



**Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland**

**Minutes of the Plenary meeting held at John Sinclair House, 16 Bernard Terrace, Edinburgh, at  
10am on Tuesday 24 March 2009**

**Present:**

Professor J Hume (Chairman), Professor A Macdonald, Professor C Morris, Dr G Masterton, Dr J Murray, Dr S Nenadic, Mrs Murray (Secretary), Ms R M Bailey, Mrs L Ferguson, Ms J McCoy, Ms E Reid, Mr J Stevenson, Dr A Jackson (minutes).

**Action**

**Apologies**

Professor J Hunter, Mr M Hopton, Ms K Byrne, Mrs D Burton

**1. Reserved business**

**2. Meeting of 2 September 2008: minutes and matter arising**

The Minutes were approved with no further matters arising.

Research Strategy and Business Plan are deferred to a future meeting.

Mrs Murray

A summary note of the Away Day was tabled. Chairman stated that he had written to the Minister and received an acknowledgement.

**3. Secretary's Report**

There were no questions.

**4. Financial Report**

Dr Jackson presented a provisional statement of income and expenditure for 2008/9 and financial projections for 2009/10 and 2010/11, highlighting the impact of the cash efficiency savings that RCAHMS is expected to achieve of £108,000 (3%) in 2009/10 and £216,000 (6%) in 2010/11. The estimating round has been completed for 2009/10. Discussion focused on current and future measures to reduce operating costs and to generate income. It was noted that Scran and TARA will greatly assist RCAHMS in generating additional income to support its activities.

Mrs Ferguson highlighted impact of accommodation costs, particularly from 2010/11 on.

Mr Stevenson highlighted increase in field survey costs beyond 2010/11 and conclusion of work on St Kilda.

Ms McCoy highlighted that ICT equipment would require refreshment from 2010/11 on.

Ms Bailey reported that there had been a very positive reception to the potential of Scran at a recent event hosted by RCAHMS for the National Collections bodies and others.

Mr John Nowak has been asked to investigate potential efficiency savings that might be made in the organisation.

Commissioners thanked Dr Jackson.

## **5. Shared services, shared working and partnerships**

Ms Reid reported being struck by defensive note of the reports produced jointly by NAS, HS and RCAHMS and proposed that RCAHMS should focus more on the positive enabling role that it is playing in respect of shared services. Mrs Murray responded that the reports were co-authored with John Graham and George Mackenzie. Mrs Murray added that she would welcome suggestions as to how RCAHMS could capture the essence of its enabling approach and best convey it government. Ms Reid suggested that a good approach would be to tailor it to fit in with Scottish Government's well-published agenda. Mrs Murray welcomed the suggestion and indicated that the Business Plan is being written with this in mind and will tie in with the Scottish Government's National Outcomes framework.

Professor Hume observed that RCAHMS profile is also raised through being associated with topical issues, e.g. the constant mention of Treasure Places in press in connection with the threat to the future of National Mining Museum.

Dr Nenadic suggested that RCAHMS should directly tie in with community and economic agendas. For example, the heritage agenda connected to the Waverley Line is closely linked to the economy of the Borders. Dr Nenadic also reported speaking to Jeremy Purvis MSP who has a connection with The Abbotsford Trust, observing that by working in partnership with the Trust, there is potential to raise RCAHMS political profile.

Ms Bailey highlighted the importance of local and national economic agendas to the development of the Cape Wrath outreach project.

Ms McCoy highlighted Scran-in-a-box and other related developments.

## **6. Estates Strategy**

Mrs Ferguson tabled the first draft of the estate strategy, highlighting key resourcing and operational issues relating to: building maintenance; office accommodation; archival storage; IS storage; and public and outreach activities. Currently, the ideal scenario is to have storage, public and office facilities based in Granton. RCAHMS will have to target the 2010/11 Spending Review for future funding for the Estates Strategy.

Mrs Murray reported that a proposal for a new central shared public facility is being developed in consultation with NAS.

Dr Murray asked what further delay to new archive project might mean for TARA. Mrs Ferguson responded that the key risk was that TARA would have to go into deep storage and become inaccessible.

The issues associated with digital storage are to be addressed by the Risk Audit Committee.

Mrs Ferguson and Dr Jackson to liaise on the production of graphs to illustrate the Estates Strategy paper.

Risk Audit  
Committee  
Mrs Ferguson /  
Dr Jackson

## **7. Collections**

Mrs Ferguson tabled a summary of *2008 Condition Survey – A report on the condition of the Collections at RCAHMS* highlighting key survey results and observations. The facts and figures will be fed into the Estates Strategy paper. The forward strategy is dependent on retention of conservation staff. Professor Hume requested that Commissioners be provided with costings.

Mrs Ferguson highlighted the lack of progress with cataloguing; 2008/9 was the first year without dedicated cataloguing posts, other than the Historic Scotland funded Archiving Post which will not be funded in 2009/10.

#### **8. Achievements of the Centenary programme**

Ms Bailey gave a presentation on Centenary Year achievements including publications, new website, exhibitions, outreach activities, conferences and other events. Mrs Murray observed that an outcome of the Centenary Year achievements was a shift in focus for the organization as a whole.

Commissioners thanked all the staff involved, especially the Centenary Working Group.

#### **9. Demonstration of the new website and new Canmore**

Mr Muirden demonstrated the new website, new Canmore and the beta version of 'mycanmore' where users can add their own images and text to site records. The ability to purchase images online will follow in the next stage of development. Discussion focused on issues connected with linking Historic Scotland and SMRs data with Canmore.

SMRs have been responding very positively to the work of Dr Middleton and Ms Casey. The Survey and Recording Committee to discuss results of LAAL Project.

Mr Stevenson

#### **10. Demonstration of Scran and development of Scran strategy**

Graham Turnbull gave a presentation on Scran. Scran uses open source software and has 1.1 million hits a day. The eCommerce function with click through sales from Canmore will be operational in April. Pricing has been homogenized and reset, and sales leaflets have been prepared. There will also be an online solution for delivering framed prints to customers; this will be linked to specific collections or images that RCAHMS are promoting (e.g. there are plans to link to Erskine Beveridge exhibition).

Discussion focused on opportunities for Scran-in-a-Box to be sold as a web solution to other organisations. RCAHMS has had interest from 3 organisations since a presentation earlier in March. There are three compelling reasons for its adoption by other organizations: it is a measurable efficiency supported by the Scottish Government's Efficient Government Team; it is open source; and by uploading data to Scran organizations are also loading data into GLOW. The digitization programme is an issue, but to date RCAHMS has not maximized ability to sell what it already has in digital form. Using Scran's figures for 2008/9, RCAHMS sales for 2009/10 are forecast double.

#### **11. Forthcoming meetings and field trip**

Scotlands Places will be launched at the Homecoming 2009 event in Inverness on 23-25 October 2009.

Commissioners have been invited to join RCAHMS Commissioners for dinner in Caernavon on 25 June 2009. Dr Jackson to investigate potential for holding RCAHMS Plenary session in Wales.

Dr Jackson

Mr Stevenson briefly summarized itinerary for Commissioners Field Trip. The Plenary meeting will be held at the RCAHMS on the morning of Monday 31 August, Commissioners will then depart for Bute. A formal dinner will be held on Bute on Tuesday 1 September; Commissioners are encouraged to propose invitees. Commissioners will leave Bute on Wednesday and will visit Dumfries House returning to RCAHMS by 5pm.

## **ACTION POINTS**

### **Plenary Meeting, Tuesday 24 March 2009**

	<b>ACTION POINTS</b>	<b>Action By</b>	<b>Action Status</b>
1	The issues associated with digital storage are to be addressed by the Risk Audit Committee.	Risk Audit Committee	Pending
2	Mrs Ferguson and Dr Jackson to liaise on the production of graphs to illustrate the Estates Strategy paper.	Mrs Ferguson / Dr Jackson	In progress
3	The Survey and Recording Committee to discuss results of LAAL Project	Mr Stevenson	Pending
4	Dr Jackson to investigate potential for holding RCAHMS Plenary session in Wales	Dr Jackson	In progress