

**Minutes of Meeting of Rathlin Manor House Steering Group held on Friday 13 February 2015 at 11.00am in the Branson Centre, Rathlin Island.**

|                |                        |                      |
|----------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Chair:         | Mr J Waddell           | DARD                 |
| Group Members: | Mr M Cecil             | RDCA                 |
|                | Mrs P McCurdy          | RDCA                 |
|                | Mr David Quinney Mee   | RDCA                 |
|                | Mr Ciaran McCurdy      | RDCA                 |
|                | Mrs L Murphy (Minutes) | DARD                 |
|                | Mr B Connolly          | Tourism NI           |
|                | Mr M McAllister        | Tourism NI           |
|                | Mrs J Cornford         | Social Enterprise NI |
|                | Mrs J King             | DRD                  |
|                | Mr S Gwynne            | CPD                  |
|                | Mr G Stewart           | CPD                  |
|                | Ms J O'Neill           | Moyle Council        |
|                | Mrs N Golden           | NIEA                 |
|                | Mr F Devlin            | National Trust       |
|                | Mr B Conway            | DSD                  |

**Apologies:**

Mr F McCourt (Invest NI), Ms L Scullion (Moyle Council), Mr O Dallas (Moyle Council), Mrs A Menary (NIEA), Mrs S Polson (DSD), Mr S Fitzpatrick (DSD)

Mr Waddell welcomed everyone and invited Mr Cecil to make some opening remarks.

Mr Cecil thanked everyone for attending and giving their time and expertise to the project. He explained that it was envisaged that once the refurbishment was complete the Manor House would be an economically viable social enterprise that would provide a 365 day facility for residents and visitors on the island.

**Current Position**

Mr Cecil stated that RDCA's application to Coastal Communities Fund (CCF) to refurbish the Manor House on Rathlin Island had been successful and that RDCA had received confirmation that they would be awarded a grant of £734,642. At this time they have not yet received their letter of offer but two officers from CCF would be travelling to Rathlin on 20/02/15 to go through the contents of the letter of offer (LoO) and the terms and conditions of grant with the hope that the LoO could be signed off expediently.

## **Project Management Board**

Mr Waddell explained that the project would need good governance and management structures. As was previously eluded to an email about the make-up of the Project Management Board, it was agreed that the Board would initially consist of 4 members, 2 from the RDCA Committee (Chair and Vice Chair), 1 official from DARD and 1 official from National Trust. Other members would be drafted onto the Board as and when their knowledge and expertise was required. Meetings of the Management Board will be held on a monthly basis or more frequently if the need arises.

The importance of the Steering Group and their contribution to the overall project was highlighted and that it is hoped that they will work in conjunction with the Project Management Board.

## **Way Forward**

Mr Waddell advised the group that the next critical step would be the engagement of a design team, he then invited Mr Gwynne CPD to explain the process needed to do this. Mr Gwynne explained that Mr Stewart would be the point of contact in CPD and that he would be working closely with NIEA and Tourism NI to ensure that the initial brief for the design team is correct.

It was agreed that Mr Waddell and Mrs Murphy along with Mrs Golden would attend a meeting with CPD to discuss the brief for the design team and progress the process more quickly. Once the design team had been engaged, input from Tourism NI would be paramount in relation to Guest Inn status and it was queried whether information could be provided in respect of certification, minimum standards and quality in advance of this.

**AP 1 Meeting to be held with CPD, DARD and NIEA to discuss Design Specification, this should be held within the next week.**

**AP 2 Mr McAllister to email Tourism NI information on listings/certifications etc to Mrs Murphy within the next few weeks.**

Mr Waddell queried how long the tendering process for a design team and contractor would take, Mr Gwynne then gave a rough timescale of the process. He explained the process components in some detail beginning with the drawing up of the design spec, and public advertisement for an architect with conservation experience. In the Pre qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) the architect would demonstrate experience on up to two similar projects carried out in the last seven years. Mrs Golden agreed to provide CPD with further information on the specifics of an accredited conservation architect.

**AP 3 Mrs Golden to forward details on accredited conservation architect as per NIEA guidance to CPD.**

Once a design team has been chosen an invitation to tender for contractors will go out to press, it will be on a price only basis where similar experience of doing this type of refurbishment is essential, the contractor would demonstrate in the PQQ previous experience in this type of construction. Mrs Cornford

queried whether there would be social clauses built into the specification and Mr Gwynne clarified that there were standard clauses that would be inserted but if RDCA felt these needed strengthened or expanded upon this could be done.

Mr Gwynne further stated that it is anticipated that the complete tendering process with a contractor to be on site will take approximately 3 months this could run in parallel with the design development .

### **Communication/PR**

Discussion ensued about how best to keep the community updated, there was general consensus within the group that RDCA would be best placed to update the community. It was further agreed that once the minutes of the Steering Group Meeting have been agreed that these would be posted onto RDCA's facebook page and that a "communication clause" could be built into the design specification so that the lead consultant on the design team would be in a position to update the community on the progress of the project as and when is needed.

It was explained that as part of the CCF Grant, funding has been obtained for a key worker, it was agreed that an important part of this persons role is the disseminating of information on the progress of the project to the island inhabitants. The ability to do this clearly and concisely whilst engaging with and promoting relationships with residents will be an integral part of his/her job.

Discussions continued about the need for a Launch Event as a celebration of the project, due to the elections any kind of event involving ministers would need to take place before Purdah, it was agreed that having an event before April and not having a design to showcase wouldn't be ideal, there was further discussion as to whether pigbacking onto the Maritime Festival on 29<sup>th</sup> May would be a good idea but it was decided that the Launch Event should be a standalone event possibly at the start of June 2015. Once official diaries have been checked a date and invitations would be circulated by RDCA.

### **AOB**

Mr McAllister queried whether there had been any interest from the Commissioners for Irish Lights (CIL) about the refurbishment of the Manor House and how this may tie in with the re-opening of the West Lighthouse. Mr Waddell explained that he was part of a Steering Group for the lighthouse which was due to meet within the next few weeks, he would table the Manor House as an agenda item and report back to the steering group at the next meeting.

Mr McAllister also queried the DOE press release about RDCA's successful application stated that the Manor House would become a Hotel, when it had previously been explained that the Manor House did not have the requisite amount of bedrooms for this. Mrs Murphy clarified that this had been a

mistake on DOE/CCF's part, as at no time during the application process was the Manor House labeled a hotel, it had always been described as a 3/4 \* Guest Inn. She further explained that after speaking with CCF about this they agreed to amend any further publicity information to Guest Inn.

### **Date of Next Meeting**

It was agreed that meetings would take place on a quarterly basis, if necessary this could be amended if more meetings where needed. The date of the next meeting would be after the Launch Event and members would be notified accordingly.

**Lucy Murphy**