

AGM Minutes

Friends of Deal Island 30th August, 2026

Held at Full Gamut, Harrington Street, Hobart 7000

President: Stuart Dudgeon

Treasurer: Jo Widdowson

Secretary: Apology received from the secretary. Minutes taken by Alison Moore

10.30am Stuart opened the meeting by thanking Simon Olding (and Jo Burke) of Full Gamut for the use of his business premises to hold this meeting.

Jo Widdowson delivered Acknowledgement of Country address.

Apologies:

Debbie Searle, Craig Searle (current Deal Island caretakers), Cathie Plowman, Ros Burgess, Lily Nayland, Cassie Strain, Jane Davis, Mike Comfort and David Butler.

Present:

Stuart Dudgeon, Georgie Dudgeon, Jo Widdowson, Richard Koch, Christian Bell, John Burgess, Christine Bowman, Ralph Baulis, Jenny Baulis, Gabrielle Balon, Tamara Terwal, Alison Moore, Lesley Ashburn, Simon Roberts, Phillipa Foster, David Reynolds, Jo Burke, Gabbie Whitworth, John Marsden-Smedley, Simon Olding.

2025 AGM:

Minutes from the 2025 AGM held in Oatlands were circulated by email, moved by David Reynolds and seconded by Georgie Dudgeon.

President's Report

Stuart paid tribute to Penny Tyson, who sadly passed away earlier this year. She was remembered with respect, great affection and admiration for her tremendous contribution over many years as a Caretaker and key FoDI member alongside her husband, Bob. Vale Penny.

A highlight of this past year was the successful working bee on weed control and continued rehabilitation work at East Cove. The sea spurge is getting less common particularly above East Cove with only 110 sea spurge plants pulled in November 2025 and 204 in Autumn 2026. A special mention goes to Reg and Jenny Grundy, the Autumn Caretakers, who took on sea spurge weeding in FoDI's absence.

Sea spurge numbers seem to still be increasing at Winter Cove with 1268 pulled in November 2025 and 150 in Autumn 2026. Garden Cove was 172 and 600 by comparison.

Another highlight in 2026, after much encouragement from FoDI members, was the Museum and outbuildings reroofing, along with gutter replacement, dormer window repairs and fascia replacement. (The museum was the original home of the first Lightkeepers in 1848). The works were funded and carried out by the Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) in Autumn. However, the project meant that FoDI was unable to undertake an Autumn working bee due to the limited accommodation being used by construction staff.

The next working bee week is planned to commence on 26 October 2026 and will focus on continuing progress on weeding and rehabilitation works.

PWS Ranger-in-Charge, Dominique Couzens, has retired and the PWS position covering Deal Island is now held by Jane Hutchinson. A number of FoDI suggestions are currently being considered by PWS including allowing for a January working bee to specifically monitor biological controls of ragwort.

The committee held a planning session in Bicheno in February 2026. Other than weed strategies, variations to our working bee format and our participation in the wooden boat festival were discussed. For the Australian Wooden Boat Festival 2027 it was agreed that we would participate collaboratively in a stall with Friends of Tasman Island, with Georgie Dudgeon, Cathie Plowman and Jo Bourke taking a lead for the FoDI side of the organising.

Treasurer's Report from Jo Widdowson:

There is sufficient money for the October 2026 working bee and the wooden boat festival stall funding, however FoDI will be reliant on securing more grant funding for a summer 2027 working bee. (Financial statement attached)

Deal Island Committee nominations were called for with Christian Bell and Richard Koch volunteering to be involved with the committee. There were no objections raised to the continuation of the current committee members who are:

Stuart Dudgeon: president

Jo Widdowson: treasurer

Georgie Dudgeon: newsletter producer

Jane Davis: secretary

General committee members: Mike Comfort, Cassie Strain, Tamara Terwal, Gabrielle Balon, David Butler and Cathie Plowman.

Christian Bell and Richard Koch nominated for being a part of the committee.

If you would like to contribute your ideas and skills please get in touch with one of the above. See Wildcare website for email contacts of main office bearers.

AGM closed at 10.55am.

General Meeting

1. Update from the island

- Craig and Debbie Searle, currently the Caretakers on Deal Island have had only six visitors this season plus HMAS Paramatta passing through.
- David Reynolds queried whether FoDI have been informed of precautions to take against the current outbreak of Bird Flu, H5. Craig did report that he had heard nothing officially but is regularly keeping an eye out for dead birds on beaches.
- Craig reported a number of deaths of the Common Brushtail Possum, which seems to occur over winter that he has been there.
- The veggie garden is experiencing a 'rat invasion' (it was reported 24 rats were caught in the Winter of 2025 The black rat is known on the island but only appears to make its presence felt in Winter. Gas traps are in use in the garden.
- Wire has been placed over openings in the fireplaces of the museum, to prevent starlings entering the building

2. Update from PWS Jane Hutchinson

- Spring Caretakers are Carol Bruce and John Porter (repeat caretakers). Jason Evans (new Flinders Island Ranger) will be giving them a briefing upon their arrival while getting familiar with the island. Next Summer caretakers are Stephen Finlayson and Pauline Garner.
- Funding is being sought for electrifying the houses and removing gas appliances which will take advantage of the existing solar panel power production.
- David Reynolds questioned whether it was feasible to piggy-back working bee volunteers with Caretaker changeover. Stuart replied that at present it was going to be complex logistically but could be looked at again in the future. Jo suggested that the present arrangement worked well for new Caretakers having time to adjust to 'Island Life' prior to working bee crews arriving.
- David Reynolds questioned whether PWS had considered using appropriately-skilled volunteers for fire-fighting response on the Bass Strait Islands.

3. Wooden Boat Festival (WBF) 4 to 9 February 2027 Georgie Dudgeon

- At a committee meeting it was agreed that up to \$2000 could be spent on the WBF.
- WBF raffle is being coordinated by FoTI, FoMI and Cathie Plowman (FoDI). Ticket sales will be online and at the WBF.
- FoDI and FoTI are sharing a marquee 3x3m. A Tas Ports grant application was unsuccessful.
- Marketing strategy. (This was very well received by the meeting)
It costs about \$40 to propagate and plant each plant on Deal.
We will 'sell' virtual plants at the WBF with each purchase will get a thankyou gift depending on how much is given. We will have Deal Island stickers, knitted cotton dishcloths (six members are having a knitting blitz), tote bags and Deal Island cards. More merchandise is being sourced.

Members were asked to keep the dates free to be able to volunteer on the stall. Jo Widdowson to send a 'live form' for the roster to Georgie. Members will be emailed this later in the year.
If you would like to help knit some cotton dish cloths or have any question, please email Georgie.dudgeon@gmail.com

4. Museum maintenance project

- Stuart gave us a slide presentation on the completed renovation work on the Museum. The new roof is galvanized steel not zincalume and is of a higher quality/thickness so should give many years of service.
- Christian suggested the back door of the Museum be replaced with a more era-appropriate model. Other items discussed were: future funding/grants and David Reynold's new book on the history of Deal Island. (His book is currently at the printers and we very much look forward to having it available for sale on our WBF stall).

5. Deal island Caretakers first 25 years project

- Gabrielle described her project (with Cathie) on Caretaker's stories and photos, for posterity, from the last 25 Years. The initial call out for contributions was missed by some members because of old email addresses, mobile numbers etc.
There will be a new invitation to this project going out in a forthcoming newsletter and we hope to receive a good response. Contributions can be as simple as three stories and five photos or a sentence or two, diary entry etc. The aim of this project is to 'future proof' the experiences of volunteer Caretakers during their time on Deal and become accessible through a variety of media; websites, State Library, Tasmanian Archives etc. At the moment this project is in 'gathering information mode'.
- In the book *Reflections* published in 2008, David Reynolds reflected on his time on Deal Island with his life partner Trauti. He and Trauti were the authors and illustrators of the book. For those who haven't seen the book it is a most beautiful memory of their experiences and well worth purchasing.

- David's latest book is the *History of Deal Island Lightstation* and it is currently at the printers. This book covers the story of Deal Island from the early 1800's up to the present. It is a 225pp and will be featured on our stall at the 2027 Wooden Boat Festival. David then read some excerpts from the book of the very earliest days of living and surviving on the island. Stuart thanked David for putting this history together – another valuable contribution from David on Deal Island.

6. Weeds Update

Ragwort progress

- There are three bio-controls for ragwort released on mainland Tasmania, two have been released on Deal Island. The flea beetle (was released in January 2024). The crown and stem boring moth larvae were transported to Deal Island in plant material in January 2025. There are good signs of the release of the beetle being effective but no confirmation of moth survival.
- Ragwort is across most grasslands on the island although limited in numbers behind Garden Cove and slopes of Barn Hill and East Cove. At present Stuart believes Garden Cove is still worth trying to restrict numbers seedings by weeding, however, wind and heavy seed dispersal is a residual problem.

The plan for a January working bee is to try and capture adult beetles just to confirm they have been successfully introduced, and to look for signs of the Crown and Stem Boring Moth to confirm their introduction was successful. Possibly take more larvae with us if they can be found prior to the working bee

Arum Lilies

- 16 plants were removed from the Telstra corner above East Cove last Spring but again the eradication is dependent upon regular monitoring and removal.

Verbascum/Mullein

- Phillipa brought up that this is another weed which requires attention, as it is not only found at the airstrip gate, but in other places around the island. Stuart confirmed this has had follow-up each working bee.

7. Other business

- A proposal to make the Compound smaller to reduce mowing appears to have been dismissed, based on the increased speed of the new mower and it provides a safe Evacuation and Assembly location, and fire protection for the buildings.
- Tamara mentioned that Peter Wiseman's new sailing boat is capable of transporting materials to the island which Peter is happy to do.
- Georgie has previously contacted at least 10 Sailing Clubs with a view to transporting materials but received to date only one reply from a Victorian club. Further investigation on this could be aimed at pursuing interest from cruising yacht clubs.
- David Reynolds inquired as to whose responsibility is the maintenance of the airstrip. Stuart responded that it is the Caretaker volunteers' task to maintain the mowing of the strip and spraying around the fenceline, however should a plane be involved in an incident it was PWS responsibility.

Thanks to all who attended. The meeting closed at 12.30pm.

Follow-up

Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service have information about bird flu and instructions:

<https://www.health.tas.gov.au/health-topics/infectious-diseases/infectious-diseases-guides-and-fact-sheets/bird-flu-avian-influenza#bird-flu-and-human-health>

Re-Roofing of The Deal Island Museum 2026

