



### **Minutes of Annual General Meeting**

7 May 2024

The Hut

At 8 pm

#### **Those that were present were as follows:**

Anna Tucker -Chairperson

Kenny Maciver – Vice Chairperson

Anne MacArthur – Secretary

Angela Maciver -Treasurer

Colin Tucker, Kenny Maciver, Anne Ramsay, Murdo Macleod, Iain Murray, Christine Macdonald, James Macdonald, Don Macdonald, James Macarthur, Sandra Macleod, Ruairidh Moir, Anne Ramsay, Catherine Margaret Macinnes, Murdo Macleod, Stewart Macleod, Lena and Angus Maclelland, Dr and Kinney Davis, Colin Thompson, Anna Mackenzie, Donald Crichton, Jayne Macarthur, Valerie Ferguson, Mary Ann Macleod

#### **Apologies:**

Margaret Stewart, Mary Ann Graham, Kathryn Graham

The meeting was opened by Anna Tucker, Chairperson, who welcomed everyone to the AGM.

The minutes of the last AGM were approved by Donald Macdonald and seconded by Murdo Macleod

**Matters arising – Nil**

#### **Chairperson's report:**

Chair's Report 29 February 2023-25 February 2024

Welcome to you all. This fifth AGM for CEBac covers the period from March 1 2023-February 25 2024. It has been a busy year with its ups and downs, but mostly ups, thankfully.

At the AGM last year, Catherine Margaret Macinnes stood down as Treasurer, and I stood down as Chair. Unfortunately, no one came forward to act as treasurer, so Catherine Margaret very graciously remained in post until September, when we were delighted to welcome Angela Maciver as treasurer. I would like to thank Catherine Margaret for all the hard work she put in as treasurer, in what were some very difficult times of organisation. She did a wonderful job, making it all much easier for Angela to take over the reins. Angela is now doing an equally great job.

Our membership is now 181 adults and 56 juniors.

Our social media numbers also continue to grow. At the end of February there were 1000 followers on Facebook, 250 on X (formerly known as Twitter) and 80 on Instagram.

Website visits have increased to an average of 2015 per month, up by 266 from last year. Our YouTube channel has 57 new subscribers, but the number of views was down from 17K views to 13 K hours over the period, with 2K hours of video watched last year, down to 1.7K hours. I would say that this is because the volume of interviews was a bit less than last year, for various reasons. So, looking forward, we will try to increase our output once more.

All our talks and events have been filmed and are available on our YouTube channel and prove very popular, as are all interviews. The tables were turned on Kenny Maciver, usually in the interviewer's chair, in September, when he was interviewed by the other Coinneach (Mac a' Ghobhainn), commemorating Kenny's 50 years in broadcasting. We

are very grateful to him for all his contributions to the work of CEBac. Grateful thanks also go to Donald I Macdonald for his filming of talks and other occasions, and to Kenny Stewart for all his help with filming and also the valuable work he has done digitising old videos and cine film. A valuable audio-visual archive is being built, and a service is being provided to the community, home and away.

Donald I also manages our website which includes running our online shop where publications can be bought. He is also very patient, being

our 'go-to' tech person.

April, the centenary month of the sailing of the Metagama from Stornoway to Canada, was a memorable time for CEBac. Four visitors whose parents had emigrated on that sailing, and who were lifelong friends in Detroit, made the journey from Detroit to be part of the centenary commemorations held in Stornoway. It was a pleasure to welcome Peggy Morrison, Angus John Mackenzie, John Macleod and Cathie Cheslak. Amongst other activities in Stornoway, a memorable evening was held by us in their honour in Back, attended by many friends, old and new.

Two trustees also contributed to the CnES education Department's Dileab project, Metagama. They attended sessions in Sgoil a' Bhac and Tong school, teaching the pupils of the emigration of 1923 and those who emigrated from this area. The project culminated in a concert in Back Sports Centre. Our Detroit visitors also made visits to the schools, which were much appreciated.

At the beginning of last May, the final talk of the 2022-23 season was delivered by Domhnall Uilleam Stewart, Sabhal Mor Ostaig. His title was Garradh a' Mheadhan-Oidhche: Co ris a bha Sgìre a' Bhac coltach bho chionn 300 bliadhna?

In October, Cebac was happy to be involved with a Culture Community Arts project, curated by Ishbel Murray, Coll and Tong. This included an Art Exhibition, An t-Seada, Ishbel's short film, and a chat between Kenny Maciver and Iain Murray (Coll), on Iain's work in the Castle Grounds, Stornoway, the theme for the Art Exhibition.

The much awaited launch of Vatisker Diaries, The History of the Village of Vatisker, written and researched by Ian Quigley, took place in November. Vatisker Diaries, a much acclaimed publication, was a sell out and another smaller print run had to be made. Cebac is very grateful to Ian for his generous donation of all the profits of the book. Ian is now embarking on Coll Diaries, and has set up a Coll Diaries Facebook group, similar to Vatisker Diaries.

Back in Time 2024, our annual magazine, was also published in November. Sincere thanks go to Iain Murray for all his research, and for compiling the magazine.

In February 2024, Alasdair Murray presented The History of Gress River. This talk had been postponed from January because of bad weather.

For 10 weeks during the summer we employed Ellie Macdonald, Gress, with help from funding from Sgeama Greis Gniomhachais nan Oileanach/Bord na Gaidhlig and also from the Western Isles Development Trust. We were fortunate to have Ellie, a statistics student from Gress, who did much valuable work for us including transcribing some of the Gaelic videos on our YouTube channel.

In November, our Development Officer, Sandra Macleod was appointed. Sandra is employed for 21 hours a week, with funding from the Crown Estate Fund, for which we are very grateful. It makes a huge difference having Sandra's input and imagination. We are grateful to CLLD (Community Led Local Government) LAG funding for help in equipping a work station for our Development Officer, also other necessary items

including archiving materials and recording equipment.

In March, our modular building was delivered and craned on site by John Maciver and Sons. The crane hire and man power was donated by the company, a huge help, for which we are very thankful. However, progress on getting our modular building completely ready for the public at large to enjoy has been frustratingly slow, for a variety of reasons, and is holding us back with our planned activities. It took a long time for utilities to be connected. The next hurdle is a ramp and railing and then a completion certificate. James Macarthur has put a lot of time and effort into this project, which has not been without its problems, and we are grateful for that.

We are also grateful to Crown Estate Funding for contributing towards help with first year costs of running and preparing the cabin.

Planning permission for a future new building on the old school site was given in October. At present we lease the land from CnES. Thanks to a grant from CLLD Community Led Local Government, work was undertaken taking the plans forward to RIBA Stage 3.

In October a Community Consultation was held with Ruairidh Moir, BARD architects, to examine potential options for the development of

the old school site. The turn out was disappointing. We are grateful for all the help given to us Ruairidh.

In December, we had further disappointing news when our application to the Scottish Land Fund for help in purchasing the old school site was unsuccessful. Following advice from Land Fund feedback we must now show more engagement and participation in the community, amongst other pointers. We are now working on that with our Development Officer and her forward plan, but are somewhat curtailed until we obtain a completion certificate for the cabin and therefore can't hold public events yet. Once we can satisfy SLF's criteria, we can then resubmit a claim.

CEBac continues to be represented on the CDIG, Comann Dualchas Innse Gall, (Heritage Forum), made up of most of the CEs in the Western Isles. Two trustees and our Development Officer gave the intention to attend the CIDG conference in Benbecula at the end of February/beginning March.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the continued hard work of all trustees and other volunteers, the support of our local councillors, the CnES Heritage Team and of course all of you for your support. We welcome volunteer members on our committee and we are very grateful to Kenny Stewart, Angus MacIannan and Ishbel Murray for their continued support in that capacity. We continue to have a close relationship with Loch a Tuath News which publishes our monthly news reports, thus keeping people in touch with what we are doing, and for this we are very grateful. We also thank sincerely Back Free Church for the use of their hall on two special occasions.

We now look forward to more involvement with and from the community.

Please encourage your friends and family, of all ages, to get involved in any way with preserving the heritage of Sgìre a' Bhac. We are now in a good position to go forward.

**Treasurer's report:** The treasurer, Angela Maciver, made available draft copies of the charity's accounts and set out in summary income and expenditure to those present. The annual accounts were formally approved and the full financial statement prepared by CIB services may be viewed at: [link required](#)

**Election of Trustees** – Anna Tucker and Catherine Margaret Macinnes are stepping down as Trustees. This means we can elect two new members as Trustees. All other Trustees have indicated that they will stay on. This was proposed by Donald Crichton, seconded by Anna Mackenzie and accepted by all those present.

Kenny Maciver proposed Angus Maclennan as a new trustee and this was seconded by Donald Crichton. Angus has agreed to be a Trustee  
Murdo Macleod proposed Stewart Macleod as a new Trustee. This was seconded by Anne Ramsay. Stewart has agreed to be a Trustee.

**AOCB** : Nil

The date of the next meeting will be 6 May 2025

The meeting closed at 8.45 pm