

Meeting of the Stonehaven Tolbooth Association (STA)
Wednesday 8th January 2025
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), Liz Ritchie (LR), Andrew Newton (AN), Clare Thomas (CT), Dennis Collie (DC), Gordon Ritchie (GR), Lindsay Petrie (LP), Douglas Cusine (DCu)

1 Welcome.

CC wished a Happy New Year to all.

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

3 Minutes of previous meetings.

a) Acceptance. The previous minutes of 30th October 2024 were accepted.

b) Matters arising.

Summary of Action Points

Summary of Action Points	Person	Report
Contact owner of ship's bell	IB	In progress.
Pursue new sign for Bervie Braes	IB	In progress
2025 Global visits	CT	Confirmation that visits will re-commence in 2025. CT will get further information and seek a payment of £35 per coach.
Old printing blocks	LR	Communications have "dropped off" over the Festive Season. LR to make contact with Anna Ross again.
Offering educational opportunities to AU museum students.	LP	Written once to the university but no reply; will write again.

Action Points

IB Ship's bell
IB Pursue new sign for Bervie Braes
LR Old printing blocks
LP Contact AU over student opportunities

4 Chair's report (CC)

CC wished to thank all the volunteers that had been on duty during December; she was especially grateful to those who volunteered between Christmas and New Year, a period which generated a high footfall.

For the next 2/3 months the museum will only be open at weekends and this should make staffing a little easier.

STA had received an invite from Horizon to celebrate their 25th anniversary by attending an event at No 44 on 17th January. CC and IB will attend.

5 Treasurer's report (DC)

I think the last financial report was for September, so I've lumped together the figures for October, November and December.

Notes before the report.

Courtyard

Total to date paid £32,415.90; reimbursed from CCCF £21,120 but £4800 from CCCF outstanding against 3rd invoice. So STA commitment to date £6495.90

Note that the original quote was £35,150 of which STA would fund 80% (£7,030).

However since then we have committed to other work which STA will fund 100% - upgrade office window (quote to be obtained and agreed) and repair & paint all external doors.

Madge Booklet

The initial 500 print run was funded by Meikle Carewe. Up to 19/12/2024 Madge had personally (or via shops) taken in £930. In addition there were sales online and in the museum, and there will have been further sales by Madge since. A second 500 print cost £960 so the income from the first run has more than paid for the second

Income		Expenditure	
Cash Sales	1288.15	Stock	2085.51
Sumup	359.26	Courtyard	32400.00
Donations (Barrel + Cash)	634.64	Event (P Cordiner + Quiz)	132.33
Gift Aid	30.00	Display	188.00
Event (Quiz)	449.00	Admin (Keys for Simbas)	15.90
Funding (CCCF)	21120.00	Total	£34,821.74
Funding (Meikle Carewe)	960.00		
Total	£24,841.05		

6 Secretary's report (AN)

The Sumup card reader went live on 1st January 2024 and the 12 month figures are:

Total Sales/Donations £4101.64 *Sumup Fee* £69.11 *Received by STA* £4032.53

Laura Ferguson, of the Scottish Community Heritage Alliance, is running a series of road shows and The Barn Arts (Banchory) is hosting one on 22nd March. Neil Smith has volunteered to man a stall on behalf on STA and LP is happy to assist. Promotional material is available in the museum – CC being the contact person.

The annual 2024 footfall for the museum was 18,731; this being 0.01% less than 2023. In effect 12 persons! Aberdeenshire Council have also provided the 2024 footfall for the museums that operate under the Council umbrella.

Aberdeenshire Farming Museum	11,118
Hareshowe Farm Museum	0
Arbuthnot Museum	0
Banchory Museum	5,203
Museum HQ Mintlaw	149

Thus the Tolbooth now provides 53% of the total footfall. I was also informed that HQ no longer accepts bookings from the general public; it is now limited to organised tours by VIPs and Councillors.

Madge's Memories book is now listed on the website and so far 3 copies have been sold by this method.

Finally, a Mrs Irving visited the museum during December and asked whether any of the brass material that she had donated back in the summer of 2023 was on display. The answer was negative as exhaustive searching can find no trace of any such donation. Mrs Irving was adamant that she delivered a car load of material and it took 4 people to carry it into the museum. If anyone can shed light on this donation please contact me.

7 CAT and Grants (GR)

GR advised that he has instructed Ronald Forbes of Smiths Solicitors to prepare an offer to purchase the ground floor and the courtyards and this will be submitted to the Council before the end of January.

AN informed the committee that he had received a short notice request on 7th January to show Tim Stephen and Diane Henderson around the premises on the same day. AN took the opportunity to discuss the CAT, highlighting the slow progress, the conflicting statements from the Council and a general vagueness on many issues. Tim did apologise. Some 'nuggets' from the discussion:

- a) The 31st January is not hard and fast – there is wriggle room of a few days if required.
- b) After the offer is submitted the Council will require up to 3 months to complete the sale.
- c) The 'Tea Fund' is believed to be £62K. Any unspent money after the repairs will be passed to STA.
- d) It was suggested that repairs will not begin until March at the earliest.
- e) Tim is to organise a 3 way meeting (STA/Council/Restaurant) ASAP. It might also include council employees who will be supervising the repairs.

AN told Tim and Diane that due to the vagueness of many items that he thought that the forthcoming offer would be conditional. He personally highlighted the following conditions but they may be others forthcoming:

- a) The production of a new plan showing the bins located to the area agreed in August 2024
- b) A sight of the most recent agreement between the Council and the Restaurant
- c) The scope and timing of all the repairs that the Council has agreed to undertake.

Tim acknowledged that he was expecting a conditional offer.

8. Events report (CT)

CT has been invited to speak to the Ladies Probus later this month and will borrow some museum items to illustrate her talk. CT has also been invited to attend a function at the Elphinstone Institute.

The Christmas decorations have been removed and GR has taken away some of the photographs.

9 Collection Report (GR)

GR has been busy over the winter and is now holding 350 re-imaged photographs. He will use some to refresh current displays.

GR and DC are to meet to discuss ways and means of refreshing display panels.

Action Point

GR/DC to review display panels.

10 Curator's report (LP/CC)

Holidays and weather have prevented a meeting between LP and CC but one is now scheduled for w/b 13th January.

LP wished to purchase plastic boxes so that material not currently on display can be stored in a secure and organised fashion. DC agreed to fund the purchases.

Action

LP to source and purchase suitable storage containers.

11 Shop report (LR)

Glen Appin and Sea Salt have indicated to LR that they will be increasing their wholesale prices.

LR is reviewing the stock items and evaluating what sells and what excites little interest.

AN recorded that a volunteer had suggested selling FireBalls bobble hats but the consensus was that the unit price was too high and there was already a dedicated sole seller. No action to be taken.

LR will be engaging with the Sketching Group to ascertain whether they have any products that could be sold in the museum.

Action Point

LR to engage with Sketching Group.

12 Clock Tower report (AN)

The 2024 footfall was 5810. This compares with 1453 in 2023. However the 2023 footfall was reduced as the Clock Tower did not open until June (closed since January 2020 for refurbishment) and then closed again until October whilst waiting for the Council to repair a failed lock.

13 AOCB.

Harbour Book. GR and DCu are finalising this book, together with an input from DC. The next stage is seeking funding for the printing – one suggestion was a local Windfarm grant but others may be available. The price to print 1000 copies would be around £1400.

Rota. DCu asked CC whether the rota list could be placed online as this would make it easier for volunteers to identify gaps. DCu remembers that LC had suggested a viable solution and CC will contact LC for further information.

Winter Talks. LR reminded the committee that there had been previous discussions on holding informative talks during the winter for all the volunteers. Reference was made to IB's highly successful talk on fishing. The committee agreed that this should be pursued. GR is available on 1st March for a talk on the photographs. CC agreed to action.

New Colony of Kincardineshire. Autumn Pinto, our MSc graduate, had hoped to re-work the poster on this Scottish emigration but is now heavily committed in her new job in Canada. LP is in touch with another Canadian graduate (Katy) who would like to take on the task even though she would be working remotely. The committee agreed to the suggestion. LP to action.

Recently the museum received a donation of \$75 dollars from Kristin Headley who had visited the museum last August and had been delighted with the display. LR has thanked her.

Oral History. This is a follow up to the *Winter Talks*. LP advocated filming these talks and extending filming to individuals with knowledge of Stonehaven’s local history. LP will investigate funding for this action.

Temu. DC tabled a variety of items that he had bought on Temu at very advantageous prices. It was thought that many of the items would help to display our stock and other items could be prizes for the various museum ‘hunts’. LR to investigate further.

Action Points

CC to contact LC over a possible digital rota list

CC to action Winter Talks.

LP to contact Katy re re-working poster

LP to investigate funding for recording local history

LR to investigate Temu products

14 Date of next meetings

Wednesday 19th February

Andrew Newton
9th January 2025

Secretary

Stonehaven Tolbooth Association (Tolbooth Museum)

A Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SC043279)

Summary of Action Points

Summary of Action Points	Person
Contact owner of ship’s bell	IB
Pursue new sign for Bervie Braes	IB
Continue considering options provided by the old blocks	LR
Contact AU over student opportunities	LP
Review display panels	GR/DC
Source and purchase suitable storage containers.	LP
Engage with Sketching Group	LR
Contact LC over a possible digital rota list	CC
Action Winter Talks	CC
Contact Katy re re-working poster	LP
Investigate funding for recording local history	LP
Investigate Temu products	LR