

Minutes of the 7th AGM of the Clan Donnachaidh Society Guarantee Company
Held at Killiecrankie Hall on Friday 10th September 2010 at 2pm

1. **Welcome by Andrew Duncan, Chairman.** Thanks to Struan and those who travelled long distances to be there. Apologies from: Gillespie Robertson, Mr and Mrs Robertson-Laird, Shirley Oliver, Faith Elliot, Sir Sandy Reid, Michael and Sarah Innes, James Robertson (Edmonton), Bob Duncan (New Zealand) and Carole Robertson (Kentucky). Apologies had been received from 27 members and proxy forms.
2. The Meeting adopted the **Minutes** of the AGM 2009; proposed by Duncan Huie and seconded by Rev John Duncan. There were no matters arising.
3. **Chairman's report:** Due to reduced membership numbers and higher running costs, there is now a shortfall in funds, which will have to be made up from other sources/reserves. The Chairman had written an appeal letter to all members, as well as a letter to all branches. This has already brought in donations of £500 and £2000. The politician, and former head of NATO, Sir George Robertson, also donated £100 and several framed photos and certificates.

There have been several departures this year. Donald and Brenda Reid are retiring from the Council at this meeting, so a new Vice-Chairman will need to be found. Donald will continue on the museum committee. Faith Elliot is also retiring from the Council. Jim Taylor departed from the shop and membership duties and Nettie Robertson also retired from the shop. Ruaidhri Brannan is the new Shop Manager and Membership Secretary. He has immediately set about making improvements in the shop and has ideas for the future. Ginnie Wilkie retired from her post as secretary but will still be on the museum committee, and helping her successor, Carol Paterson, to learn the ropes.

Subscription costs, which had been doubled last year, were very unpopular, especially among overseas members. This was not just because of the global financial situation but also because of the bad exchange rates and fluctuations. Some memberships had been lost due to this. The subscription costs need to be reviewed.

The Chairman thanked the local branch for all their fund-raising activities.

4. **Secretary's Report and Finance:** Ginnie Wilkie announced that she had retired and that Jim Taylor had left and apologised for delays during the handover to the new members of staff. She talked about the accounts summary. The audio-equipment hire agreement had been cancelled, but the equipment had not been removed by the hire people and is still in use at the Centre. The accountant had produced a full set of accounts for 2009. A full copy of the Society Accounts goes to Companies House and a full copy has to be sent to the Office of Scottish Charity Regulator. The Accountant signs these accounts, Andrew Duncan signs as Chairman, and the Secretary signs as well. Full accounts can be emailed to those who request it. Also, the accounts will be published on the website.

The accountant is prepared to do the accounts for one more year (2010 accounts) only. He is having trouble costing the work due to all the OSCR regulations. The true cost is considerably more, and doubles the amount the Society has been charged. A letter had been received from the accountants, suggesting that consideration be given to simplifying the processes and structures of the organisation, and whether the Society should continue to operate as a Charity, given the onerous requirements of the charity regulations. Advice would need to be sought as to the implications of ceasing to operate as a charity.

There was then a discussion on the benefits of being a Charity. Bill Robertson said that in the USA, there are many wealthy people looking for charities to donate to. Not only do the donors get some tax relief, but they also get a little income from their donation. These are the kind of people who the Society may want to contact with a view to donations. These donations could be administered through the Atholl-Rannoch Trust and dispersed internationally.

As well as being faced with higher accountants' fees, there has also been a rise in the amount of rates the Society must now pay.

Acceptance of the Financial Accounts and Statements: proposed by James Irvine Robertson, seconded by Brenda Reid.

Carol Paterson introduced herself as the new Secretary who had taken over from Ginnie Wilkie.

5. **Membership Report and Shop Report:** Ruaidhri Brannan introduced himself as he took over from Jim Taylor as Shop Manager and Membership Secretary. He has been working on increasing shop sales and increasing stock. He believes that the front of the building could be enhanced by replacing the small panel windows with larger windows. It would then be easier for potential customers to see into the shop that way,

rather than peering through small panels. John P Robertson is going to look into the costs of making these alterations.

On the membership side, there had been a few teething problems with computers and files/databases.

Membership numbers are around 850. The membership databases could be very much improved and this improvement could take place over the quieter time during the winter.

6. **Museum Report:** Ginnie Wilkie read out the report from OSCR and talked about the Clan Gathering in 2009. The shop had closed for a while last winter for building alteration works to take place. Johnny Cope's fiddle has been loaned to the museum by Mrs Anne-Lise Robertson in Pitlochry. Bars had been removed from the displays, so it is now easier to get into the display cabinets.

7. **Clan Annual Report:** James Irvine Robertson reported on the 2010 annual. There is a possibility that in future, a large proportion of the annuals could be printed overseas. This would cut down on production costs and postage costs.

8. **Affiliated Branches Reports:** There were reports submitted by the following Branches: London; Rannoch & Highland; North California; South California: Florida; Midwest; Carolinas; North-East. Thanks were expressed to them for attending the meeting.

9. **Any Other Business:**

- Nothing had been heard back from the previous International Vice-Chairman. Christy Lange from Florida is delighted to be International Vice-Chairman elect. She has prepared an up-to-date database of branch contacts and has established a Clan Donnachaidh page on the networking internet site Facebook. She thanked James Irvine Robertson for literature he had prepared for her to take with her to the various highland games she attends. She reported that many people she had spoken to wish the membership fees to be reduced. Some people had also asked for a 'journey home consultant' to help them with trips to Scotland and she knew of a lady in America who was willing to do that. Christy wants to reach out to defunct and ailing branches to see if they can be rejuvenated. She also enquired whether there was a charter which was used to inaugurate new branches.
- Membership dues – Ruaidhri Brannan suggested changing the membership dues date from January to July each year. This was thought to be possible.
- Duncan Huie had proposed Stephanie Robertson to be a Fellow of the Society of Antiquarians in Scotland, due to all the work she has done on the DNA Project.
- The DNA Project is going well and now has over 600 people taking part. There is a new website for the programme: clandonnachaidhdna.org
- The Chairman proposed altering the timing of the AGM next year so that it did not coincide with the Chief's harvest time. Carol Gascoigne-Pees proposed June and Tim Duncan proposed the weekend of the Pitlochry Games in September. There was a show of hands with more hands for the September date.
- Website – the Chairman thanked Cheryl Robertson for all the work she has done on the website. She is going to retire from that position in the spring. Mike Stead indicated that he may be able to find a willing successor to Cheryl.
- There was a lively discussion on the level of membership fees. It was generally agreed that the rates for overseas members should be reduced. There was debate as to whether the level should be \$20, \$25 or \$30. Finally a show of hands elected \$25 as the new rate. Membership fees remain at the same rate for British members.

10. **Intimations**

- The Secretary made announcements concerning the forthcoming events - the Clan Service at Struan Church on Sunday taken by the Rev Matthew Robertson.
- The Dinner is at 7.15 pm in Westlands Hotel. A stand-in piper will be in attendance to play for us.
- There will be a short Council Meeting to elect a Chairman, Vice Chairmen and Executive Committee held immediately after the AGM.

11. **Date of Annual General Meeting in 2011: Friday, 9th September 2011 at 2pm in Killiecrankie Hall.**

Struan thanked the Council for all their hard work, members of the local branch for their help at the meeting and for all who attended.