



FRIENDS OF SEAFIELD HOUSE

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
FRIENDS OF SEAFIELD HOUSE
Saturday 17 May 2014, 11am : Ellisland Hotel, Ayr**

**REPORT FROM THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE ON THE LAST YEAR'S
ACTIVITIES**

1. Background

1.1 This first FoSH AGM covers the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014 following FoSH's formal establishment by certified founding deed as an unincorporated voluntary body on 25 March 2013.

1.2 In advance of this formal establishment, FoSH's active campaigning commenced following the decision at the Steering Group Meeting of 15 October 2012 to establish the friends of Seafield House. The Steering Group Meeting was held at the Savoy Park Hotel in Ayr.

1.3 Our first public meeting was held on Saturday 1 December 2012 at The Old Racecourse Hotel, Ayr. Over 50 people attended. In advance, we held a photocall at Seafield House. Both events generated greater awareness & good publicity in the local & national media.

1.4 Responding to the Transport Scotland call to put forward names for the third Forth Crossing in January 2013, FoSH put forward the name "The Arrol Bridge". We put the suggestion to schools in Ayr and generated good publicity albeit that our suggestion did not go forward to the final sift.

1.5 On Wednesday 20 February, the Centenary of Sir William Arrol's death in Ayr, FoSH Committee Members travelled to Woodside Cemetery in Paisley to lay a wreath on Sir William Arrol's grave on the Centenary of his death. They were joined by Arrol relatives for the wreath-laying.

1.6 Following the wreath-laying, FoSH Committee Members & Friends were present in the Scottish Parliament to hear a debate on a motion lodged by Chic Brodie MSP. In closing the debate, Cabinet Secretary for Culture & External Affairs, Fiona Hyslop MSP, gave her good wishes to the campaign. A reception was held in Queensberry House following the debate.

1.7 From 11-23 February 2013, FoSH mounted a Foyer Exhibition in Carnegie Library to mark the Centenary of Sir William Arrol's death in Ayr on 20 February 1913 and to celebrate his engineering & construction achievements.

1.8 Also in February 2013, Kyle & Carrick Civic Society (KCCS) handed over a cheque for £500 to FoSH at a photocall held at Seafield House.

1.9 In March 2013, FoSH participated in South Ayrshire Council's National Science & Engineering Week programme at Rozelle House focusing our input on Sir William Arrol's lasting construction legacy.

1.10 We gained permission for an information board to be located on the Doonfoot Road perimeter wall of Seafield House. We also launched the FoSH website, Facebook page and Twitter feed.

1.11 FoSH continued to call on NHSAA to commence a maintenance programme for Seafield House to end the years of neglect it has overseen.

1.12 We corresponded with many individuals and organisations who/that have ideas/made suggestions for future uses of Seafield House or our campaign, responded to comments posted on our website & Facebook page & written letters to the Editor of our weekly local press. Our Twitter feed has also formed part of the wider communication of our campaign.

2. Activity in the year to 31 March 2014

2.1 In September, the FoSH response to the Scottish Government consultation on the Historic Environment Strategy for Scotland and the Merger of Historic Scotland and the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS) was published as one of 90 responses to the consultation.

2.2 The Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland (AHSS) published an article on Seafield House in the Autumn 2013 edition of its magazine. FoSH welcomed this support of its campaign.

2.3 On Monday 16 September, FoSH were present at a Developers Day held by NHS Ayrshire & Arran (NHSAA) and its agents Ryden to launch the new marketing campaign that would see the restoration of Seafield House by way of enabling development. In advance of this date, FoSH had worked together with SAVE Britain's Heritage on materials that were incorporated into the marketing campaign. FoSH Committee Members were joined on the day by Clem Cecil, SAVE's Director & Sheila Penny, KCCS Secretary.

2.4 In the lead-up to the Developers Day, SAVE Britain's Heritage made Seafield House its Building of the Month. This decision was critical to communicating the importance of Seafield House and extended hugely the reach of our campaign. SAVE also featured Seafield House and the FoSH campaign in its October 2013 Newsletter.

2.5 On 4 October, FoSH Chair Rob Close, fellow FoSH Committee Member & Arrol relative Kirsty Menzies were in attendance with FoSH Secretary Lianne Hackett and FoSH Friends at the James Watt Dinner in Glasgow where the 2014 inductees into the Scottish Engineering Hall of Fame were announced. FoSH had both nominated Sir William Arrol & campaigned for his induction. We were delighted to be present to hear the announcement of his induction.

2.6 FoSH made contact with the Scottish Government to make the case for highlighting Sir William Arrol in its bid for UNESCO World Heritage status for the Forth Rail Bridge. We have suggested that Seafield in Ayr is involved in the bid as a community (in addition to North &

South Queensferry). We are working on a FoSH participation in the Forth Bridges Festival (4-13 September 2014).

2.7 On 11 October, FoSH held a second public meeting at The Old Racecourse Hotel to mark the first year of our campaign, update on progress and hear people's ideas and campaigning suggestions.

2.8 In advance of the setting of a closing date in the sale of Seafield House on 11 December 2013, FoSH publicised the date, emailed information we had produced to potentially interested parties & maintained contact with NHSAA. Since the closing date, as a result of our concerns about the handling of the sale, FoSH has called for messages of support, which it then collated and sent to NHSAA, Scottish Futures Trust and posted on our website. We also produced a timeline for NHSAA to highlight our concerns.

2.9 In tandem with our inputs on the sale of Seafield House, FoSH maintained pressure on NHSAA on the neglected state of Seafield House. Thanks to a generous offer of £1,000 by SAVE Britain's Heritage, FoSH offered to pay for gutter cleaning, as we view this as a simple piece of maintenance that will contribute greatly to saving the fabric of the building. To date, NHSAA has rejected our repeated calls for this offer to be taken up.

2.10 FoSH continued to call on NHSAA to commence a maintenance programme for Seafield House to end the years of neglect it has overseen. In February 2014, having concluded that our calls on NHSAA to commence a maintenance programme were not being heard, we wrote to South Ayrshire Council calling on it to serve an urgent repairs notice on NHSAA that would see the repair of Seafield House. Our call was turned down. We continue to press for this notice to be served.

2.11 Over the weekend 22-23 March 2014, FoSH participated for the second time in South Ayrshire Council's National Science & Engineering Week programme at Rozelle House. The theme this year included Bridges. In partnership with the Meccano Society of Scotland, FoSH offered bridge building activity based on Sir William Arrol's iconic Forth Rail Bridge, London Tower Bridge & the Middlesbrough Transporter Bridge. FoSH Committee Member & Arrol relative, Kirsty Menzies, arranged - on loan from Scottish Screen Archive - the screening of a short film on the building of the Forth Rail Bridge.

2.12 In addition, we have responded to comments posted on our website & Facebook page, written letters to the Editor of our weekly local press and corresponded with people and organisations that have suggestions for future uses of Seafield House or our campaign. Our Twitter feed has also formed part of the wider communication of our campaign.

Rob Close, FoSH Chair
31 March 2014

Contact: info@friends-of-seafield-house.org.uk