

**Annual General Meeting
Cole Harbour Rural Heritage Society
Tuesday, 21 March 2023
Held at the Rose and Kettle Tearoom and via Zoom**

Call to Order.

The meeting was called to order at 7:08pm by the acting Chair, John Stewart. A Quorum was declared. The Chair, Brennan LeJean, passed his regrets as he was away in Toronto. Michael McFadden will be acting as recording secretary on behalf of Judith. Prior to the meeting there was a social time that included a slide show of activities at the farm. Everyone present was very impressed with the quality and level of activity. The opening of the meeting was further enhanced with a short video that was prepared with assistance from Tourism NS highlighting the farm and the many activities from last summer. It was noted that this year marks our 50th anniversary. There are plans afoot to properly celebrate this historic occasion.

Approval of the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting, 29 March 2022

John explained to the membership that, due to various difficulties, a formal Minutes document was not available. However, the attendance and all reports were on record and available to the members on the website and at the Farm. There was consensus that this information was sufficient to form the minutes of the AGM 2022.

**Motion: To accept the Minutes of AGM 2022 as presented
Moved by Keith MacMaster, seconded by Jon Stone**

Carried unanimously

Business Arising from the Minutes.

Nothing to report.

Agenda

The agenda as presented at the meeting (Annex B) and at *WEBSITE*

accepted by consensus

Annual Reports

The complete reports are available on the CHRHS website ([Annual General Meeting 2023 | The Cole Harbour Rural Heritage Society & Heritage Farm Museum \(coleharbourfarmmuseum.ca\)](#)). The following are brief summaries.

Chair of the Board of Directors John Stewart for Brennan LeJean. Link: [Microsoft Word - Chair report 2023 AGM.docx \(coleharbourfarmmuseum.ca\)](#)

Brennan's report was read verbatim by John. In general, it was a good year, and the other reports provide the details. There is an ongoing concern about sustainable funding, but the Board is working the issue and is planning events and means to supplement our budget in the absence of the annual dinner auction. It was noted that Brennan is stepping down from the Chair position but has offered to remain on the Board as a Director.

The society is privileged to have a dedicated and enthusiastic staff and volunteers skilfully guided by our Executive Director, Janice Kirkbright. It was noted that Janice received the Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee

Medal for her outstanding contributions to the Farm and the greater Nova Scotia Museum community. She was warmly applauded by all present.

Executive Director – Janice Kirkbright

Janice provided an extensive report – Link: [Executive-Directors-Report-March-21-2023-1.pdf \(coleharbourfarmmuseum.ca\)](#).

This year saw a lot of post pandemic rebuilding year with new processes such as Tea Room operations and a new 5 day operations for weekly operations model (Wednesday to Sunday) have been very successful and these have gone a long way toward ensuring our sustainability over the long-term. There have been significant strides in collections management, and the revival of popular programming such as the farm camps. A high point was the official accreditation as a Museum by the Association of Nova Scotia Museums, This honour was the result of high provincial evaluation results made possible by very dedicated staff work. An accessibility audit was conducted and shows us a way ahead to improve access to the farm. Collaboration with the Federation of NS Agriculture, Tourism NS and Ducks Unlimited will help us expand our outreach programs. Janice lauded the extraordinary efforts of our Volunteer Blacksmith, Kevin Thomas in supporting our operations with his work with local film industry and providing quality products for our on-site sales and promotions.

With the loss of our major fundraiser, the dinner auction, sustainable funding is a major concern. The staff and the Board are working on several projects to improve our situation. A major new fund and friend raising effort will be highlighted at the end of the meeting.

Collections – Heather Adams. link: [Collections Manager Report 2023 \(coleharbourfarmmuseum.ca\)](#)

Heather completed the Association of Nova Scotia Museums (ANSM) Museum studies Program certificate which provides another level of expertise to the work done at the farm.

Overall, it was a positive year and a promising future. Substantial work in collections and archival work was achieved to manage our collections and archives that are spread throughout the farm site. There was a big focus on the extensive Rosemary Eaton Fond, which was progressed with provincial funding. The archival assistant, Brooke Barker, did phenomenal archival work through her five-month contract while a volunteer from the NSCC helped advance the job of digitization and recording of artefacts. The amount of material being processed and prepared for uploading to MemoryNS is very impressive and much of this work is being properly conserved. (Website [Welcome to MemoryNS.ca - MemoryNS](#)).

Interpretation work. This year saw update work being done for signage in the Settle Barn which was quite dated. This year should see new improved high quality and informative signage being installed.

Heather finished her presentation with a heartfelt thanks to her fellow workers and Janice for all their support and collaborative effort.

Environment and Programming Emma Agombar was unable to attend the AGM in person. Makayla Cole presented the report [Environment and Programs Report 2023 \(coleharbourfarmmuseum.ca\)](#)

General farm environment. Weather conditions were a challenge this year, but a number of initiatives are helping. Water management, composting and selective planting of native species are just some of the projects that will allow the Farm environment to flourish. Ducks Unlimited is assisting with a water survey, staff training and planning to control invasive species and interpretation program development in our wetland area.

Programming. The various outreach programs are very popular with our visitors. Many of the events which highlight farm life, crafts and food are often sold out with people asking for more. The farm hosted an interpretation luncheon for the National Interpretation Conference held in Halifax last October. It was a well-run, all hands involved and greatly appreciated event that was a showcase for local foods. New events such as the Winter Solstice attracted many people and will probably become an annual event along with an "INaturalist" events, Strawberry socials and scavenger hunts among several events. We need to look at our Wednesday Farmers Market as the level of activity has dropped this year. The staff is a vital link in planning, preparation and execution of all these events and a valiant core of dedicated volunteers help to produce a first-rate outreach program. The presentation was concluded with kudos from Emma for all the workers (full, part time and volunteer) that was warmly applauded by the members.

Bell Heritage Trust Jon Stone, Chair of the Bell Heritage Trust provided the report [Bell-Trust-Report-March-2023.pdf](#) ([coleharbourfarmmuseum.ca](#)).

The trust now has a complete Board of Directors and significant work has been completed in formalizing the governance and administration of the Trust. Much of this work is the work of Alan Mitchell and the Society owes him a big vote of thanks for his tireless work. The big challenge in the near term is dealing with increased costs in insurance and taxation that are becoming a burden for a non-profit trust attempting to keep a heritage structure in good order. The municipality does not appear to recognise that the Trust is not operating a profit-based business but maintaining an important piece of Cole Harbour history while providing a reasonably affordable housing option. The trust is examining options to have the "powers that be" to recognize that this is not a simple commercial property but a heritage property. In recognition of the wishes of the Barbara Bell estate, the trust provided a grant of \$3,000.00 to the Society to support the blacksmith shop.

The Chair thanked all the people who provided the reports and the excellent work behind the process. A more formal thank you follows at the end of the meeting.

Motion:

That the reports be accepted as presented with the hearty thanks of the Membership.

Moved By Mary Ann LaPierre, seconded by Chris Mont

Carried unanimously

Financial Report and Statements. Presented by Keith MacMaster, Treasurer. *WEBSITE*

The books were reviewed and summarized for the membership using tables and graphs. The graphs showed several years information that gave the members a good appreciation of the challenges that the pandemic imposed along with the excellent work done by all to mitigate those issue. Of note was that retail and program sales for 2022 have exceeded the pre-pandemic amounts. Overall, the Society is in good shape, and we finished the year with a small surplus. The major challenge is bringing the fundraising up to and beyond the pre-pandemic levels to meet our commitment to our future.

Janice provided more information on the proposed budget for 2023 which is balanced and highlights our plans for programming and capital work. The graphs showed the trends as we move forward. It was noted that our budget has been steadily increasing over the years as we pursue the Society's aim. This year's budget is over \$325,000.00! An important element for fundraising in this 50th anniversary year is being directed towards some badly needed work on our heritage property – The Meeting House. In addition, we have an ambitious but doable operations and programming budget. Janice and the Board are actively pursuing several avenues of additional funding that can be used in specific projects.

Motion

Moved to accept the financial statement for 2022 and the 2023 Budget as presented.

Moved by Jon Stone, seconded by Alan Mitchell

Carried unanimously

Election of Directors.

John Stewart handed the duties of Chair for the election process to Alan Mitchell for the election of Directors.

Alan Mitchell, chair of the nominating committee, provided the nomination report. He also highlighted the process and filled in some areas of administration that had lapsed over the last few years.

Alan was pleased to report that we have 13 people ready to stand as Directors including 3 brand new candidates. The candidates were introduced to the members and the complete list can be found at this link: [Nominating-Committee-report-March-2023.pdf \(coleharbourfarmmuseum.ca\)](https://www.coleharbourfarmmuseum.ca/Nominating-Committee-report-March-2023.pdf). Following our By-Laws, the Officers of the Board (Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer and Secretary) are elected by the Board of Directors at their first meeting after the AGM. That first meeting will occur immediately after this AGM.

Moved to accept the slate of candidates presented as Directors for the Cole Harbour Rural Heritage Society,

Moved by Alan Mitchell, seconded by Jon Stone

Carried unanimously

John Stewart assumed the Chair for the remainder of the meeting. As the By-Laws permit up to 18 Directors John opened the floor to any additional nominations. There were none.

Appointment of Auditors John Stewart indicated that we have been using the same auditors for several years and are satisfied with the service provided. Reeves Accounting Services is recommended by the Board.

Motion

Moved to accept Reeves Accounting Service as the CHRHS Auditor for 2023.

Moved by Keith MacMaster, seconded by Mary Ann LaPierre

Carried unanimously.

New Business

Fund and Friend raising event in November.

Jon Stone announced to the membership some good fundraising and friend raising news. The CHRHS has teamed up with the Dartmouth Heritage Museum to host a celebration of all things heritage for Dartmouth and

surrounding areas on 2nd November at the Alderney Gate Theatre. Clary Croft, a long time supporter of both of our groups will be one of several performers at the event. There will be a silent auction involved and we are looking for donations. A major coup has been struck as Eastlink has agreed to be our premier sponsor by providing \$5,000 to cover event expense plus providing television coverage of the event. There are over 200,000 potential viewers. More information to follow (along with calls to help out).

Blacksmith projects for our anniversary

A short video clip that was produced by NS Tourism for the Farm highlighting the Blacksmith shop was shown. The “pose” by Kevin Thomas, our intrepid blacksmith, at the end of the movie was met with great amusement and applause. Kevin has worked with several of the staff to provide a unique and limited-edition creation from the Blacksmith shop to celebrate our fiftieth anniversary. He has designed an ornament in the shape of a bullrush in the Blacksmith shop. He showed a preliminary sample to the membership. Only 50 of them of them will be produced and although a price has yet to be set there was enthusiastic support for this project including several orders from the membership.

A vote of Thanks

The chair and several members lauded the work of the staff in this last year. A heartfelt round of applause was given after the following motion:

Motion

Moved that the Cole Harbour Rural Heritage Society formally recognize the outstanding work done by all our staff over the year.

[Secretarial note: Specifically (alphabetical by first name):

Angus Stewart, Autumn Hebb, Barry Gorman, Brooke Barker, Danielle Brown, Emma Agombar, Heather Adams, Janice Kirkbright, Kaelin George-Wegner, Karen Rutherford, Kevin Thomas, Magali Kirkbright, Maggie Jenkins, Makayla Cole, Marie Sentner, Matt MacAllister, NSCC volunteer, Paige Antonick, Paul Bonang, Robin Kirkbright, Sue Corser, Tanna Burke, Wayne Bonang]

Moved by Judith Tulloch seconded by Jon Smith

Carried Unanimously with resounding applause

Adjournment

Moved by Judith

Adjourned at 8:35 pm

Prepared by Michael McFadden, Secretary

Secretarial note: The Board of Directors held their first meeting immediately after the AGM in the Tea Room to elect officers of the Society. The Officers elected:

- *Chair – John Stewart*
- *Vice Chair – Chris Mont*

- *Treasurer – Cora Bell*
- *Secretary – Michael McFadden*

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