



**ORKNEY
ARCHAEOLOGY
SOCIETY**
SCIOo48044

Annual General Meeting

DRAFT MINUTES: TO BE CONSIDERED BY THE 2019 AGM

22 May 2018

Present

32 people

Apologies

Colin Richards and Joe Horrocks

Minutes of last AGM

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 May 2017 were reviewed and agreed with no amendments.

Update from the Chair

Martin gave a presentation on the highlights for OAS over the last 12 months.

It was noted that there had been lots of very positive activity, with the usual round of public events and talks, involvement in community archaeology including the fieldwalking in the WHS, and a number of archaeology projects supported through grant aid. As always, this came down to the hard work of the Board and all volunteers.

The positive and close working relationship between OAS and the Ness of Brodgar Trust continues to be a strength and OAS has also been very pleased this year to support projects including Swandro, The Cairns, Cata Sands and elsewhere. The Board has started to think about the more strategic questions facing Archaeology in Orkney, including the impact and benefits of tourism. The paper written by OAS, which we will be discussing later, has been very well received - as a result OAS has been invited to be part of the discussions with other key stakeholders, including OIC.

Noted the 2018 OAS Review which has just been published and is bigger and better than ever, this is now a real asset for OAS and a valuable record of the archaeology taking place across all of Orkney. Thanks given to George Vickers, the Editor, and all contributors for their excellent articles and photographs.

Update from the Secretary

Hayley presented her written report. Biggest organisational work this year has been the conversion to a SCIO. Changes in the Board over the last 12 months were noted. Future

plans for 2018/19 are exciting although some are dependent on funding applications which have yet to be submitted and this is now a priority.

Treasurer's report and Adoption of the Accounts

The accounts were available in the meeting and agreed without comment.

Appointment of competent person to scrutinise the accounts for 2019

Agreed to continue with VAO.

Review of membership and subscriptions

George presented his report. Noted that there had been an increase in membership over the last 2 years from 250 to 340, and that unusually for a 'local' society we have the majority of our members outwith Orkney - a recognition of the worldwide interest and support for Orkney and its archaeological heritage. A question was asked about why the membership had grown so much over the last 2 years and it was felt this was down to improved communication with members, the improved membership offer (such as the free Review) and the increased profile there has been of Orkney archaeology, with the increase in visitors etc.

Election of Trustees to the Board of the Society

The 13 existing Board members stood down as per the constitution. All were then re-elected. In addition, Moira Parker and Terri-Jane White were agreed as Board members, taking the total to 15.

The Board will meet immediately after the AGM to agree the officer positions. For the minutes, the Board Trustees are Martin Carruthers, Hayley Green, George Vickers, Christine Northage, Kathleen Stevenson, Mark Newton, David Drever, Joe Horrocks, Colin Richards, Jan Blatchford, Kath Page, Julie Cassidy, Jim Bright, Terri-Jane White and Moira Parker.

Resolutions

None notified

Any Other AGM Business

None.

Meeting closed at 20.00

Following the AGM the meeting then discussed the OAS Archaeology and Tourism paper. The notes are a summary of key points made, themes from the discussion and actions.

George Vickers presented the main themes from his OAS discussion paper, which was based on the thinking at the OAS Board Away day in Jan 2018. The paper has been generally well received and OIC have invited OAS to discuss the themes, this meeting will be taking place next week. After George's initial presentation the meeting discussed the ideas raised and it was clear that there was a broad consensus on the following issues;

* Overall Tourism is seen as a good thing, it brings significant money into the economy at a number of different levels, from harbour fees to the self-employment of people living in Orkney but working around the Tourist Trade.

- * without folk coming to Orkney we wouldn't have the amazing facilities that we have, nor would there be the investment in Archaeology that there is.
- * people do not want to see the main sites over commercialised, there was some concern that 'becoming like Stonehenge' was a risk, but at the same time recognition that the changes at Stonehenge did manage to open up a mainly positive visitor experience, at a high price
- * as well as the stakeholders identified in the paper there are other interests who may want to be involved, including the shore excursion companies who are looking at ways to diversify their offers, and could link into the objective in the discussion paper of taking tours to sites other than the main ones
- * it would be wrong to assume that just the big cruise ships are an issue, in fact the big cruise ships tend to have very good logistical arrangements that works generally very well to move the big groups of tourists around the sites. What can be more problematic are the tours coming over from John O'Gand the Inverness day trips who come up and are moved around the island from site to site quickly, often without stopping to spend money!
- * there needs to be work on improving the public transport to sites - examples including the idea of a shuttle bus from Kirkwall to the Italian Chapel and back again, rather than folk having to get the X1, which then causes problems re capacity for people using the buses to go home etc. Also the idea of buses which go out to the main HES sites to enable visitors to access the twilight tours
- * improved walking access to sites would be welcomed, noted that it can be risky for tourists to walk from Stones of Stenness to Ring Of Brodgar, yet this is one of the key walks in the WHS and enables the visitor to get a better sense of the landscape in context - it was noted that OIC are working on a consolidated network which will likely include input and funding from SusTrans, this will be shared in draft when available
- * an interpretation centre is very important. Options around this were discussed, it could be privately run or a publicly provided facility - there was mixed views on this. What was agreed was that it needed to be developed in a collaborative way and represent the different interests in Orkney and also more than 'just' the WHS
- * would a heritage hub be possible? Something in Kirkwall that could give day visitors the 'Orkney Experience' and also be a place where crafts / food / art etc could be sold. A way to give folk with limited time a broader sense of Orkney and maybe encourage them to return - use of 3D and tech to improve the experience
- * an interpretation centre and a Heritage Hub do not need to be mutually exclusive - they could be aimed at different audiences
- * We should be ambitious and also keep an eye on the bigger picture
- * role for OAS to continue with these discussions

There was also a few points raised which should be noted

- * A feeling that spreading the visitors across Orkney, you could disrupt the parts of Orkney which are still quiet and 'unspoilt'. This could have a negative impact on folk in those areas, and the economic benefit which OAS have suggested would be a good thing may not be seen as such?
- * Other ways of raising money - Tourist Tax / Charge – David Bilcliffe from Orkney Conservation Trust outlined his experiences across the world and the time he set up a levy around Kilimanjaro to fund cleaning and provide facilities - this was not widely supported by the meeting but it was noted that some present had paid a Tourist tax when visiting other places (such as Malta) and had not minded doing so. Questions

about how it would be spent, governance and whether it would exclude the non-wealthy visitors were raised.

Agreed Actions

- 1) Notes of the discussion to be written up and shared
- 2) OAS to continue to engage with wider groups including OIC and to encourage by our actions, collaboration
- 3) Invite Stuart West from OIC to come to a future public OAS meeting to run through the OIC plans and how these are developing general final comment in summary.

The big problem is that the people of Orkney, so far, have not had ownership of the ideas and actions needed - anything that changes this is a good thing.