

Scottish Society for Northern Studies
Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

Held at 50 George Square, Edinburgh on Saturday, 26th November, 2016

1 Welcome and apologies for absence

Alan Macniven welcomed members and guests to the meeting and said that he would be chairing it in the absence of the President Colleen Batey, who sent her apologies. Apologies had also been received from Tom Turpie, Peter Anderson, Sarah Thomas, Mary Bromage and Jonie Guest.

2 Minutes of the 2015 AGM

The minutes were accepted as an accurate record.

Proposed: Barbara Crawford Seconded: Bob Diamond

3 Matters arising not already on the agenda

John Baldwin asked whether a claim for GiftAid had been made. Alan Calder replied that a claim had been prepared and would be tendered shortly.

4 President's report

Alan read the report prepared by the President.

The Committee had met several times during the year to discuss matters practical and financial. Membership numbers remained relatively stable, but of course new members were always welcome and members were asked to encourage people to join.

Two successful day conferences had been held, both well-supported. The 750th anniversary of the Treaty of Perth had been marked by a meeting jointly hosted by SSNS and Culture Perth and Kinross in August. Perth Museum had been the venue and housed for the duration a copy of the original manuscript of the Treaty itself. There had been a videoed welcome from Dr Alastair Allan, MSP, Minister for Europe and speakers from Norway and Scotland.

'A'm Grippit dis Land', had been a joint venture in October with the Scottish Place-Name Society in honour of former President, Doreen Waugh. Gillian Fellows-Jensen had given the Hermann Pálsson Memorial Lecture and presentations spanning Caithness, Orkney and Shetland had provided a well-rounded view of Doreen's interests. The "Mirids o Wirids" by Mary Blance from Shetland ForWirids and Shetland fiddle music had reminded attendees of Doreen's roots.

Other conference contributions both scholarly and financially had included a donation to the Nordic Research Network meeting held in Glasgow in May, and in November, Arne Kruse, another past President, had represented the Society and given a paper at a SPNS event to commemorate yet another past President, Bill Nicolaisen.

2016 had been very eventful but that meant that there would not be a residential conference in 2017. 2018 was now the intended target date and the options being explored included perhaps Lismore or more likely a return to Caithness.

Sarah Thomas and her editorial panel had successfully delivered *Northern Studies* volume 47, and the next was in the pipeline. Chris Coojmans was nearing completion of the editing of a volume entitled *Traversing the Inner Seas: Contacts and Continuity around Western Scotland, the Hebrides and Northern Ireland*, bringing together papers from the conferences held in Islay, Coleraine and Coll/Tiree. It was anticipated this volume will be available from the earlier part of 2017. It was also intended to publish the papers from the recent Treaty of Perth day conference.

Colleen thanked the committee members, without whose hard work the Society would not function, with particular thanks to Linda Riddell, who would be demitting office as Secretary after this meeting.

There had been several entrants for the 2016 Magnus Magnusson Memorial Essay Prize and the standard had been high. The winner was Anna Kuprian, a PhD student at Aberdeen University for her essay, 'Negotiating Contested Landscapes: the Lupin Controversy in Iceland'.

Barbara Crawford read an obituary for Willie Thomson, geographer and historian of Orkney and Shetland, who had been a member of the Society for many years. Also remembered was Anne Halford-MacLeod (wife of Ruari) who died recently.

5 Treasurer's report

The Treasurer, Colin Forsyth, presented the draft accounts for 2015 – 16 with explanatory notes. Spending had been less as there had been no major conference and income higher, though two items related to expenditure in the next financial year. The publication of *Northern Studies* was still a major commitment, partly met from reserves. The contract with Bookcourse for book storage and sale was also problematical. The books in storage had been reduced but Booksource had charged what was considered an unreasonable amount for this and discussions were ongoing.

Barbara Crawford questioned the payment made to Booksource which did not tally with the reported costs, and Colin explained that usually receipts for books sold were set against storage costs and only difference was paid.

John Baldwin noted that donations had been received for publication of the *Inner Seas* volume £1000 from the Strathmartine Trust and £1500 from the Marc Fitch Fund: a donation made to the Society's funds from Lieutenant-Commander Bell several years previously had also been earmarked for publications by the Committee. He also reminded members that the Society was willing to donate copies of its earlier publications to interested institutions.

The draft accounts were approved.

Proposed: John Baldwin

Seconded: Arne Kruse

6 Editors' reports and publications (also covered in President's report)

It was intended to publish volume 48 of *Northern Studies* in the summer of 2017, edited by Kathrin Zickermann and Kelsey Jackson Williams. The articles would explore connections between Scotland and Scandinavia in the early modern period. Several submissions had also been received for volume

49, which would be edited by Sarah Thomas and was expected to be published in the winter of 2017/18.

7 Change of Society's constitution to Scottish Charitable Incorporated Institution (SCIO)

Linda reminded the meeting that this had been proposed several years ago, and the Committee were now bringing forward their proposed constitution, which had already been issued to members for comment. It was, however, not intended to change the title of the organisation. She briefly explained the pros and cons of changing to a SCIO and put forward the Committee's proposals:

a) that the Society's Constitution be amended in line with the accompanying draft, assuming that the Society is converted to a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO)

b) that the Committee be empowered to agree with the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) the conversion of the Society to a SCIO, including any minor further changes to the constitution required.

Brian Balmain pointed out some discrepancies in the draft related to the committee quorum and minimum number of trustees (sections 54 and 88) and bank signatories (sections 105 and 106) and the use of digital banking (section 108). Linda undertook to review these.

John Baldwin asked whether it was intended to include arrangements for proxy voting at AGMs although in current constitution. Linda replied that this facility had never been used so the Committee did not intend to continue it. John stressed that it was important that trustees commit to serve on the committee for a term of say, three years, to allow continuity.

The meeting accepted the proposals.

Proposed: John Baldwin Seconded: Maggie Mackay

9. Election of Committee

Linda Riddell confirmed that she would be standing down as secretary. Alan Macniven and Peter Anderson had also completed their current three-year period on the committee but were willing to stand again. They were re-elected.

Proposed: Brian Balmain Seconded: David Grant

Morag Redford, who had been secretary in the 1980s, had agreed to stand again and she was elected.

Proposed: John Baldwin Seconded: Bob Diamond

Linda said that she was willing to continue working with the committee as a volunteer but was also willing to stand as vice-president. She was elected.

Proposed: Margaret Mackay Seconded: Arne Kruse

10. Future Conferences/Activities

This had been covered in the President's report. Alan said that the Committee always welcomed ideas for future conferences.

11. AOCB

It was agreed to send a card to Ian Fraser, a former President who had recently spoken at the conference in honour of Doreen Waugh, who was not in good health.

Maggie Mackay proposed a vote of thanks to the committee for their hard work. A special vote of thanks was also proposed to Molly Rorke for organising the day's catering.