

Minutes of Chisholme Institute Directors Meeting 19-09-15 and 20-09-15

Present: T Roberts (Chair), P Young (Principal), P Finegan, J Hill, C Bingham, R Gault (Acting Principal), P Coates (in attendance),

Apologies: C Ryan, L Abadi, F Bockenheimer, J Davey.

1. Minutes of previous meeting, matters arising.

Minutes of the previous meeting were read and agreed.

ACTION POINTS from last meeting:

TR to Contact Jethro re changing Electricity provider to NPower. Done.

J Dry reported that approximately £16,000 had been saved by moving from diesel to the grid. Further savings have been made by switching to Ecotricity.

Burial Committee formed: CR, PF, TR to meet. To be carried forward.

TR to send out corrected minutes after this meeting, and going forward, for record purposes only. Done.

PF and AC to meet re: Bursary application form and God's Guest, in consultation with P Young. Done

P Young to contact Richard Gault re: responses to letter, and change retreat dates to enable attendance at meeting. Done.

PF to contact Richard re: wages. Done.

Long, medium and short-term to-do list (grease traps), and Inventory. P Young, PF and CR to meet to compile maintenance schedule and costings. To be carried forward.

PF had spoken to a person from Historic Scotland at The Convocation. She offered to do a survey of the house to clarify repairs/maintenance required and to advise re: grant application. **Action:** to be taken forward by PF

LA and TR to look at legacies etc. - with Martha Cass. Ongoing

Principal's report

There have been 3 areas of focus over the last 6 months: i) Alumni relations; ii) Staffing; iii) 6 month course preparation.

i) The series of study retreat weeks went very well with a relatively small uptake. The new format and new course material were introduced. This culminated in The Convocation. P Young felt that overall this was successful in presenting information and involving people in the process we have been going through for the last 2 years.

(2)

ii) The running of Chisholme has been challenging after the members of the management team left. Help was forthcoming from F Dunning in the office and A M Burbidge in the kitchen as well as others who were able to come for fortnightly periods. Ideally, staffing could be covered through a rota of people who were able to come for short periods that covered the whole year. What was highlighted over the summer was a lack of people who were able to manage others. There has also been a lot of physical work carried out e.g. painting, flooring etc. in the Steading and the Steading Cottage.

iii) There are currently 4 definite participants for the 6 month course. There is also a possibility that a volunteer will join the course and he is currently considering this. Sean Dowd has a further 12 weeks on his work placement. Currently there are no dedicated staff to act as office manager or cook.

The first 2 year modular course has been completed. The next one is planned for April 2016 and will take place in Indonesia.

Recent developments also include the change in operating name and the imminent departure of the current Principal. With regard to the latter, P YOUNG has been meeting RG daily to hand over responsibilities and discuss the management of Chisholme.

P Young felt that an urgent issue was the launching of the retreat facility (this includes retreat courses, solitary retreat and the yurt village). Ideally a retreat manager would manage this facility. We also need to renew our entry in the good retreat guide. Action Point

R Gault has agreed to move into the summer house on vacation of this by The Principal. The Flowers will shortly be moving into their new house. A Cass may then move into Lotties. Peter and Pua Young intend to depart from Chisholme on 1st October 2015. At this point P Young will give up the e-mail account principal@beshara.org.

3. Staffing: Mainly covered above.

J Hill met with the new member of staff Chris Crompton. His duties involve garden tasks, and he will require line management.

4. New Directors

This matter was postponed until the next meeting, due to the lack of quorate.

8. Finance

PF received an interim report from J Dry. She was not aware of the situation in August and it was therefore a brief report. At March 31st 2016, it appears that we will have £440 in reserve. Over the year we will have used £24,000 reserves. Concern was raised that we will be going into the spring without reserves. It may be that other monies come in during the winter. In the budget there is £3000 for publicity. The projection is £143,000+ income and £175,000 expenditure for the year. Included in this figure are courses in Feb and March. This is based on actual figures up to July 2015. We need to have an idea of a forward financial projection in the spring. PF will provide an update when the figures for August and September are in.

(3)

R Gault proposed the idea of offering a week stay in perpetuity in return for an upfront payment. It was agreed that this should be explored. Action Point

5. Planning weekend

J H: a lot of questions regarding governance have arisen which need to be tied into governance points in the Memorandum and Articles. It was felt important to consider governance and revisit the process that was started by the finance, communication teams etc. TR suggested relevant people who had previously been involved in the teams could be invited to contribute in the days leading up to the planning weekend.

JH had spoken to Sophia Hill: the Chisholme pages on the website will be accessed through Chisholme.org on the current Beshara website. There is an option being offered by S Hill and M Young, that they produce something which represents the process of transition – which it itself is an element. RG suggests she get in touch with him to show what has been produced. Content is starting to be put on the site e.g. the Mindfulness course on October 3rd. PF highlighted the need to put the information about the intentional community on the site. The holding page will be forwarded to The Board who will then forward their comments as to the content.

PF raised the need to consider the post of Principal after RG had completed his term. RG suggested that he introduce himself on the new website.

6. Meeting with Trust

The meeting with The Beshara Trust was due to take place on 20-09-15. Neither The Board nor The Trust had a specific agenda.

11. Date of next meeting: 31st October 2015.