



Clan Donnachaidh

Clan Secretary/Membership Report – AGM 2021

As I pen this report for the AGM it occurs to me that it is 12 months to the date since my first encounter with the Clan Donnachaidh Society as it was on 19 August 2020 no less, when I attended interview at the Clan Centre, met our Chair, Gillespie Robertson and Vice-Chair Iain Reid, and began discussing the role of the Clan Secretary.

The rest, they may say in times to come, is history.

It's been a strange year by way of induction. No sooner in post, and we were back in lockdown here in Scotland, essentially from end of October through to April 2021.

House of Bruar and the Clan Centre were closed for the majority of this time ... with the Museum only open at weekends, and little, if any, footfall. Travel restrictions across Scotland really only allowed for those in Highland Perthshire to visit the site. Locals, using HoB for essential food shopping. So in many ways it was a long, cold winter, with little presence at Clan Centre, no physical meetings with Clan Council members or engagement with the membership. Work from home the default position, wherever and whenever possible.

But we had the telephone, e-mail, and we had "Zoom" ... lots of hope and aspirations. So we all persevered and worked through the challenges. And it has been a delight this week to finally meet Council colleagues, Clan members and friends face to face and to celebrate and enjoy "business" and "social" times together.

Reporting on exciting Clan activities, meetings, Highland Games, new initiatives will have to wait until the 2022 AGM. Nonetheless, 2021 has been busy for me, as a newcomer to the Society, with much time spent familiarising myself with the calendar year's core activities; the administrative role, membership processing and recording, finances, governance and preparation and publication of the Clan Annual.

Challenges around the accuracy and efficiency of the membership database have already been shared at last year's AGM. Although not yet fully resolved, with the assistance and support of Council Members, I believe we now have a clearer understanding of where we stand and can report our membership numbers sit around the 1000 mark (964) as of yesterday. This figure includes our 286 life members. We have decided to re-establish the traditional calendar year basis for membership renewals. This, we hope, will make it easier for our members to remember to renew; myself at the Clan Centre and branch administrators overseas to manage. We will continue to work to ensure that our record keeping is accurate and informative, meets our needs and takes advantage of digital technology and innovations.

We have plans to improve our financial accounting and reporting systems during the coming year which should again improve our admin processes and efficiency.

Our 2020 Gathering has been arranged at very short notice. So many ifs and buts, changes to travel regulations and unknowns, have precluded us from being overly ambitious. But for those who have managed to visit us here at Clan Centre, from near and far, we are delighted to welcome you and hope you enjoy your time with us. For those who have not managed to be with us this year, be sure we are already making our plans for a 2022 Gathering like no other and we look forward to welcoming you back!

Irene Cameron
Clan Secretary