BOARD MINUTES

Date and Time	Tuesday 16 June, 7 pm
Location	Robertson House, Greenhill Street, Dingwall, IV15 9JQ
Purpose	Quarterly Meeting
Present	Fiona Dalgetty (Chief Executive), Anna-Wendy Stevenson (Chair), Alex Urquhart-Taylor (Vice-Chair), Megan Dale, Don Esson, Grace Stewart-Skinner, Jamie MacDonald, Calum MacAulay (Treasurer), Tom Boyd, Lorraine Aburrow (minutes, Company Secretary)
Zoom	Carrie Forbes,
Apologies	

Actions:

Item 1	Fiona will contact Sine at Ledingham Chalmers for some HR advice re self-employment
Item 2	Alex will send a sentence to Fiona to add to the EDI plan

2026.02.01 Preliminaries

Anna-Wendy welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Fiona and the Fèis Rois team for the exceptionally detailed Board Papers.

It was noted that David Green has stepped down from the Board and Fiona has sent a thank you card and voucher to David from the Board and the Fèis Rois Team.

Anna-Wendy expressed sadness on the passing of legendary fiddle player Aonghas Grant. Both she and Fiona attended his funeral and it was a true celebration of his life. It was agreed that Fèis Rois has benefitted hugely from his legacy.

Jamie MacDonald 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

Carrie Forbes and Anna-Wendy Stevenson are freelance musicians and are currently being paid by Fèis Rois as such. Jamie MacDonald is an employee of Stronachs who are assisting with the Fèis Rois lease on Robertson House.

Actions from previous minutes

Fiona and Alex met in the afternoon to discuss Google ads and the potential as a charity to make money from this. They have now applied to set this up. Anna-Wendy thanked Alex for highlighting this.

Fiona urged Board Members to share and highlight our fundraising campaign with their networks.

Fiona will speak to HIE about measuring the impact of our work using the WELLBY tool. She did talk to Highland Council about how they could help us with evaluation too.

2026.02.02 Reports and Updates

Fiona thanked Lorraine for the Management Accounts and said that it was another busy quarter for Fèis Rois. She highlighted the rising costs of everything saying that the accommodation for the Adult Fèis this year was £10,000 higher than the previous year. She explained that smaller independent businesses, like the Ceilidh Place in Ullapool, have been hit with rates increase and Employer National Insurance hikes. She also said that the cost of accommodation in Inverness is astronomical.

Fiona said that once the lease is signed we will then get the signage for the front of Robertson House. Calum asked about the sub-letting of rooms to Moniack Mhor and CFWET, and Fiona said that formal leases for sub-tenants will be prepared when our own lease is signed off.

There was a discussion about increasing the fee that participants pay to attend the Adult Fèis in 2027. It was agreed that the fee needs to go up to contribute to the rising costs of running the event. A discussion was had about whether this should be an additional sum when booking a place, e.g. £20 more than this year, or whether to keep the fee the same and add an "add a donation" button at the point of registration so that people could choose to pay more if they wish. Megan Dale attended the Adult Fèis as a participant and said that it was a highlight of the year. There was a discussion about the event and how it was inclusive and invigorating. It was noted that it was important to celebrate Rona Lightfoot's 90th birthday at the Adult Fèis to recognise her contribution to Fèis Rois.

Fiona said that, due to rising costs of accommodation, travel and meals, the Ceilidh Trail 2026 has been scaled back, and the inclusive Ceilidh Trail is not running this year.

Fiona said that the ticket sales for the 40th anniversary concert at Eden Court are going well. It is hoped that the ticket sales will be £6,000 and there will be a £5,000 contribution from the BLAS Festival.

Fiona said that there is a real buzz with the Dingwall 800 project and lots of new community connections.

There was a discussion about the Easter Fèis and Fiona said that there were 4 tutors in each of the 3 communities; Dingwall, Tain and Ullapool. She said that the participant numbers in Tain were quite low for a second-year running. There was a chat about rotating the third community each Easter and perhaps Gairloch could be a possible community for 2027.

Fiona gave thanks to the Munros at Foulis Castle for the Daffodil Open Day fundraising event. She said that the general fundraising target for the year has nearly been met in quarter 1. Fiona said that the JustGiving campaign for our 40th anniversary is now live and urged the Board to share the JustGiving page. Fiona also said that ANTA were keen to design something for Fèis Rois and give us a percentage of the sales, but she has

suggested they donate and then we can get match funding from the Culture and Business Fund. She will follow up with them.

Fiona said that Jonathan Innes, our accountant, from Innes & Partners has been in touch to say that the company has merged with another company. Fiona has been assured that there will be no impact on the cost of our audit and that we will be working with the same team.

There was a discussion about VAT and Calum said that Fèis Rois was not at significant risk at the moment, but the Board agreed to take advice from a VAT specialist in the Autumn if it was still thought necessary.

There was a discussion about the change of personnel at Highlife Highland as the Head of Music Development is due to retire, and the potential impact that this might have on Fèis Rois if the incoming person chooses to reallocate the YMI budget in future years. The conversation then included a discussion about the continuing increases to teaching rates by the Musicians Union, which are due to go up again for freelance musicians in September. Fiona said that Creative Scotland's contracts state that musicians have to be paid Musician Union rates. It was noted that Fèis Rois staff have not been given a salary uplift this year due to standstill core funding and the Board agreed to review this later in the year if additional funds are secured and/or savings are made elsewhere.

Fiona asked for it to be noted the huge amount of excellent work that Education Manager, Rachael Duff, has done on the Paul Hamlyn Foundation Teacher Development Fund Project. She said that the Foundation are very hands on and involved in the project, there is a high level of reporting, we have received excellent feedback, and Rachael is doing an extraordinary job on this project.

Anna-Wendy thanked Chief Executive, Fiona, and all the Fèis Rois staff for preparing detailed reports on all activity for the Board with lots of useful information. She said that it was a massive amount of work producing the annual Fèis Rois programme. She also thanked the Fèis Rois adult learners for all that they do to help Fèis Rois.

Fiona said that interviews were taking place on 17 and 18 June for the Dingwall Collective project posts.

As part of the risk management points for discussion, there was a conversation about equality and inclusion, and it was noted that Alex will send Fiona a sentence to add to the EDI plan about the pastoral care at the Adult Fèis, which allows people to attend who might not have been able to otherwise.

2026.02.03 Press & Publicity Update

Fèis Rois continue to have good publicity in the local press and across social media. Katie Mackenzie is continuing to do the equivalent of one day a week on press, publicity and marketing. Fiona will be the guest on BBC Radio Scotland's Travelling Folk programme on 27 August to talk about the Fèis Rois 40th Anniversary.

2026.02.04 AOB

Anna-Wendy noted that Lorraine is now the General Manager.

Date of the next meeting is 13 October 2026.