Sharing Table” – the ethos is share what you can and take what you need. It appears to have been well received and is being well used.

We now have a regular Zumba class thanks to our projector and an instructor who is sending us classes online.”

Mental Health grants

BG reported that the Hall has had success in securing two Mental Health grants in 2023 that will provide us with the funds over the next two years (at least) to maintain and build on the range of activities for all ages that currently happen at the hall.

The Children’s Mental Health Grant was secured by Ros & Megan. Via a Messenger chat group Barb, Saara & Agnes have been liaising

with all the parents in Applecross on spending and programming of events and activities from the children's grant monies. Currently over £6,000 remains in that fund and activities funded included: children's fares on the Waverley boat trip, hall hire for the Scouts group and workshop materials, two drama workshops, a puppet performance and workshop. The parents are planning a meeting to reach agreement on how the remaining funds will be divided to ensure equity across the age group. A new Youth Group for teens has recently started and have generated ideas for things they would like to use the funds for.

Finances

BG extended a huge thank you to Christian for his tenacity, humour and hard work sorting out the Hall's finances. He succeeded in getting all the records submitted to OSCR and approved this year. This has been key for us being able to apply for the funding that we have and in moving us closer to the goal of becoming a SCIO.

Becoming a SCIO

BG again gave a massive thank you to Christian for working on this. BG reported that we are nearly at the end of the process. The SCIO status has been approved and the next step is, with the help of a solicitor, to transfer the assets, contracts and licences to the new organisation and wind down the old organisation.

Plans for 2024

BG noted that plans for 2024 include community consultation and expanding the usage of the hall by the community, completing as a SCIO, beginning to explore options for making the building more energy efficient, redecorating the main hall, improving the car park drainage and surface, improving the toddlers' outdoor play park, and relocating the sharing table to an outdoor store for easier access.

Questions

- BG opened the floor for questions.
- RM asked if there was a need for the Hall to re-apply for the Mental Health grants once they run out. BG said that it is not certain that the funding pots will be available again after this round.
- EM asked if the improvements to the car park would include the grassy area with the picnic tables. BG said that this would be included, as it clearly requires work.

Treasurer's report

- CB said that the finances looked healthy, thanks to grant funding being awarded to the Hall.
- There was a slight loss from the Duathlon event due to insurance expenses. BG noted that the Duathlon group might be able to

take on the insurance for this year's event.

- CB noted that OSCR had accepted the application to start a new SCIO. CB estimated that there is a couple of months' work left to finalise the process.
- Most of the expenditure had been due to building maintenance and utilities. CB said that he is applying for charity discounts for utilities.
- BG asked how much the annual running costs are for the Hall building, and CB said it is about £40,000 per year.
- CB said he would put together an infographic to display on the Hall noticeboard about the Hall's finances.
- CB thanked RM for organising invoicing.

Election of committee members

- All committee members stepped down from the committee as per the procedure.
- BG, IF, AM and AR re-joined the committee. EM, DJ and AH joined the committee. SV and CB would like to continue as associate members. No objections were raised by those present.
- BG was proposed for the role of Chair by RM and seconded by AM.
- SV was proposed for the role of Secretary by BG and seconded by AM.
- CB was proposed for the role of Treasurer by BG and seconded by AR.

AOB

- No other business raised.

Next AGM scheduled for Monday 24th February 2025 at 7pm.

BG concluded the meeting.