

# Celtic Fringe AGM 2008

*The Torridon, April 17<sup>th</sup>*

## **Present:**

Fran Cree, Douglas Gibson, Richard Spence, James Mould, Sandie Stevens, Gina Burt, Chris White, Jenny White

## **Apologies:**

Apologies were received from 11 separate businesses (*well, at least people read their e-mails – there's nothing worse than NO apologies and a small turnout!*)

## **Chairman's Report:** *Fran Cree*

Fran gave an overview of the last year's Activities. This included mentions of the Wester Ross Brand Logo, the Tourism @ Wester Ross grouping, and the various projects that we have been involved with. A copy of her report (single page) is attached at the end of the minutes.

## **Treasurers Report:** *James Mould*

Total balance at the 31<sup>st</sup> of March was £4968.38, spread across two accounts (membership fees & project work). Memberships have increased by 10 compared to last year, and income generated between membership fees and occasional project management work has accounted for an extra £1067 "in the coffers" this year. It is hoped that this trend will continue. James also commented that the current "Visitor Information Pack" project should be completely self sustaining. A full breakdown of the figures is available from myself by emailing [douglasg@burach.org.uk](mailto:douglasg@burach.org.uk)

## **Project Co-Ordinators report:** *Douglas Gibson*

A full Annual report will be available on the website by the end of April 2008. Therefore (*and on the assumption that all members eagerly devour regular news updates from me!*) a summarised report was presented to the meeting.

Regarding James's thoughts that CF should ideally have a larger membership base, this was agreed by all. However, it was pointed out that the far larger NHTOG organisation, covering Lochinver, the *whole of* Caithness and Sutherland, and both Wick and Thurso only has a few more members than ourselves. It was noted, though, that membership had increased over the last year, and that we would continue to strive towards greater numbers.

**(Note later comments about fees, in AOCB)**

Brief Summary of Current Projects:

- Visitor Information packs being completed this week (by Saturday 26<sup>th</sup>). Deliveries will then commence throughout the area.
- TARGET: **T**ourism **A**pprenticeships: **R**ecognising and **G**rowing **E**xcellence through **T**raining. With the support of a number of local businesses & the Gairloch High School, this will commence towards the end of September 2008. Due to a number of factors (the duration of the season + exams being the main ones) this was seen as the ideal start time. Funding approaches are currently underway for this. TARGET will seek to train and teach the 16 – 25 age group in a variety of tourism related matters, including mentored work placements in the local area.
- Revamped and updated web-based information. Funding has recently been approved to allow this to take place, and we will be starting this immediately after the Visitor Packs have been delivered.

The group then discussed the subject of the long awaited brand logo / strapline. The contract to develop this was handed out a considerable time ago to a locally based organisation, but the continued absence of the end product, coupled with that organisation's reluctance to respond to emails and requests for information has meant that the groups within T@ WR will now launch this without further ado, with Celtic Fringe taking the role of managing the brand. Though subject to written confirmation, we understand that funding has been sourced to allow this to proceed without further delay, and precise plans for the launch will be announced shortly.

A discussion then took place regarding fees that might be charged for using the brand image. It was accepted that this should not simply be available to anybody or any business via downloading an image, and to then use this to promote what may be a less than quality service. The group concluded that an annual charge of £10 would be reasonable, this not only including items such as window stickers and promotional material, but also copyright protection and ongoing admin costs (reacting to feedback from visitors, promoting the brand etc). **NOTE:** This discussion over fees is not finalised, and will have input from LADBA / UTBA etc. before an end decision is reached.

### **Alteration to the Constitution**

With it being over ten years since the original constitution was signed up, it was agreed to re-sign a copy of this, and to include a single alteration in the "Aims and Objectives". This has been brought about through simple realigning of borders and boundaries over the years. While our original "borders" fitted the times of 1997, recent work has included co-operation with the UTBA in Ullapool, and has included areas of Wester Ross outwith our original membership. Therefore the A&O section now reads "**.....raising the profile of the region known as Wester Ross, at home and abroad, for the collective benefit of the area.....**"

### **Election of Committee for 2008**

This was comparatively painless...Fran Cree will stay as Chairman, James will carry on as Treasurer. Morag Walmsley has left the committee, and has taken up her post as Celtic Fringe's most Southerly member, being semi-resident in Portugal now! (The most northerly member, incidentally, is Seoras Burnett, from Badrallach) We welcomed Richard Spence on board representing the Gairloch area, and Gina Burt / Chris Field / Sandie Stevens all agreed to give us yet another year of their lives. It was also agreed that we would seek a new committee member in the Aultbea - Dundonnell area.

### **AOCB**

Fees.....now that must have received your sudden attention! Since the AGM is the place to alter these if required, the subject duly came up. For simplicity, it has been agreed that since all recent requests for joining CF have included a photo, then this will be the standard format from now on ie: membership, entry on the website, contact details, text, and a photo will remain at **£35 per annum**. Since this also includes the email based news service, it was reckoned to be pretty good value for money.

By comparison, the group was told that GALE **charge £75** for a very similar service but *without* the newsletter facility. It was also commented by those present that the feedback and information they receive through CF was well worth the fees charged.

**Meeting ended at a highly agreeable 3.45pm**

*Thanks to the Torridon for quality biscuits and teas / coffee, the weather clerk for fantastically clear weather with snow topped mountains, to everybody that apologised but couldn't come, and to those that made the journey down to Torridon.*

## **Celtic Fringe AGM 2008**

### **Chairman's Report**

**For me 2007 proved to be a busy season which was much better than 2006. I hope other members found the same. As well as being busy at Rua Reidh we had a pretty busy year with Celtic Fringe too, though not all of it as constructive as we may have wished!**

**Douglas and I spent a fair amount of time working with Tourism @ Wester Ross and along with a few other members had a few 'brain storming' meetings looking at the Brand for Wester Ross Project. These meetings resulted in the brand logo and strap line we are launching shortly .**

**Through Tourism @ Wester Ross, Celtic Fringe is also working on the events diary for the area and on a new web enhanced site.**

**For those not familiar with Tourism @ Wester Ross - this is a grouping of Associations covering the whole of the area Ullapool, Tourism & Business Association, Lochcarron Business Association, Gairloch & Loch Ewe Action Forum and Celtic Fringe. The idea came from a two day event Celtic Fringe held in Cromarty four years ago to try to promote better liaison for the Tourism Industry in Wester Ross. Just after this Tourism @ became involved in a Northern Periphery project which looked at building closer links between ourselves and several other countries such as Iceland, Sweden, and Finland.**

**This project has now ended and the administration post funded by NPP has also ended. Tourism @ will continue working together in an informal way for the future consulting when the opportunity for joint projects arise.**

**The big project we are working on at the moment is producing 1000 visitor Information packs for the area which will be distributed to accommodation outlets in the area within the next couple of weeks. The last time this was done was several years ago so this new pack is greatly needed. From my own business I know how much visitors use the packs and the information is so much more relevant to our area than the Landmark Trust packs!**

**I reported on discussions some weeks ago about changes in the Visit Scotland/Enterprise/Council networks. I represent Tourism Groups in the North West area on the Highland Area Tourism Forum which meets four times a year. As well as reps from the industry, most Public Agencies are also represented on this Forum. If anyone has any burning issues they want me to take along to the forum then I would be happy to hear from you.**

**The early Easter this year has left us with a pretty long season. Lets hope it proves busy and profitable!**

**Lastly I would say a big thank you to those who have given up their time for Celtic fringe throughout the year particularly to Douglas, James our Treasurer and the Committee, to SNH for providing a meeting venue and to those working on the Visitor Packs at the moment – we will have handled over 50,000 pieces of paper before we have completed the project!**

**Fran Cree**