

Eilean Eisdeal and Easdale Island Trading Company AGM

held 28th December 2013 at 2p.m. in Easdale Island Community Hall

Directors present: Keren Cafferty, Duncan Smallman, Jan Fraser, Alex Mac Rae, Iain McDougall.

Members present: David Donnison, May McGillivray, Tony Hill, Jess Hill, Mike Cafferty, Lucy Johnstone, Steven Brown, Voirrey Quillan, Elaine McChesney, Neil Fraser.

Apologies for absence: Annabel Gregory, Dave Rockley, Rosie Collinge, Helen McDougall, Robert McDougall, Fiona Adamson, Alan McDougall, Colin MacPherson.

Minutes of the previous AGM: proposed Voirrey Quillan, seconded David Donnison.

Matters arising: Tony Hill asked Keren for an update on the resolution of the disagreement with Alastair Knox over ownership of the coal-shed and strip of land. Although the Keeper was at fault we have been unable to reclaim our considerable legal expenses. Since our solicitor did not keep us fully informed of the escalation in these costs, we have argued successfully to reduce the bill, and have now agreed to pay this in instalments.

Chairman's Report: 2013 has been another busy year for fundraising and managing existing assets for the directors of Eilean Eisdeal. We continue to investigate sources of funding for new and existing projects although this is tough in the current economic climate.

A successful application to Creative Scotland secured funding of £5478 towards the 2013 arts programme and 10th anniversary hall celebrations. The Creative Scotland funding stream is becoming more and more competitive each year and the application requires a huge amount of work in a very short time frame as it has to be lodged in October for the following years programme. I would like to thank Wee for his help in putting together another excellent programme for 2014 and we look forward to hearing in January if this has been successful.

The hall's 10th anniversary in May saw a busy weekend packed full of music and community celebration. We would like to thank everyone who contributed and made it a weekend to remember. The hall sub committee has ensured each and every event has run seamlessly and our thanks go once again to Annabel, Lynn, Jess and Wee.

Despite the initial success in tanking the hall walls we noted in October following a prolonged period of extremely wet weather that water seepage was clearly evident on the back wall. On closer inspection we have

identified that the Solar PV panels seem to be the root of the problem and when the rain is heavy it is literally coming off the panels like a waterfall and completely missing the guttering. We are trying to establish from the installer how this can be rectified and hope to have it sorted before any damage is done.

The museum has been open all season supported by a combination of paid and volunteer staff. The decision was taken this year to operate the museum on entry by suggested donation rather than an entry fee. This decision was based on witness accounts of the number of people who were either not going in or went in and came straight back out. Interestingly footfall has increased by a massive 1000 visitors but despite this the museum made a loss. We accept this was probably due to the delay installing a dedicated donation box with careful wording to encourage donations and also providing guidance to staff and volunteers on how to engage with visitors so that they understand why their donation is so important. We hope that next year will see a more positive financial position for the museum. The museum building is showing considerable signs of deterioration and will require quite major works very soon. Appropriate funding is being sought to help with this.

Eilean Eisdeal has continued to work with Suzanne McIntosh of Suzanne McIntosh Planning throughout the year. Representation was made to the Local Development Plan and a community consultation was undertaken in April regarding the area known locally as the Rush n Gush. This followed complaints to the planners made by a couple of individuals. The planners requested a change of use for the land but we argued that the council also need to take responsibility as the waste provider. Uplift of heavy unwanted bulky goods used to take place on a regular basis but Eilean Eisdeal are concerned that there has been no uplift by the council since 2006. The consultation received a good number of responses and its findings have now been finalised into a report which we will be distributing shortly.

Points from consultation

Discussions with Highlands and Islands Enterprise regarding Easdale benefiting from a Development Manager to assist with future projects are ongoing. Funding for these positions has just been through some radical changes and we will continue discussions on how Easdale can benefit.

Regarding the legal fees caused by the land dispute with Alistair Knox we were disappointed to learn that we would be unable to claim any money back from the We have negotiated with our solicitors Burness and they agreed to reduce the fees considerably. We are currently paying the fees in monthly instalments.

The directors took the difficult decision to raise small claims cases against harbour users with outstanding harbour dues. This was not as

straightforward as we thought due to the fact that company directors are unable to represent themselves and require to engage a solicitor to act on their behalf. Obviously this would have been pointless due to the costs involved however John Campbell QC offered to represent us if the case went to court. We also raised this matter with our local MSP who wrote to the Scottish Minister of Justice on our behalf and his reply indicated that this would hopefully change in the near future.

The islands' fundraisers Atlantic Adventure Day and The World Stone Skimming Championships were once again very successful raising vital funds and gaining positive PR for the charity. The Press and Journal stepped in once again to pay the £1000 demand by Mr Feigenbaum and we're very grateful for their support along with all the other sponsors and volunteers.

The directors are grateful for the positive and encouraging support that they continue to receive. They would like to extend their thanks to members, the sub-committees and the many volunteers who have assisted throughout the year. The directors look forward, with this continuing support, to furthering the projects that are on the Community Plan.

Treasurer's Report:

This year's Accounts were prepared by our accountants, Simmers and Co in Oban, before being approved by the Directors. We continue to find Simmers and Co very pleasant and helpful to deal with. Once approved, the accounts are filed with Companies House and also with the Charity Regulator OSCR. If you have any questions about the accounts we would be delighted to take them to the Accountants if we can't answer them ourselves. We now ask you to consider the accounts.

As we are all aware, the economic climate continues to be as challenging as much as the weather has been over the last couple of months. On first glance the picture remains somewhat turbulent and interesting.

Our two largest fund - raising events, the Atlantic Adventure Day and World Stone Skimming Championships proved as successful as previous years, with the Atlantic Adventure Day

Atlantic Adventure Day £837 compared to £326 last year. At the time of submission of the accounts not all sponsorship monies had been received for the Stone Skimming, with the received funds the total was c£8000.

Part of this will be from an improvement in our t-shirt and paraphernalia which saw an increase in sales to £2070 (compared to £2035 in 2012). Our costs in sales was reduced to below £900 (compared to over £1000 last year) giving us a larger margin.

Overall Eilean Eisdeals income for the year was down compared to last year (by 23%), our costs were down sufficiently enough to allow our overall gross profit to

drop by only 6%. This is despite an increase in our legal costs due to various ongoing issues that the trust has suddenly faced in the passed 12 months.

The income from the harbour was down this year but we have started to undertake proceedings to reclaim some of the outstanding costs due, though initially this will appear as an added cost.

This year the Directors took the decision to make admission to the museum by donation. There was an increase in footfalls but this did not directly equate to an increase in museum income which was down £1856. There were initial issues with a suitable donations box and once the one that is now in the museum was installed, the amount of donations increased. With a full season with the current system in place it is entirely plausible that next year will see an increase in museum income.

The costs of the hall have remained high and increased slightly for the EITC. These are barely being covered even though we were successful in securing funding this year for The ever popular Arts programme was more successful this year, generating £5376 compared to £2250 last year which may also explain the increase in the amount generated through the ever popular raffles (so thank you all for taking part in them), up by £176.

Our PV Feed in tariff also saw a slight increase to £911, 20% of which will be donated for the use of the children of the island, once they have decided what to spend it on. I would like to take this opportunity to thank my predecessor, Donald, for all his work as treasurer. Like him, I would also like to thank Keren and Annabel in easing me into the financial machinations of the trust, keeping me on the straight and narrow, making sure everything is signed and for doing an excellent job with the book keeping.

Questions from the floor:

Tony Hill asked what was the percentage reduction on the museum takings. Iain McDougall replied that overall it was around 25%, although this could partly be explained by not having a proper donation box with wording until May, and the very slow start to the tourist season everywhere due to the cold weather. Takings for July/August/September were only about 10% down. Over a longer time period – several years – the museum breaks even.

Eilean Eisdeal and EITC Accounts for year ending 30th September 2013

Accounts were considered by the members. Jess Hill asked about the increase in accounting costs. Duncan and Keren replied that Simmers provided a lot of helpful advice and now that we can submit our accounts using SAGE, costs should drop. Also Annabel will be taking over PAYE this year using SAGE which will also reduce costs. The accounts were accepted by the members.

Appoint Accountant: The members agreed to re-appoint Simmers.

Appointment of new Directors: Jan Fraser stood down this year in rotation. Jan was the only nomination for Director and was therefore reappointed.

Any Other Business:

David Donnison thanked all the Directors for their work on behalf of the community.

Jess thanked Mike Mackenzie and Iain Mitchell for their work shoring up the Bull after the storms. The Directors wholeheartedly endorsed this and thanked Tony and Jess Hill (Sea.fari) for providing the diesel for this work. It was agreed by all that we need to tackle this problem. Tony Hill suggested that this should be the top priority for Eilean Eideal. Keren commented that Suzanne's consultation had shown us how to progress projects with the community. Duncan Smallman thanked Tony for contacting and liaising with Wallace Stone Consulting Engineers and exploring funding opportunities for the Bull and harbour. Lucy Johnstone asked what responsibility the Council had in the maintenance of the harbour. Keren replied that they were only bound to keep the access clear to the ferryslip. Lucy suggested that it could be useful if members wrote individually to the Council and all agreed.

Elaine McChesney asked what plans Eilean Eideal had regarding social housing? Keren explained that this was a priority and had been part of the community plan for many years. The Directors were happy to accept Elaine's offer of assistance to further this project. May was concerned that we would have no control over who moved to the island but was reassured that these properties are built for local people to help ensure a sustainable community. Lucy explained that she had been involved with building social housing on Colonsay. The Directors agreed that we would plan a meeting at Easter to discuss the options for social housing and other projects with the community.

The meeting closed at 2.45p.m.