

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR SCOTLAND

MINUTES OF MEETING 17 JUNE 2008

CULLODEN HOUSE HOTEL, INVERNESS

Present: Liz Burns (Chair)
Mark Hopton
Colin McLean
Eila Macqueen
Ross Noble
Richard Oram
Evelyn Silber
James Simpson
Andrew Wright
Olwyn Owen (Secretary)
Malcolm Bangor-Jones (Senior Administrator)

Welcome and apologies

1. The Chair welcomed Members to Culloden House. Apologies were noted from Peter Burman, Ian Johnson, and Colin Martin.

Minutes of the meeting of 14 March 2008

2. The minutes were approved.

Matters arising

Rural issues

3. Council noted that there had been interest expressed by land managers in the maintenance of vernacular buildings under the Scottish Rural Development Programme. Concern was expressed over the proposed sale of Forest Enterprise land which included a significant number of Scheduled Monuments, currently managed by Forest Enterprise under Management Agreements with Historic Scotland. Council noted that the Archaeology Scotland rural adviser would be concentrating on providing training for land managers.

Scotland's Historic Environment Audit

4. Council noted a letter from Historic Scotland to members of HEASAG and attached Action Plan. Concern was expressed that HEASAG would not be meeting for the foreseeable future and that the Action Plan did not take account of relevant current work commissioned by HEACS. The likely slow progress on monitoring the condition of the historic environment was noted; Council agreed this was the fundamental purpose of the Audit. It was agreed that HEACS should write to Historic Scotland.

5. Council noted a letter from Historic Scotland to local authorities about the need for a single indicator for the historic environment under the National Performance Framework and that the indicator selected was a decrease in the percentage of A-listed buildings at risk. Council noted that this has led to increased investment in the Buildings at Risk Register. Concern was expressed over the simplistic nature of the measure adopted (the percentage of A-listed buildings on the Register will fall as the total number of A-listed buildings rises) and the lack of attention given to B- and C-listed buildings and the many unlisted buildings of significance. It was suggested that the main problems lie lower down the scale.

Correspondence with the Minister about HEACS' decisions

6. Council noted the letter from the Minister commenting on how HEACS intended to manage the remainder of its work programme in the period to May 2009.

Extension of public appointments

7. Council noted that the term of appointment of two members had been extended. The question of members' final performance appraisals would be raised with Historic Scotland, as well as availability of performance appraisals to others after HEACS' abolition.

Minister's response: HEACS response to Minister's addendum on the legislation report

8. Council noted the Minister's response to the Chair's letter and that this would be placed on the HEACS website.

Current work

Programme of work for 2008

9. Council noted the outline plan of work for 2008.

Infrastructure

10. Council noted progress of the Infrastructure Working Group and the results of the SCVO report. Council noted that a meeting had taken place with BEFS on 6 June and that BEFS had since written to HEACS summarising their position. It was agreed to ask SCVO for clarification of why they considered BEFS was not a national intermediary body. Council noted that a seminar to discuss its provisional findings with the sector would be held on 9 July. It was noted that Volunteer Development Scotland had won the commission to carry out the Audit and Review of Volunteering in the Historic Environment; the Chair asked for it to be noted that neither she nor the Director of Archaeology Scotland had taken part in the tender judging process due to potential conflicts of interest. Council considered the draft Infrastructure report in detail. A further draft would be presented to the next Council meeting.

Economic Significance

11. Council noted progress with the Economic Significance Working Group and the positive outcome of the most recent meeting with ECOTEC. Council noted that a seminar to present draft key findings of the Economic Impact Study to major stakeholders would be held on 30 July.

Ecclesiastical Heritage

12. Council noted progress with the Ecclesiastical Heritage Working Group, including the proposed visit to London to gather evidence on 26 June.

Young Adults

13. Council noted progress with the Young Adults Working Group. It was noted that the Audit and Review of Volunteering in the Historic Environment would include questions on the involvement of young adults.

Proposals for additional research 2008/9

14. Council considered the proposals for additional research against the background of budgetary constraints. After discussion, Council favoured the research proposed by the Young Adults Working Group. It was agreed that Council would ask Historic Scotland if there was any possibility of an increase in this year's budget.

Communications Strategy

Format of HEACS reports

15. Council noted the paper which had been amended following the Chair's Group meeting setting out a typical format for the final four HEACS reports.

Managing public relations 2008/09

16. It was suggested that concerns about the public perception of HEACS since the announcement of its abolition had proved to be largely unfounded. It was agreed that the possibility of obtaining assistance for publishing the proceedings of the HEACS conference in May 2009 should be given further consideration.

National Performance Framework

17. Council noted the Scottish Government's National Performance Framework. It was suggested that this should be referred to in forthcoming HEACS reports.

Chair's Group

Minutes of the meeting of 29 April 2008

18. Council noted the minutes of the Chair's Group meeting. It was agreed that Council should meet on 12/13 March 2009 at Dumfries House, when a private dinner would also be held for current and former members of HEACS. It was agreed that Council would 'brainstorm' the contents of HEACS' closing report in 2009 at its December meeting in Perth and that no guests would be invited to dinner on this occasion. It was agreed that a series of meetings with other agencies should take place in early 2009 to afford them an opportunity to feed in to the closing report.

Minutes of the meeting with Historic Scotland on 19 May 2008

19. Council noted the minutes of the meeting with Historic Scotland.

Study Tour 2008 – Caithness

20. Council noted the itinerary for the forthcoming study tour of Caithness, which would focus on the four core topics.

Closing Conference 2008 – Edinburgh

21. Council discussed the outline proposal for the closing conference which would be held in Edinburgh on 20 May 2009. It was agreed that Council should explore the possibility that the conference might be arranged by a partnership involving HEACS, Historic Scotland, NTS, BEFS, Historic Houses Association, Scottish Civic Trust and Archaeology Scotland. It was agreed to seek to set up a Steering Group chaired by Liz Burns.

Budget paper

22. Council discussed the budget paper. It was agreed that the Chair's Group should monitor expenditure.

A O B

Aberdeen City Heritage Trust

23. The Chair alerted Members to an invitation from the Aberdeen City Heritage Trust.

Commission on Scottish Devolution

24. Council noted an invitation to give evidence from the Commission on Scottish Devolution chaired by Sir Kenneth Calman.

HEACS Annual Report

25. Council agreed that the Chairs of Working Groups should submit contributions for the Annual Report by the end of July.

HEACS website

26. It was agreed that the content of the HEACS website should remain accessible for some time after HEACS had ceased to exist. It was agreed to raise this issue with Historic Scotland at the November meeting and to check the longevity of the domain name.

Scottish Cemetery in Kolkata

26. Council's attention was drawn to the Scottish Cemetery in Kolkata (Calcutta) and the recent launch of the Kolkata-Scottish Heritage Trust.

Date of next meeting

27. The next meeting would take place between 9.30am and 4pm on 17 September in Edinburgh. The public meeting would take place between 5pm and 6pm.

**HEACS Secretariat
July 2008**