



### **Report to Guildry & Mortifications Funds Sub-Committee 21/01/2015**

This is a follow-up to a paper presented to the committee by my predecessor, Dean Fred Dalgarno, on 14th April 2014, (copy attached), and the decision of committee at that time was that the Dean of Guild should report back in more detail.

One of the matters addressed in Fred's paper was the subject of 'Burgess Awards' and an update on this is that I on behalf of the Burgesses have had and continue to have discussions with participating parties including the University of Aberdeen and Robert Gordon University, and The North East Scotland College; also with Mr. Ciaran Monaghan. Our ambition to create forms of 'scholarship' with these institutions remain, however as it is not yet appropriate to seek committee agreement on this I will report further in due course.

The prime purpose of this paper is to develop the other matter addressed in the earlier paper, in connection with the 800th anniversary of the granting of a Royal Charter to the Burgesses of Aberdeen by King Alexander II on 27th February 1214. The Charter document, (which survives and is held in the Town House Charter Room), is dated 27th February but the year is not included, however we are assured by historians that under the Julian Calendar the new year commenced on Lady Day (25th March) consequently on 27th February 2015 we will have held our Royal Charter for exactly 800 years.

**Several events and ideas are planned for our year of celebration, a unique set of occasions, in this connection I am seeking the committee to approve in principle an expenditure budget from Guildry Funds up to a maximum of £50,000, (fifty thousand pounds). This request is coupled with a promise that following such approval we will fully report to the committee and of course to OSCR with justification of and for items of expenditure and appropriate paper work will be offered.**

The following matters are planned or are in the planning stages for 2015.

An anniversary dinner will be held in the Beach Ballroom on 27th February, to date the bookings number some 530 people at a ticket price of £60/head. There will be a number of high profile guests, (with partners if desired), including The Lord Provost, The Lord Lyon, the Leader of Aberdeen City Council and the Chief Executive, the two University Principals, the Deacon Convener of the Incorporated Trades, the Lord President of the Court of Deans of Scotland, the two most immediate Past Deans of Guild, the Minister of the Mither Kirk and perhaps a few others who will deservedly enjoy our hospitality. The headline Speaker on this occasion will be well known north east journalist, Mr. Jack Webster. Clearly, costs are to be incurred to entertain our guests and there are other expenses to be met including forms of entertainment on the evening, a memento of the occasion for each person attending, speakers' and entertainers' expenses. At this point in time I am unable to estimate what all of the costs may amount to, the tremendous take up of places is encouraging a view that the event will come close to being self-funding and therefore I am suggesting a contingency figure should be in the region of **£2,000**.



Surprisingly, for an 800 years old organisation the Burgesses of Guild of the City of Aberdeen do not have a Coat of Arms and this amazing omission from our long history is now being addressed. I am very much involved with Burgess Gordon Casely who is doing a fine job in moving this forward and thanks to his heraldic connections I recently had the honour of meeting with the Lord Lyon who is wonderfully supportive. Thus far our costs in this connection amount to £800, (lodging fee £300 plus Heritage Architect's fee £500), and overall the estimated cost of this exercise will be somewhere between **£3/4,000**.

The formal presentation of the Coat of Arms can be a grand occasion later this year. We have an aspiration that this can take place in the Marischal Quadrangle with both Burgesses and Guests attending. The likely total cost of this truly unique event is difficult to predict, however I suggest a figure which might be in the region of **£10,000**.

In recent days I have been involved in discussions concerning the March Stones which from a historical point of view are very important to our city. The ACC Historian, Chris Croly, has a desire to reprint the leaflet which was published a few years ago after the Burgesses' involvement in bringing the March Stones and their importance to the attention of citizens, establishing a Guardian for each stone to keep them weed-free, etc., therefore we are keen to continue this support of the ACC initiative and to assist the funding of the leaflet reprint at an estimated figure of **£2,000**.

Other Burgesses' expenditure this year of a necessary nature includes a transfer to a new website host and a re-design of the content, a re-written and updated version of our 800 years' history booklet, and replacement of four missing Assessors' medals (badges). These items could well incur costs of up to **£5,000**.

Finally, on my offerings on 2015 expenditure by the Burgesses, it is our intention to seek permission to create a permanent feature in Aberdeen to recognise our remarkable anniversary and our long-standing and unrivalled connection with and for our city. These are EXAMPLES of what might be, subject of course to discussion and agreement with authorities : a stained glass widow in the Town House or in the Mither Kirk; a granite ornament or plaque in or around Marischal College; an interpretive panel made of granite in the area of the Robert The Bruce statue (could explain why this statue is there and his strong connections with the city of Aberdeen and of course the Burgesses of the city). Any one of these examples or any other ideas could well incur costs of between **£10/20,000**.

I beg your approval, please.