



Alford Heritage Museum
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Alford Heritage Museum

May 2021

Dear Member,

MEMBERS NEWSLETTER MAY 2021

The good news is that **the museum will reopen on Thursday 1 July**. We look forward to seeing people back in the building again after such a long closure. 2021 is our 30th anniversary so it is good to be able to celebrate a special year. Since we last sent out a newsletter in December a lot has been happening behind the scenes both to get the museum open again, and to look to the future with a plan for the direction of the building and the museum.

YOUR MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

We were very grateful for the continued support of our members during 2020. Your donations give us a steady flow of income. We were fortunate to receive a lot of grant aid but, of course, this is restricted to specific activities and so your donations are important to meet other costs. Your renewal information is enclosed with this newsletter along with a Gift Aid form which we hope most of you will be able to complete. Since we started collecting a few years ago we have received over £700 from Gift Aid. Unfortunately because we have a new charity number we have to ask you to complete a new form.

MEMBERS EVENTS

We will be holding two special events for members and guests just before we reopen. Because of the continuing need for social distancing our normal Members' Event will be split over two days – Friday 25 June at 7pm and Saturday 26 June at 3pm. We would like you to book your ticket online at **alford-heritage-museum.arttickets.org.uk** or via the link on our web site.

We have had to introduce some changes to the way we operate to reassure visitors of our Covid compliance. In common with most other attractions, we are introducing pre-booking of timed tickets via our web site to ensure a safe and controlled flow of visitors. Once inside, a new one-way system will keep people safely distant, and contactless payment will be offered, although cash payment will also be an option. Those who have not pre-booked may be asked to wait until a slot is free.

SCIO STATUS

In February 2021 the Alford and Donside Heritage Association changed its charitable status to a SCIO – Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO). This more appropriate new legal structure will allow us more options for the future ownership of the building; will assist in funding bids; and offers better protection for the Trustees of the Association. The old charity will be wound up in June 2021 and the assets transferred to the new body. It will, however, mean little change for the day to day operations of the museum. Our new charity number is SC050799.



Opening Ceremony May 1991

REPAIRS

In the last newsletter we told you about funding which would allow us to carry out repairs to the building and health and safety improvements. The Covid lockdown soon put a stop to our schedule, and so we have not yet completed the work. However, we have carried out electrical checks of the building and equipment; begun work on the guttering and roof; and had the building and contents protected against woodworm. We still have to tackle some wet rot and install the new fire alarm system but funding is in place for these jobs plus some more work on the roof and skylights. With such an old building, the work will never be finished !

FUTURE PLANS

We have been working with a team of consultants to create a forward plan to consider how the Museum and the Mart building might be developed for the future. It was recommended that we apply for listed building status for the Mart which we believe may be the last wooden auction mart in Scotland still in its original state. Most others have been demolished, and the few which remain do not have the full structure and spaces intact. We still await a decision from Historic Environment Scotland who, of course, have been unable to travel to view the building.

As part of the same project, we are about to engage in a community consultation about our future. We hope to reach as many people in the community as possible with our surveys, and hope that this will encourage people to think about the Mart and how they would like to see it continue into the future. We welcome comments and suggestions from members - please get in touch using our contact details at the top of this letter.

Finally, with support from Museums Galleries Scotland, we have been able to fund the appointment of Lyza Riddell and Angela Main as **Museum and Community Development Officers** for a few months. Both ladies live in Alford, and their role is to encourage more local people to become involved in the museum as volunteers and to develop a range of museum-related activities for the community and other visitors. Lyza and Angela can be contacted by email at volunteers@alfordheritagemuseum.com.



Angela and Lyza looking forward to the reopening

Yours sincerely

Alford and Donside Heritage Association Board of Trustees