

BOARD MINUTES

Date and Time	Thursday 7 December 2023, 8pm
Location	Dingwall Academy, Dingwall, IV15 9LT
Purpose	Quarterly Meeting
Present	Fiona Dalgetty (Chief Executive), Jennifer Marshall (Chair), Alex Urquhart-Taylor (Vice Chair), Calum MacAulay (Treasurer), Megan Dale, David Green, Don Esson, Tom Boyd, Carrie Forbes, Lorraine Aburrow (Minutes)
Apologies	Duncan Chisholm, Shona Henderson, Chloë Bryce, Grace Stewart-Skinner, Siobhan Anderson (Creative Scotland)

Actions:

Item 1

Agenda Item

2023.04.01 Preliminaries

Jennifer Marshall welcomed everyone to the meeting and warmly welcomed our 5 new Board Members.

Jennifer congratulated Board Member Duncan Chisholm on his Honorary Doctorate from the University of the Highlands and Islands and on his recent Trad Award for album of the year.

Jennifer also congratulated Board Member Grace Stewart-Skinner on her Trad Award nomination.

Calum MacAulay approved the minutes of the previous meeting as being a correct and accurate record and these were seconded by Alex Urquhart-Taylor.

Declarations of Interest

Jennifer Marshall is a Director of Dandelion 2022 Ltd. Carrie Forbes is a freelance musician and is currently being paid by Fèis Rois as such.

Fiona gave the new Board Members a recap of the Dandelion project.

2023.04.02 Reports and Updates

Fiona explained our accounts for the benefit of the new board members and mentioned about the timings of the academic year and financial year. Fiona also explained that her Board report always gives very detailed information on the accounts.

Fiona said that we'd had some positive funding news (January announcement) and this money would allow us to continue with Fèis Club and Lullaby for the next financial year. She said that there are two funding applications due to be assessed before Christmas.

Fiona explained to new Board Members that last year's budget was approved with a £75k gap but the deficit had been greatly reduced with money from the MacRobert Trust and an anonymous £10k donation. She explained that next year's budget will have a gap of approximately £85k but there is not a severe risk to the company as, if need be, we have reserves to cover this and we are confident that some funding applications will be successful. David asked if having unrestricted reserves would hinder funders from supporting Fèis Rois, but Fiona explained that although we have good reserves it is responsible governance to hold at least 3 months running costs in reserves and ideally 6 months.

Fiona gave a brief outline to new Board Members about the challenges of being in receipt of standstill funding from Creative Scotland since 2018. She outlined how Fèis Rois had to adapt our programme to reflect this with only one residential event for young people in the year and three smaller non-residential events at Easter time. She said that the non-residential Easter events had been successful with young people attending that perhaps didn't have the confidence to attend a residential event. Although the programme has been adapted to survive, we are thriving.

Fiona then explained that the Creative Scotland Multi Year Funding (MYF) for 2025-2028 is a two-stage process and she has completed stage one. We will only find out in October 2024 if this has been successful. If unsuccessful, there will potentially be funding from Creative Scotland for one year as a transition.

Fiona outlined the staff roles for the new Board Members and gave a brief outline on activity for the last month. She said that it was heartening that there were waiting lists for Fèis Club, our after school club and Carrie said that the Fèis Club was reaching children that might never have come to Fèis events. Our monthly Kiltarn Fiddlers group is going well with a new intermediate monthly class also running at the same time due to demand. Fiona highlighted the numbers of children that are reached through our education programme, including some work we are currently doing to support the music department at Invergordon Academy.

Fiona and Christian are going to Ullapool on Friday to meet with partners about next year's activities.

The Chair thanked the Chief Executive and all staff for preparing detailed reports on all activity for the board. She once again congratulated the staff on the success of the Fèis Rois programme and said that the Board were very proud of the team.

2023.04.03 Press & Publicity Update

We continue to have a good presence in the local press and across social media. The Board noted their thanks to Katie Mackenzie who provides freelance marketing and PR support.

2023.04.04 AOB

Jennifer said that Shona wanted to let everyone know that Dingwall are hoping to have a local Mod in September 2024. Fiona said that she has already had a meeting with Fiona J Mackenzie about this.

Fiona will email everyone with dates for the four meetings next year.