

Rosemarkie and Fortrose Trust

Trustees' report 2021/22 (1 November 2021 to 31 October 2022)

First major project nearing completion

Rosemarkie and Fortrose Trust was established by the trustees of Groam House Museum in 2019 as a charitable trust whose objectives were to identify projects of benefit to the communities of Rosemarkie and Fortrose and to seek out funding to resource them. The first major project, and indeed the key driver behind the creation of the trust, was the proposal by The Highland Council to close the public toilets in both Rosemarkie and Fortrose. None of the local voluntary groups showed interest in taking action, so it fell to volunteers from Groam House Museum, supported by the Fortrose and Rosemarkie Community Council, to create the Trust, following two public meetings.

At last year's AGM we reported on the progress made in obtaining funding for the refurbishment of the toilets, and the progress made despite severe difficulties arising from the effects of the Covid pandemic. Much later than planned, the refurbishment was finally completed in December 2021, with the Fortrose toilet having benefited from a complete new roof, and the installation of an electric supply which now enabled the provision of hot water and frost protection.

The majority of the year was therefore concerned mainly with the day-to-day operation of the toilets, greatly assisted by our cleaner George Mackenzie, who does a great job in keeping the toilets clean in all weathers.

This has enabled the Board of Trustees to start to focus on potential new projects, since as a charity, our focus is on identifying and tackling projects of real benefit to the local community.

During the year, both Doug Maclean and Barbara Cohen indicated their intention to stand down when other candidates could be found to take over. They will be standing down at the 2021/22 AGM, following the co-option in December 2022 of four new Board members Roderick Beasley, Marlyn Foster, Stewart Lambie and Lucy Vaughan.

The Trustees throughout the 2021/22 year were Doug Maclean (Chair), Barbara Cohen (Treasurer), Sarah Atkin (Secretary). Helen Robinson and Paul Pritchard resigned as Trustees in August 2022.

Finally, the long-running saga of the broken electricity meter in the Rosemarkie toilets was finally resolved in October 2022, when EDF finally replaced the faulty meter. After a few weeks of monitoring our usage of electricity, EDF agreed to reduce our outstanding bill (based on estimates) from £8895 to £1799, which the board of Trustees agreed to pay.

The equally long saga of our water supply continues – we applied for charitable status to reduce our water charges, which apparently couldn't be processed because of Covid, and our charges were put on hold – which they continue to be to the present day.

Again, we have been greatly appreciative of the generosity of our local residents and users of the facilities, who contribute to the donation boxes. Even so, the combination of these donations, and the Council's payments under the Comfort Scheme, do not quite cover our operating costs so we continue to run at a slight deficit. We plan to approach local businesses to seek support from those which benefit from the toilet facility being available and encouraging people to stop in the village.

Prepared by A D Maclean, Chair, on behalf of the Board of Trustees
15 May 2023

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A D Maclean', with a long, sweeping underline.