

Minutes of Meeting of Rathlin Manor House Steering Group held on Monday 8th June 2015 at 11.45am in Bruce's Kitchen, Rathlin Island.

Chair:	Michael Cecil	RDCA
Group Members:		
	Mr David Quinney Mee (Minutes)	RDCA
	Mr John Waddell	DARD
	Mr Matthew McAllister	Tourism NI
	Mrs Juliet Cornford	SENI
	Mrs Jackie King	DRD
	Mrs Nicola Golden	NIEA
	Mr Dermot Madden	NIEA
	Mr B Conway	DSD

Apologies:

Ms Patricia McCurdy (RDCA), Mrs Lucy Murphy (DARD)

Mr Cecil welcomed everyone and thanked all for taking the time to come over to Rathlin and for their commitment to the project. He gave a brief update on progress to date.

1. **Current Position:** The Design Contractors have been appointed – Donnelly O'Neill Architects Ltd, and have begun to work through the procurement process to tender for contractors.

The first drafts of a design have been drawn up to begin the conversations and work through possible costs. This is still a work in progress and will need to be brought to the community, and to NIEA Historical Buildings, the National Trust and, possibly, Planning Service. The initial draft includes 17 bed spaces and eleven public rooms.

The Project Board meets after this meeting and will approve a job description for the part-time key worker. If the description is approved and satisfies the requirements of the Coastal Communities Fund it will then be advertised locally and on Jobs & Benefits websites and recruitment boards. The post will be a part-time (minimum 18 hours per week) appointment for 6 – 9 months.

Given the very tight timing for this project, there may need to be a series of meetings at very short notice until the project is underway. The Project Board hopes to be able to make clear recommendations to the community. It will also be necessary for the design plans to fulfil business requirements for the 3* grading from Tourism NI.

An asbestos survey will be completed shortly.

2. **Key worker:** Job description to be approved this afternoon by Project Board
AP 1 Approve recruitment process (Project Board)
AP2 Advertise post as soon as possible (RDCA)
3. **Date for official launch:** Determined by design agreements with community and all other parties. May be early July, depending on progress.
4. **Commissioners of Irish Lights update:** John Waddell and Michael Cecil present at the launch of Great Lighthouses of Ireland Trail (20 May 2015). CIL aware of the Manor House project and potential mutual value in extending tourism beyond summer season.
AP 1 Matthew McAllister to seek contacts between CIL and Tourism NI that can be followed by the Manor House key worker for the marketing plan development.

5. Tourism NI grading requirements: Matthew McAllister provided brief outline of basic requirements for the Manor House to achieve 3* grading. Process would be to have the facility certified by Tourism NI for its opening and grading to be developed a few months after opening as it will also need assessment of good practice and service quality.

AP 1 Matthew McAllister to see draft designs to give guidance on grading requirements

6. AOB:

- 6.1. NIEA Historic buildings: In principle the intentions for better use of the current space and the draft drawings are acceptable and encouraging. Historic Buildings team should be kept informed of any significant alterations to current process.

The meeting expressed thanks for support to date from Nicola Golden who is leaving the Steering Group. Dermot Madden will continue on the Steering Group on behalf of NIEA Historic Buildings.

AP 1 Meeting with NIEA, Building Control, Architects and others to be arranged. (Michael Cecil)

- 6.2. Budget: Negotiation ongoing between Architects, clients and funders. Current funding allows for essential work and 'desirable' work. Any higher level preferences need to be kept within acceptable budget.

Furniture and fittings costs will still need to be sourced.

- 6.3. Licensing: brief discussion regarding various levels of licencing and certification (Tourism NI, Environmental Health, Building Control, etc). Important to keep this process moving smoothly.

- 6.4. Clearance: Community will be invited to purchase and remove any loose fittings currently in the Manor House. Anything remaining may then be offered to other 'upcyclers' or salvage businesses.

AP 1 Inform community of date for clearance (RDCA)

- 6.5. Social Enterprise NI: Support offered by Juliet Cornford for marketing and recruitment of General Manager

AP1 Juliet Cornford to explore possible marketing support options.

- 6.6. Good practice visit: Small team visited Causeway Hotel (National Trust). Extremely worthwhile visit with a lot of knowledge and insight gained. It was agreed that other best practice visits would be arranged for the Board once a design for the Manor House had been agreed on. Causeway Hotel visit may also lead to further ad hoc support from NT.

6.7. AP 1 Further good practice visits to be arranged as the project develops

7. Date of next meeting: End of August/early September – to be arranged. Steering Group to attend Site meetings, particularly at the early stages of the refurbishment.

(DQM June 2015)