

Clan Donnachaidh Society Chair Report to 2020 Annual General Meeting

In this extraordinary pandemic year, my main AGM task, indeed my overriding wish, is to reassure all members that your Society's Council is in good heart and is still functioning effectively. This is despite our huge twin challenges of 2020: COVID19 and its multiple and global impacts, and the recent resignation, in its very midst, of our Clan Secretary - our sole paid employee.

It will, as always, be the volunteers which the rest of us are, and – thanks to virus-related restrictions – deliberately only a very small group of them, essentially U.K.- based Council members and some extremely supportive spouses, who can “sensibly” (although inevitably not 100% without risk) attend the AGM. They will of course be, and already are, greatly encouraged by the very many supportive messages which are coming in from around the world with the proxies needed to ensure a proper quorum for successfully voting through the brief formal Agenda items which are required by our constitution. Thank you very much indeed to all who have written in.

I'm glad to say that we have persuaded our ever-supportive Chief, given background health and age factors considered relevant by the experts to COVID risks, to agree that his son and heir Alasdair will this year represent him at this attenuated AGM. We have, unsurprisingly I hope, **not** asked the branches to send in reports this year, but our IVC will probably submit a very brief report for inclusion along with my own as an attachment to the AGM Minutes in due course.

In many respects 2020 may be an almost lost year; or at least one of largely keeping heads above water, as well as assessing and preparing for more future uncertainties than ever; but the AGM will as always look back at our overall and financial performance in the previous year (2019) and the official Report on this which all registered companies and Charities such as ours have to submit each year to the relevant Authorities will be published on our Clan website, with the AGM Minutes, in the coming weeks.

In the meantime, I will pick out only four elements, all important in different ways, which epitomise your Council's current focus. First, interviewing of candidates for the Clan Secretary role is just starting. “Watch this space.” Second, and very relevant to the first item, a regrettably very substantial amount of dealing with unfinished administrative tasks, of clearing up, and of organising files and records, is taking place at the Clan Centre, hopefully to ensure that candidates will be willing to take on the role! Third, discussions with House of Bruar are taking place – in a very positive and cooperative atmosphere – on their own post-COVID prospects and business plans and the potential implications of these for our Museum and for continuing cooperation. Fourth, despite all the current difficult pandemic circumstances, or perhaps even partly because of them, we are working to try to find before year-end another youngster in Clan Country worthy of receiving our Youth Award for showing exceptional courage and determination in adversity in 2020. She or he may of course have to wait until at least 2021 to attend a Chief's Dinner for the formal award presentation, but we think that the very special challenges of this pandemic year may actually help with obtaining nominations.