**Minutes of the John Rae Society AGM**

**Wednesday, 8th December 2021 7.00 p.m.**

**Present:** Andrew Appleby, David Ashcroft, Janet Ashdown, Colleen Batey, Kevin Boak, Heather Bond, James Chalmers, Cheryl Chapman, Jean Craigie, Sandra Deans, Fiona Gould, Elaine Grieve, James Grieve,

Donna Heddle, Neil Kermode, Fiona Lettice, Simon Lloyd, Liz MacInally, Alasdair Marwick, Frank Mill, John Mowat, Mark Newton, Martyn Obbard, Tracey Phillips, Marie-Claire Rackham-Mann, K.R. (Keith Ramsay?), Kirk Rummel, Norman Shearer, Paul Simmons, Ken Stewart, Rachel Whitworth, Colin Young

**Apologies:**  Jane Berry, Alison Cruikshanks, Glenn Munro, Martha LaBare (all owing to technical difficulties)

The meeting was chaired by Liz MacInally, who has been acting Chair of the Society since July 2021, succeeding Neil Kermode who became acting Chair in 2020 when Norman Shearer, then Chair, became ill.

1. **Minutes of last AGM on 25th October 2020\***

Acceptance proposed by Mark Newton, Seconded by Andrew Appleby. Agreed.

1. **Trustees’ Annual Report\*** Presented by Liz MacInally. She spoke first about the Membership Report\*, which gives the number of members and their geographical distribution. She commented on the total number of members (407) and the gratifyingly high number of those overseas (64). She then referred to the following events/activities undertaken by the Society during the year mostly online, and publicised using the JRS newsletters, the JRS website, Facebook, Twitter, Radio Orkney, newspapers and online news sites:

* Open Doors event on the JRS website
* Four online talks on Zoom (fundraising)
* The John Rae Challenge (fundraising)
* Archaeological project in 2020 and 2021
* Loan of the John Rae chest to schools

She outlined continued collaboration over the year with the heritage consultants, resulting in plans for Conservation, Business and Activity, and draft architectural plans for the Hall of Clestrain Project.

Finally, she defined what keeps this project on target, as a combination of the board of trustees, the project manager, the membership of the society, the support of the local community, the support of the wider international community, the financial support of our members, our donors, and our major funders, and most of all our collective will to restore and conserve this building for this and future generations.

1. **Financial review**: the Society receives many donations, some of them regular. It also applies to a wide range of funding groups, including Historic Environment Scotland, National Heritage Lottery Fund, The Pilgrim Fund, Orkney Islands Council Community Development Fund, the Architectural Heritage Fund, Highland and Islands Enterprise, the Garfield Weston Trust and will next year be applying to the Capital Regeneration Growth Fund.

Income for the financial year April 20 to April 2021 was £94,355, expenditure £69,497 and the current balance stands at £182,045 including assets to the value of £117,668. See Trustees’ Annual Report\*

1. **Accounts.**  The treasurer reported that she was happy with Scholes acting as the independent examiner.

**Voting.**  Those in the meeting voted to accept both the Trustees’ Annual Report and the Accounts and for the retention of Scholes as independent examiner. (There was some difficulty in accessing the online forms but agreement was registered by comment.)

1. **President’s Report\*** Presented by Andrew Appleby. He made specific reference to the

* Graveside ceremony on John Rae’s birthday
* The birthday draw
* Approval of the plan for an access road to the Hall
* Online talks
* John Rae challenge
* Conservation Plan
* Archaeological discoveries

1. **General discussion**

**David Ashcroft** asked how members outwith Orkney might do more to support the Society and added how he had enjoyed the online lectures.  **Fiona Gould** advised the meeting there will be three more online talks in the early part of 2022.

**John Mowat,** chairman of the Orkney Norway Friendship Association, told the meeting how this has a close association with the Grimstad Kommune, who supply a Christmas tree for Orkney. He pointed out that both the Norwegian explorer, Roald Amundsen, and John Rae are highly regarded in Norway and that the two shared the same attitude in respecting and caring for the people they worked with. Information between Orkney and Norway is shared regularly and he suggested he might at some point ask for some material from the JRS which he could pass on.

**Simon Lloyd** expressed interest in the online talks and commented that he had not received information about them. The trustees agreed to look into this.

1. **Election of trustees**

Andrew Appleby and Norman Shearer were re-elected

Cheryl Chapman, Donna Heddle and Alasdair Marwick were elected.

(Again, there were some difficulties with the poll and voters used other means, but approval was given by at least 25 or 26 people and this was taken to show general acceptance.)

1. **AOC Business**

**Liz MacInally** announced that the Project Manager, Sandra Deans, will be issuing an interim report to the trustees shortly.

1. **Date of next AGM:**  Wednesday, November 16th at 7.00 p.m. on TEAMS

**Trustee meeting to elect office bearers**

Chaired by Norman Shearer.

He explained that its purpose would be to elect officers and that others were welcome to attend but would not be able to vote.

**Chair.**  Norman told the meeting that he and Liz MacInally had decided to offer their services as Joint Chair.

Proposed by Mark Newton, seconded by Andrew Appleby.

Agreed by remaining trustees.

**Treasurer.**  Tracey Phillips proposed by Liz MacInally, seconded by Norman Shearer.

Agreed by remaining trustees.

**Secretary.**  Fiona Gould proposed by Norman Shearer, seconded by Andrew Appleby. Fiona has agreed to take on this role in addition to that of Membership Secretary until such time as a new secretary is

appointed. Agreed by remaining trustees.

**Date of next meeting.**  Wednesday, 12th January 2022. Might be a physical meeting, although Andrew will be away and would have to join online.

**AOCB.**

**Sandra Deans.** ‘A thank you to everyone for attending tonight and a plea for help from anyone wanting to help, either as a volunteer or as a trustee. Thank you, John, for that offer to link with Norway: that could be a real bonus for the project.’

**Liz MacInally.**  ‘You will find all the information you need about the responsibilities of becoming a trustee on the website, below the information about the AGM. I would like to add my thanks to Sandra’s to all of you for attending.’

Meeting ended at 8.00 p.m.

⃰⃰⃰ Indicates the full report is available on the website

Website address: <https://www.johnraesociety.com>

Facebook: John Rae Society

Twitter: John Rae Society @JohnRaeSociety