

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR SCOTLAND

**MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 30 JUNE 2003
LONGMORE HOUSE, EDINBURGH**

Present: Mrs Liz Burns (Chair)
Dr Peter Burman
Mr Neil Galbraith
Mr Martin Hulse
Mr Ian Johnson
Mr Finlay Lockie
Prof. Charles McKean
Ms Eleanor McAllister
Mrs Clare Meredith
Mr Ross Noble
Dr Malcolm Bangor-Jones (Secretary)

Welcome and apologies

1. The Chair welcomed Members to the first meeting of HEACS.
2. Apologies were noted from Mark Hopton and Andrew Wright, and Mrs Susan Williamson, Policy Adviser to the Council.
3. The following papers were tabled:
 - HEACS(03)6 Scottish Executive Review of the Structure and Functions of Historic Scotland
 - Letter from Andrew Wright
 - Draft Press Release
 - Samples of Head Notepaper

Introductions

4. Members introduced themselves, providing details of their background and interests of relevance to HEACS.

Draft press release

5. Council considered the draft press release. There was discussion of the statement on the front page “The historic environment includes structures and places of historical, archaeological and architectural interest.” Members felt that the statement was not sufficiently broad and could give a misleading impression of Council’s remit. It was agreed that comments on the draft should be sent to the Secretary. [Secretariat note: the statement was removed from the press release.]

Website

6. Council discussed the question of a website. Some Members felt that there would be advantages in HEACS having a separate website. It was acknowledged, however, that this would present many practical challenges which could distract from the Council's many tasks. It was therefore agreed to use the facility offered by the Historic Scotland website.

Role of HEACS

7. The Chair referred to paper HEACS(03)1 containing extracts from the legislation under which HEACS had been created, and HEACS(03)2 containing the job descriptions and person specifications. HEACS was not a management board nor an advisory body to Historic Scotland. However, Council had a wide remit which it would be able to interpret in a very broad way in order to fully address its task of providing independent strategic advice to Scottish Ministers.

8. Members raised the possibility of the Council developing its own strategic plan and how a potential strategy might fit with Historic Scotland's own strategic plan. It was recognised that the Council was charged with providing independent advice to Scottish Ministers. The letter from the Minister would form a large part of the agenda for Council's first term but it would not be the whole agenda. There was a range of other issues which Council might wish to consider. The question of a strategic plan would be explored further at the next meeting.

9. Reference was made to the concerns which had been expressed by many interests over the dissolution of the Ancient Monuments Board for Scotland and the Historic Buildings Council for Scotland. It was felt important that HEACS proved its independence to the wider constituency. The Council would provide its advice direct to Ministers, but it was free to consult with other key players. Its proceedings should be characterised by openness and transparency. Members asked whether Council's advice to Ministers would be confidential. [Secretariat note: advice provided by HEACS to Ministers would not be treated as confidential].

Relationship to Historic Scotland

10. The Chair set out the Council's relationship with Historic Scotland. The Council's Secretariat was provided by Historic Scotland which also had formal responsibility for HEACS's budget, although the Chair understood that any reasonable request for additional funds would be considered. Council had access to Historic Scotland staff and resources. The agency could be asked to prepare and present papers at Council meetings and Historic Scotland staff could take part in Council discussions. Susan Williamson, Head of Heritage Policy, would act as the Council's Policy Adviser. Members discussed the Council's relationship with Historic Scotland. Members reiterated that Council's role was to provide independent advice direct to Ministers. Council should be even handed in its dealings with Historic Scotland but needed to maintain a healthy independence. It was agreed, on the Chair's suggestion, that the Council should aim to be to an ally but critical friend of Historic Scotland.

Secretariat

11. The Secretariat consisted of Malcolm Bangor-Jones, Secretary, Bill McQueen, Assistant Secretary, and Trish Stewart. The Secretariat would effectively be the Council's link with Historic Scotland.

Relationship with other key bodies

12. The Chair said that she hoped to visit some of the key bodies over the next two to three months. Members would be given the opportunity to take part in meetings with key bodies. Council discussed potential bodies to be visited or consulted. It was agreed that Council did not need to limit itself to organisations operating in Scotland.

Shaping the agenda

13. Council considered the letter from the Minister, HEACS(03)3. The Chair suggested that it provided a helpful framework and that Council should consider timescales and priorities. It was felt that a heritage audit would provide a useful baseline to manage change, although there was a need for greater clarity as to the form it should take. Reference was made to the English Heritage State of the Historic Environment Report 2002, the Scottish Environment LINK Report on The Historic Environment, the Scottish Museums Council Museums Audit, and various reports on Historic Landscape Assessment. The problems facing local authorities was also felt to be a priority for the Council.

14. It was suggested that there was a need to look at Historic Scotland core funding of organisations, including Building Preservation Trusts. Areas not directly covered by the Minister's letter included the production and presentation of knowledge about properties in the care of Historic Scotland, the fostering of education and enjoyment, and community planning.

15. It was felt that Council would need to prioritise the issues it wished to consider. There was a danger in setting off in too many directions. It was agreed that Historic Scotland should be asked to provide briefing papers on the five topics in the Minister's letter. The paper on the role of local authorities should include statistical information on the numbers of specialist staff.

16. Council considered the consultation paper on the Scottish Executive Review of the Structure and Functions of Historic Scotland, HEACS(03)6. Note was taken of the Review of English Heritage. It was agreed that an ad hoc working group should be established to consider Council's response. The group would comprise the Chair and up to 5 members who should nominate themselves. Members should send their comments on the consultation document to the Secretary by the end of July for consideration by the working group. It was agreed that the Council should ask for extension to the deadline of 17 September to enable the Council at its next meeting to consider its response.

Ways of working

17. The Chair said that the Council could involve Historic Scotland in a variety of ways, as noted at paragraph 10. In addition to attending full Council meetings, it was anticipated that Members could be part of ad hoc groups. It was hoped that all Members would at some stage be involved in Council activities between meetings. The Council should hold an open meeting or roadshow. It could also commission research or consultancy work.

Agenda for meetings

18. It was noted that Members would receive papers for meetings at least a week in advance. Items which Members wished to appear on the agenda should be put to the Secretary for discussion with the Chair.

Senior staff from Historic Scotland

19. The Council were joined by the following senior staff from Historic Scotland:

Mr Graeme Munro, Director and Chief Executive
 Ms Sheenagh Adams, Director of Heritage Policy
 Mr Owen Kelly, Director Properties in Care
 Mr Ingval Maxwell, Director, Technical Conservation, Research and Education
 Dr David Breeze, Chief Inspector of Ancient Monuments
 Dr Aonghus MacKechnie, Principal Inspector of Historic Buildings

20. Historic Scotland staff introduced themselves, and explained the work of the agency and its various Divisions. Council Members introduced themselves.

21. It was noted that HEACS had been invited to take part in the consultation exercise which formed part of the Scottish Executive Review of Historic Scotland. Mr Munro explained that the Review was in the nature of a quinquennial review and was being overseen by a Steering Group comprising:

Mike Ewart, Head of Education Department, Scottish Executive (chair)
 Kathleen Dalyell, Chairman, Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments
 Margaret Ford, Chief Executive, Goodpractice
 David Reid, Scottish Executive
 Ian Walford, Scottish Executive
 Andrew Wright, Chartered Architect and Heritage consultant (and Member of HEACS)
 Graeme Munro, Chief Executive of Historic Scotland, was attending Steering Group meetings.

22. The day-to-day work on the review was being undertaken by Rachel Sunderland, a Principal in the Scottish Executive. It was expected that a report would be submitted to Ministers by the end of the year. In the meantime, the agency was continuing in a 'business as usual' mode.

23. The relationship between HEACS and Historic Scotland was discussed. The Council was grateful that Historic Scotland was ready to brief the Council. It saw its relationship with Historic Scotland as being an ally but critical friend. HEACS and Historic Scotland should be honest and frank with each other. Historic Scotland regarded HEACS as an independent statutory body. The fact that Historic Scotland was providing the Secretariat should not affect the Council's independence. Council was free to reach its own views.

24. The Chair thanked the Historic Scotland staff for attending.

[Historic Scotland staff left the meeting]

Pattern of meetings

25. Council discussed the pattern of meetings, including public meetings and the annual tour or study visit. The public meeting might be in the form of a conference. The annual tour or study visit should have a purpose and might be centred around one or more themes. Meetings should be held in different locations: the Council should not be perceived as being Edinburgh centred. The opportunity should be taken to meet representatives of government bodies, such as Historic Scotland and English Heritage, local authorities, professional bodies, voluntary sector organisations and community groups. Subgroups of the Council could meet as occasion required.

26. In view of the amount of business facing the Council, it was agreed that Council should hold four residential meetings in the year, commencing in early evening and continuing until teatime the following day. These would take place in September, December, March and June. For its study visit the Council might go to the Scottish Borders in June and invite English Heritage to meet the Council. The Secretariat would investigate whether English Heritage staff might be able to attend. The next meeting of Council would take place on Monday 6 and Tuesday 7 October at New Lanark. It would commence at 10.30am on Monday and finish at 4pm on Tuesday.

Any Other Business

27. Council expressed its appreciation for the invitation from Historic Scotland to the Box at the Edinburgh Tattoo.

28. The Chair reported that she had dealt with one item of correspondence the subject of which had fallen outwith the Council's remit. Future items would consult with the Council Members or provide copies of her reply.

29. The Chair would write on behalf of Council to Ingval Maxwell congratulating him on his OBE

30. Council chose a letterhead.

31. Council discussed the possibility of asking for information on organisations which Historic Scotland funded. The question of support for local groups was raised.

Summary

32. The Chair summarised decisions taken at the meeting:

- the Chair would reply to the letter from Andrew Wright;
- Members should provide comments on the draft Press Release;
- a draft contact list would be circulated;
- clarification would be sought on the question of advice to Ministers;
- the Chair would issue a holding reply to the letter from the Minister;

- Members should send their responses to the Review of Historic Scotland to the Secretary by the end of July. These would be considered by a working group. Council would seek to be involved in the follow-up to the Review;
- Members wishing to put items on the agenda for Council meetings should put them to the Secretary in the first instance;
- Council meetings would take place quarterly, in September, December, March and June. Guests would be invited to Council meetings. Historic Scotland staff would also participate in Council meetings;
- Council had selected a letterhead; and
- Members had been invited to attend the Tattoo.

33. The Chair said that she had been giving consideration to the appointment of two vice-chairs and would be approaching two Members.

34. Council discussed the question of correcting and issuing minutes. It was agreed that Council minutes should appear on the website after they had been approved by Council.

35. The Chair thanked Members for attending. Members congratulated the Chair for a successful first meeting of Council.