



Nairn Book and Arts Festival AGM

2 March 2026

Nairn Community and Arts Centre

Minutes

Present:

Ian Finlayson

Andy Draper

Doug Maclean

Elaine James

Denise Collins

Simon Bradley

Rhona Macdonald (late arrival)

Ronald Skeldon (Chair)

Tanera Bryden (minutes)

Emma Heritage

Phillip Stuart

Marion Cordiner

Alison Bertlin

Claire Dormer

Caitlin Ogilvie

On Zoom:

Heather Blackley

Daz UHI

Sophie Martin

Andy Clucas

Apologies:

Pradeep Jethi, Anna Zaluczowska, Joan Noble, Karen Stuart, Lucy Harding, Anna-Wendy Stevenson

Welcome and Apologies:

The Chair welcomed all and initiated round-table introductions.

Approval of minutes from 2025 AGM: The Minutes were approved with no amendments.

Proposed: Philip Stuart

Seconded: Marion Cordiner

Chair's report:

The report has been circulated to all, but I'd like to draw out some key points -

The Festival was a great success, surpassing our expectations. I'd like to pay tribute to the dedication of the volunteers. And of course the festival could only have come about through our sponsors, funders, and patron supporters – I'd like to give mention in particular to Creative Scotland, The Davidson Trust, Event Scotland and our principal sponsors Haventus. All of our supporters are listed in the festival programme.

There were 91 separate events, many listed on the report. This represented slightly fewer events than 2024 – but higher quality events with record ticket sales.

Big ticket occasions such as Roger Sayer's *Interstellar 10* recital and Julie Fowles and Duncan Chisholm's performance commemorating the Iolaire disaster were indeed impressive. So too were the lower-profile events – for example, the collaboration with Scottish opera for primary schools – the adventures of Albie the Albatross were a wonder to behold.

We launched a writing competition for the first time this year and there were an impressive number of competitors.

Finale Day allows us to focus on other events for those in our community who may not be attracted by other literary and music events.

Attendance was excellent, particularly for the music sessions.

This year we undertook an impact survey to gauge the benefits of the festival to the local economy- this is downloadable from our website, if anyone would like to see it. In summary, the report highlights £220,000 in direct benefits to Nairn. 80% of

audience survey respondents in 2025 rated events as 'Excellent'. I look forward to the continued success of the festival in 2026.

A few final words of caution as outgoing Chair – we have expanded in size, and we have sailed quite close to the wind given our resources and managerial capabilities – no more so that when we depended on the engineers to get the electricity back on for the organ recital.

We are embarking on internal consultations to establish our way forward, under a younger, more energetic Chair!

Financial report by Phillip Stuart, Treasurer:

The Festival's Profit and Loss (circulated) includes adjusted figures

Phillip gave several key figures:

Financial year turnover figure is £102,899 + £78 in interest

Cost of sales, admin £97,180

Overall recorded loss of £10,619

The reserves stood at £38,300 last year. Now they are sitting at £27,681.

That is the bad news – the better news is that once adjusted, (there is money that came in from the year before and income that has not yet come in)

The turnover is exactly the same (as in the previous year).

We can remove £5075 income from the previous year and add money received after the financial year end, and funds still due to come in.

Overall turnover is £103,114.50

If we factor in admin, expenses – including some 2024 expenses – there is a loss of £5683.50. Our contingency was £7000 and we have come in under contingency.

We did make the budget, but it was extremely tight.

The festival sells itself, through its events programme. To finance the festival we have to work hard every year. This year there were 450 different transactions processed by the Treasurer. We did not go over the planned budget.

Ron commented that as we spend a considerable amount on photography, it would be great to see a portfolio of these images on the website, and it was undertaken to add more pictures to the website's archive pages.

Events: Phill observed that we have to have popular events , but the bigger the event, the bigger the cost.

We need to have the expertise to balance the festival, and we need to use the assets for the festival where we can. We need to keep fundraising actively at Market days, Xmas stalls, etc. We need to proactively raise our own funds.

Adoption of the accounts:

Proposed: Approved subject to verification of accounts: Alison Bertlin

Seconded: Claire Dormer

Ron highlighted that we are always looking for volunteers both on Committee and as general volunteers.

Directors retiring by rotation:

Anna Zaluczowska - Anna will not seek re-election

Alison Bertlin – will be automatically re-elected

Ronald Skeldon is retiring by submission as Chair.

Proposed: Claire Dormer

Seconded: Philip Stuart

Appointment of new directors:

Pradeep Jethi

Andy Clucas

Proposed: Phil

Seconded: Alison

Office Bearers:

Philip Stuart – Treasurer

Secretary – Tanera Bryden

Chair – Co-Chair Claire Dormer, second Co-Chair position to be filled

Proposed: Alison Bertlin

Seconded: Phill Stuart

Thanks to Ron and Anna for their time , hard work and unwavering commitment - there are very large boots to fill!

AOB:

Denise asked what the theme will be for the year – this was confirmed as *A Sense of A Place: Overland and Underground*

Ron thanked everyone for attending and reminded those attending the Committee meeting that it starts at 8.00pm

Meeting ended.