

Post Meeting Briefing

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Purpose of briefing

The Shetland Amenity Trust AGM and Board meeting were held via video-conference in response to the current Covid-19 restrictions and guidance. As such the decision was taken to cancel the usual public session of the meeting and continue with only the private session. This briefing aims to provide an overview of the meeting discussion in relation to those items that are public.

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting took place prior to the Board meeting. The minutes of the previous AGM were adopted, and the Annual Accounts were signed off. An online vote was conducted to appoint four new Trustees. The names of these Trustees will be released once they have been notified.

Alastair Hamilton was appointed as Chair and Linda Riddell and Alison Moncrieff as Vice-Chairs

Trustee Frank Robertson retired from the Board after 21 years, completing the maximum number of terms in office. The Trustees thanked him for all of his advice and hard work over the years.

Board Meeting

Update to Board on re-opening of the Shetland Museum and Archives

- Shetland Museum and Archives was successfully reopened to visitors on 15th July 2020.
- Full risk assessments were carried out and approved for the reopening of Shetland Museum & Archives. New safety measures have been implemented to restrict visitor numbers, enable social distancing and increase cleaning and hygiene. Staff training and consultation has also been undertaken. Sector and Government guidelines are kept under constant review to ensure we are compliant and achieving best practice.
- We received 'We're Good To Go' accreditation for the site before reopening on the 15th of July. We were one of the first public buildings and tourism business in Shetland to reopen.
- A new online booking system is now in place restricting visitor numbers and enabling track and trace where required. A one-way system and social distancing measures enable visitors to have a safe and enjoyable experience. The café area has been adapted to provide a socially distanced picnic area.
- Ability Shetland accepted our invitation to the Museum to review our new systems and visitor experience which received a positive response. They are now visiting on a more regular basis

using the picnic area as a socially distanced meeting area in line with guidelines. They have had nowhere to meet or to go since lockdown started.

- All customers are now met on arrival and briefed by a member of staff. Customer feedback has been extremely positive with visitors stating that they feel safe, staff are friendly and knowledgeable and that they enjoyed their visit.
- 906 visitors were welcomed to the museum during July and August, 93% lower than in 2019. 84% of available slots were booked and 77% of our visitors were tourists.

Update to Board on re-opening of Sumburgh Head Lighthouse & Visitor Centre

- Sumburgh Head was successfully reopened to visitors on 26th July 2020 for 4 weeks only.
- Similar to Shetland Museum and Archives, full risk assessments were carried out and approved and new safety measures implemented. We also received 'We're Good To Go' accreditation for the site before reopening.
- A new one-way system and social distancing measures enabled visitors to have a safe and enjoyable experience. Children and family activities were available.
- We welcomed 463 paying visitors in the 4 week period, 61% less than the previous year. There were also a large number of non-paying visitors to the outside areas of the site. A marked effort was made to encourage non-ticket holders to make a donation to support the upkeep of the site and in particular the toilet facilities, this resulted in higher donations than in previous years.

Business Services Update

- A range of HR policies have been approved by the HR Committee.
- Work has been done to reopen our self-catering accommodation including review of guidelines, risk assessments and revised approach to bookings and cleaning. Existing bookings have been moved or refunded as appropriate. We have had our first guests successfully stay at Sumburgh Head Lighthouse cottage and will soon be welcoming other guests at Eshaness Lighthouse shortly.
- The Financial Year end and audit has been successfully completed along with the Annual Report.
- Development of financial projections and budgets to support future funding bids.

Development Update

- Peatlands - Tait's Hill project is back on-site following breeding birds survey. Sandgarth is awaiting the departure of a pair of Red Throated Divers. We have been authorised to develop one project for the current year and are looking for a possible extension of the Tait's Hill site as this could be developed quickly and contractors will already be on site.
- We are doing our best to keep in touch with local communities during the present crisis and offering support where we can. This includes research into the best way to disburse Shetland Charitable trust funding going into the future. We have now received clearance from the Shetland Charitable Trust to devise and implement a new more equitable scheme.
- We have applied for and are applying for funding from various funds for various aspects of our operation that are affected by the current lockdown. We hope this will help to mitigate some of the shortfalls and additional expenses caused by the COVID-19 outbreak. So far we have had limited success but are more hopeful that new funds that look to the future rather than emergency funding may be a more fruitful area for applications.

Engagement Update

- The main focus of our work on engagement has been on the reopening of Shetland Museum and Archives and Sumburgh Head and delivering a safe and enjoyable visitor experience.
- We continue to deliver online activity including wildlife, place names and archaeology blogs and social media posts.
- A Shetland Wool Week Supporters pack was launched earlier in the year and has been very well received. Pre-orders of the Shetland Wool Week annual have also gone live and the response has been excellent.
- Work is underway with local textiles businesses and the community to develop online content to share during the period that would have been Wool Week. Activity is designed to keep our audience engaged and to bring a piece of Shetland and Shetland Wool Week to them.

Operations Update

- The main focus of our operational work has been on the safe reopening of key sites and services ensuring compliance with regulations and the health and safety of staff, contractors and visitors.
- A working group was established to oversee the process of reopening sites who liaise closely with all SAT staff and continues to meet and review the process and guidelines.
- Work on a forward maintenance register has highlighted the key priorities for work on a range of sites and buildings and potential repair, maintenance and ongoing running costs.
- The curatorial team at the museum and store continue to care for our collections and register artefacts and donations as well as providing advice and support to community museums.
- The Archives team continue to catalogue BBC Radio Shetland material and Shetland documents from the tenth century to 1714.
- As fieldwork has resumed, we have undertaken monitoring of Local Nature Reserves and various surveys, including working with volunteers to record the results of bird surveys.