



Clan Donnachaidh

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of THE CLAN DONNACHAIDH SOCIETY held at The Tryst, Pitlochry on Friday 18th August 2023

1 Welcome

Following the piping in of the Chief, Chairman Jonn Duncan extended a warm welcome to all. A list of those in attendance is attached to this minute (Appendix 1).

2 Apologies

Apologies were recorded from the Honorary President, Lord Robertson of Port Ellen, David J Roy, John and Christy Duncan Lange, Mark Robertson and Emilio Ferrero Guevara.

3 Approval of the Minutes of the AGM held on 9th September 2022

A copy of the minutes of the AGM held on 9th September 2022 had been previously posted on the website and made available to those in attendance. There were no questions or amendments offered. Gillespie Robertson proposed the minutes be accepted. The proposal was seconded by Suzi McNutt and unanimously approved by the members in attendance.

4 Council Report by Chair

Jonn Duncan spoke to his written report – a copy of which is attached to this minute (Appendix 2).

5 Financial Report and Acceptance of 2022 Accounts

The Statement of Financial Activities and Financial Position had been previously circulated to those members in attendance.

The Chair confirmed the Society had achieved another increase in income in the financial year ending 31 December 2022. Total income for the year amounted to £108,395 (2021: £48,244). The increase in income was reflected by donations, legacies, sales of merchandise and dividend income, with funds significantly boosted by a generous legacy. In general, the single most important source of income to the Society continues to be rental income from the lease of part of the Society's property at Bruar, followed by membership subscriptions and contributions towards the cost of the Clan Annual. Investment values had held fairly constant.

The Chair further reported expenditure during 2022 had increased slightly – as expected - to cover increased costs to support the annual Gathering, increase in wages, Clan Annual expenses, accountancy and professional services.

In summary, and in conclusion, the Chair confirmed of the total funds, the amount ring-fenced for specific purposes at end of year 2022 amounted to £75,120 split as follows: £12,633 for Struan Kirk Trust; £54,232 for educational purposes; £3,225 for Genealogy, £5,000 for Bronze Piper Statue maintenance.

There being no questions from the floor, Suzi McNutt proposed the Statement of Financial Activities and Financial Position for the year ending 31 December 2022 be duly approved. The motion was seconded by Stacey Reid, and approved unanimously by the members in attendance.

6 Election of Office Bearers/Nomination to Council

There were no new nominations to Council. All existing Council members indicated a willingness to continue to serve on Council for the forthcoming year. Their re-appointment to Council was unanimously approved by the members.

Nominations for Office Bearers were proposed by Stacey Reid as follows -

Jon Duncan (Chair); Emma Reid (Vice-Chair); Suzi McNutt (International Vice-Chair)

The three nominations were seconded by Bridget Robertson, and unanimously approved by the membership.

7 International Vice-Chair Report

Jon Duncan apologised for the absence of the written IVC report – this had been “lost in transit” due to the recent challenges with the Society’s e-mail accounts. In summary, however, he reported that total membership numbers globally are in the region of 960 – slightly down on previous year (1087). However, there remain some large gatherings to be held in the USA before the year end and it is expected new memberships and renewals will increase significantly during this period and match – at a minimum – total membership recorded for 2021 year end.

8 Branch Reports

- **Midwest:** Linda Myers spoke to her written report, a copy of which is attached and forms part of the Minutes (Appendix 3).
- **Carolinas:** Judy Harkin reported on behalf of the branch President Scott Robertson. The branch had continued to struggle to attract new and retain existing members as a consequence of the three Covid lockdowns and adverse recent weather challenges. However, it remained hopeful that 2024 will be a more active year.
- **Rocky Mountains:** Jim Robertson reported Rocky Mountains Branch had participated at five festivals in 2022. The branch had also held a very successful Robert Burns dinner with 100 people in attendance. Membership is down a little, but the branch remained confident the upcoming festival in two weeks time would bring in both new members and membership renewals. Finances remained strong and the branch benefitted from an active and enthusiastic Marketing Team and office bearers. The branch was also proud to report that Vice-President Heather Hildago had recently qualified for the World Highland Games (but decided to come to the Clan Gathering instead).
- **Northeast Branch:** D’Arce Reid (Vice-President) reported the branch had lost one games due to Covid, but was scheduled to attend 13 events in the coming year. 45 new members had joined recently bringing the Branch total to 230. The branch was also able to generate funds from the sales of T-shirts and bags, which were used to support scholarships for bagpiping and Scottish dance.
- **Pacific Northwest Branch:** Nyla Jebousek recorded greetings from all members of the Pacific Northwest Branch.
- **London & Southern Counties Branch:** Lynda Robertson (Interim Secretary) reported the branch had a membership of 97 but only 20-25 of those members had registered e-mail addresses and this makes communication challenging. Nonetheless, an organised branch visit to St Paul’s Cathedral, London had been arranged during 2022 which had been supported by a number of members, including the Chief and his family along with Honorary President Lord George Robertson of Port Ellen.
- **Scotland Branch:** The Chief reported that efforts had been expended to resurrect a new Branch in Scotland. A lunch had been held in March 2023 at the Atholl Arms Hotel, Blair Atholl which had attracted around 30 in total (a mix of members and visitors). A further lunch was planned for late September/October 2023 and invitations would again be extended to all members in Scotland along with guests who may have an interest in becoming involved with the Clan Society.

9 History Branch and other initiatives

Alasdair Robertson reported the planned launch of the new website would offer the functionality to support and launch the History Group which would be the first **virtual group**; and open to members from anywhere in the world. With the support of a small working group, the aim was to set up a new area within the website (or linked to the website) which could grow organically and be self managed. The group would focus on various research topics from which articles could be produced for upload onto the website.

A further initiative of the new website would be to set up a Clan Trail of related sites around Donnachaidh clanlands which could be accessed by members and visitors who plan to visit the area.

Alasdair concluded by suggesting that once the History Group was operational, the template for its structure and operational best practice could help inform the development of other virtual groups (eg. Youth Group).

10 Clan Donnachaidh DNA Project

Stephanie Robertson reported that the Clan Donnachaidh DNA project currently had over 2000 members, including both participants who had taken a Y chromosome test that identified the direct male line of ancestry and participants who had taken an autosomal test covering all lines of ancestry. The Y test was the best way of discovering a relationship with other families with the same clan surname as it could show very long genetic lineages, going back before the emergence of surnames and clans. An autosomal test was useful if revealing recent family relationships and could be taken by both men and women.

11 Membership & Review of Membership Subscription Rates

The Clan Secretary re-confirmed membership numbers at time of AGM 2023 totalled 960 compared with 1087 at time of the AGM in 2022. As earlier intimated by the Chair, numbers were expected to rise fairly significantly in the next two months.

The Chair confirmed Council recommended that there be no increase in membership subscriptions at this time.

12 Clan Annual

The Chair confirmed that the 2024 Clan Annual would continue to be published in hard copy and circulated to all members in good standing in Spring 2024. Consideration continues to be given to including an online version via the website. In the meantime, he confirmed additional efforts would be expended to attract more commercial adverts for the 2024 annual by way of offsetting increased costs in print and fulfilment.

13 Appointment of Auditors

Walton Kilgour, Chartered Accountants, had expressed a willingness to continue to offer audit services. A motion to re-appoint Walton Kilgour as auditors, was proposed by Duncan Huie and seconded by Stacey Reid. Members present unanimously approved their re-appointment for a further year.

14 Appointment of Clan Annual Editor

James Irvine Robertson had confirmed his willingness to edit the 2024 Clan Annual and his re-appointment as editor was unanimously approved by those members present.

15 Any Other Business

On behalf of the Clan Council and membership of Clan Donnachaidh Society, the Chair recorded grateful thanks to Stuart Roberson who had retired from Council last year, following a further tenure of nine years' service.

The Chair announced the upcoming 100th birthday of life member, Jean Munro, in December 2023, and invited members to sign a birthday card from the Clan Donnachaidh Society with messages of congratulations and gratitude to Jean.

Gillespie Robertson, Chair of the Struan Kirk Trust, reported that following recent discussions, Atholl had agreed to include Struan Kirk as a possible wedding service/vows renewal venue in their marketing literature for 2024. The information would appear alongside accommodation options such as Kindrochet House and Clachan Cottages.

16 Date of Next AGM

The Chair confirmed the next AGM would be held on Friday 13th September 2024 at 1.30 pm in the Tryst, Pitlochry.

There being no further business, the Chair closed the meeting at 2.45 pm.

Appendix I

AGM 2023 - Attendance list

Kathy Duncan
Jonn Duncan
Tom Reid
D'Arce Reid
Judy Harkin
Gillespie Robertson
Heather Hildago
Jim Robertson
Linda Myers
Thoma Vargas
Clarissa Vargas
Pamela E Neill
James Roberts
Jim Roberts
Ron Hobson
Duncan Huie
Andrew Duncan
Gilbert Robertson (Chief)
Bridget Robertson
Alasdair Robertson
Brian Donaghy
Rev Matthew Robertson
Emma Reid
Stephanie Robertson
Eddie Stewart
Nyla Jebousek
Lynda Robertson
Stuart Robertson
Stacey Reid
Suzi McNutt
Donald Reid
Brenda Reid

APPENDIX 2

Clan Donnachaidh Society Chair Report to the 2023 AGM

The Society Finances for the year ending 2022 showed somewhat of an improvement, due mainly to the continued support of membership and hopefully all of us being on the back side finally, of COVID.

The Council has been through a couple of change overs during the last year, as far as the Chair position, due to circumstances beyond anyone's control. In March Emma Reid stepped in as Acting Chair while a search took place to fill the position. In July the Council met virtually and appointed me to the Chair position, at Emma's request. I would be amiss in not giving recognition and expressing my gratitude to Emma for the splendid job she carried out as Acting Chair all while holding down a demanding job and keeping up with two active children. I am honored to be allowed to serve the Clan Donnachaidh Society as the Chair and also the Society's elected Trustee on the Struan Kirk Trust. Realizing that I have big shoes to fill, I sincerely hope that I am able to meet the high expectations and fulfill the needs of the Society.

Concerning a replacement for the International Vice Chair, Suzi McNutt has graciously agreed to assume this role. Most of you may know that Suzi has served the Clan Donnachaidh Society as a Council Member for many years as well as being an active member of the Southern California Branch and now the Tennessee Branch. I know that Suzi will serve the Society well in the IVC position.

Much gratitude is due to the remaining Council members Vice Chair, Emma Reid, Alasdair Robertson, Stephanie Robertson, Emillio Ferrero Guevara, James (Jim) Robertson, Mark Robertson and Kathy Duncan. We have a great group of enthusiastic council members and I look forward to working with them during the upcoming year.

We have good news to report regarding the Museum. There has been a substantial bequeathment from a Lady in the USA, allocated through the Atholl Rannoch Society, that is designated specifically for the Clan Donnachaidh Society Museum. This generous donation should allow us to replace the existing display cabinets with museum grade cabinets and also install an interactive touch icon screen, allowing visitors to obtain more in depth information on the artifacts displayed. The lighting has been upgraded by the House of Bruar at no cost to the Society. Our goal is to reach the level of an Accredited Museum.

A new and improved website for the Clan Donnachaidh Society is underway, thanksto a great deal of hard work from Brian Robertson and Alasdair Robertson. Many changes to the site are in the works, including a members only section and a section for genealogy as well as the History Group. In time, there will also be areas for the Branches to input information in the members only section. We are also considering other social media options to offer a broader platform for members as well as the general public.

Continuing this year, it has proven difficult to find a suitable candidate for the Youth Award. There has been discussion on broadening this type of award to an Arts Scholarship program that would extend worldwide and continue our support of education in the fields of Scottish Arts. You can expect to hear more on this exciting avenue in the upcoming months.

I would also like recognize the dedication and hard work of our Secretary, Irene Cameron. Irene goes above and beyond in all areas and we would surely be lost without her. Further in need of recognition is Council Member Stephanie Robertson. Stephanie wears many hats within the Society. She oversees the DNA Project, plays a large role in assisting Editor, James Irvine Robertson with the overall publication of the Clan Annual. Stephanie also coordinates all the events for the Gathering week activities, the AGM and the Chief's Reception and Dinner. Much appreciation goes out to both these invaluable ladies.

It is my fervent goal as Chairman to continue to promote the Clan Donnachaidh Society and our Scottish Heritage. Your Council and I have taken to task the building of an even better Clan Donnachaidh Society. We look forward to the upcoming year and the exciting things to come.

Sincerely,

Jonn Duncan

Chairman

APPENDIX 3

MIDWEST BRANCH REPORT

August 18,2023

Covering the states of Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Louisiana, the Midwest Branch sends greetings and best wishes to all Donnachaidhs around the world.

We are happy to report that we were able to resume some of our normal activities later in 2022 after the pandemic shutdowns. We enjoyed having a presence at three Highland Games events: ScotFest in Broken Arrow in September - which was one of the most beastly hot events ever held then!!!! We could be facing even worse this year! The Arkansas Scottish Festival, and the Highland Gathering, both in October. We were most pleased to welcome several new members from these events.

Membership has been dropping each year and we believe a lot is due to lack of usual activity during the years from 2019-2022. Our Council is looking at trying to hold another Branch AGM either this Fall or next Spring, hoping it will bring back some former members. Those previously held garnered a great attendance from all 5 states. We met at Branson, MO in a hotel built like a castle, appropriately named "StoneCastle Inn". It definitely lent itself to the occasion

In other Branch news, we have a new president, Tim Robertson from Jones, OK, and a new treasurer, George Robertson from Cameron, OK. Karen Robertson continues as secretary and Linda Myers is serving as Advisor to the Branch .

We were very sorry to learn of the passing of Dr. Hugh Robertson, a lifetime member from New Orleans. Dr. Robertson was a most generous donor to Clan Donnachaidh, helping to acquire the Clan Chiefs' burial ground and supporting the purchase of Struan Kirk on those grounds. He will be sorely missed.

We plan to have displays at several of the Fall games in our area, beginning with ScotFest in -mid September.

We are open to some suggestions from other branches as to activities offered to members, and any type of membership drive, if utilized.
