Chairman’s Report on behalf of the Trustees

Alford Heritage Museum AGM 2023

Good evening and welcome to the 2023 AGM, to those of you who think it does not seem very long since the last AGM, you are right, the last AGM was held in Oct 2022. The trustees decided we wanted to bring the AGM back closer to our financial year end which is 31st December as it was felt approving accounts nearly 12 months after they had closed was not ideal and with the change to May it should be warm enough to hold the AGM in the museum.

Since the last AGM in October 2022 several major things have happened in the museum the first of those being the award of 3 stars in the Visit Scotland grading scheme which was the result of work over the last couple of years by all the volunteers to improve the visitor experience at the museum.

 In December, a number of exhibits which had been in the museum since it opened were sold off by their owner which left us with space in the back shed and has allowed a Cormack threshing mill, a Simpson tip cart made in Peterhead and a Macdonald of Portsoy reaper to join the collection.

We also have on loan the 3 tractors that make up the New Performance range of Fordson tractors which were produced 60 years ago. These will be with us for this season and will be replaced next year with different exhibits to ensure there is something different to see for regular visitors.

There have also been a number of smaller additions to the collection, and these range from blacksmiths’ tools to communion tokens from a couple of local churches and some of the exhibitions have been changed or updated to hopefully give the museum a slightly different look.

Behind the scenes the volunteers have been busy working on cataloguing the collection and I believe they have now done 1500 items and still have not got past the front corridor. A lot of this work has been undertaken during the closed season when most Monday mornings you will find a selection of volunteers at work in the museum working on all sorts of tasks from the cataloguing mentioned, to the cleaning and restoration of exhibits and quite a lot of general tidying up.

We are lucky to have a good group of volunteers who tackle a whole range of tasks in the museum from manning the front desk when the museum is open, maintaining the model railway, fixing the plumbing and assisting at events. Without them we would not be able to keep the museum running.

The trustees continue to meet every 3 weeks when everything that is happening in the museum is discussed and decided on with the major item being the repairs and hopefully the improvements to the Mart building that are needed to ensure it is to survive not just the next couple of years but well into the future.

Last year we held a good selection of events ranging from fairs to an illustrated talk on the Horsemen of North East Scotland in mid-November, and this year will be no different. We have a good selection of different events planned with the next event being the Spring Fair on Sunday June 4th and they will range from the regular events such as the annual tractor run which this year is on June 11th to a concert by Allan Taylor and friends which is to be held in July.

As a new way to try and secure funds we have been looking for sponsors for the museum and are very grateful for the companies and individuals who have come forward to support us in this way.

I think it just leaves me to thank all the volunteers for all their help throughout the year, Lyza Riddell who has continued her job as Museum Development Officer, the people who have donated items to the museum over the last year be it exhibits for the museum or prizes for the raffles at events, the trustees who put in many hours of work on behalf of the museum, our sponsors who have joined us this year but hopefully will feel able to support us in future years as well, the Friends of the Museum and finally anyone who does not come into any of the groups above who has come along tonight and had to put up with me speaking. Thank you for your support this past year and I hope I can look forward to your support for many more years to come.

Thomas Jackson, Chair 19 May 2023