



Minutes of the Oldway Mansion and Estate Working Party

22 May 2018

-: Present :-

Councillor Chris Robson

Councillor Lynn Sykes

Councillor Mike Morey

Kevin Mowat

(Also in attendance: Councillor Cindy Stocks, Councillor Di Stubley, Councillor Anne Brooks, Mayor Gordon Oliver, Louise Gilson and Lorraine Stewart)

75. Minutes

CR proposed and LSy seconded

76. Matters Arising

LS advised that she is still awaiting a response from PH re dates for Oldway visit. – ACTION – LS/PH

KM still needs to confirm with TDA re little Oldway lease position - action carried forward – ACTION - KM

CR asked if KM feels that DCA should attend full council meeting in June - KM advised that the recent members briefing was well attended so he does not feel that there is a need for this. The DCA report will be circulated with agenda.

KM confirmed that a press release is now with communications team to be issued to the Herald Express to advise that the work has been carried out and a report will be going to full council meeting in June.

77. Exclusion of the Press and Public

LSy proposed this and MM seconded this and it was agreed.

78. Discuss final DCA Report

KM advised at the last meeting there was a presentation of the draft report and now we have final report that was sent out recently. KM & Martin Phillips have been in contact with David Clarke with questions regarding finance and some challenge over the figures stated within the report.

KM has called this meeting to get the Working Party's views on the final report.

A copy of the DCA recommendations from the report was distributed to all of the Working Party and KM asked for everyone's comments.

KM advised that the DCA report was also discussed at SLT meeting and there are very real concerns over the affordability of any restoration works.

A full report will be going to full council on 21st June which will state all the recommendations put forward by the Working Party, the officers and the Mayor.

CR asked KM if auction houses have been shown round Oldway. KM confirmed yes he has to look at all the options available for the future of the asset.

CR also asked if the reason that the Oldway Report and decision was not taken to Full Council meeting in May was due to Torre Abbey HLF funding bid decision being made then. KM stated that the opportunity for HLF funding existed for both Torre Abbey and Oldway but they were on completely different timelines.

CR raised the issue of the dry rot in the building and that if the issue is not resolved then it will get worse. KM agreed that the dry rot issue requires urgent attention.

MM asked what the original figure that the Council would be expected to pay out for phase 1 is made up of - KM advised to fix dry rot and issues with regards to the roof. CR commented that it also includes working on the rooms inside to get occupancy reinstated within the building.

KM confirmed that there is a balance available in the reserve which may be able to be used to help towards the dry rot issue.

DS suggested idea of raising funding towards saving Oldway if could find a patron and then promote fund raising for Oldway. CR stated that the issue over this is the officer issue and the resource to organise.

KM agreed with this and if the Council agree with the Oldway proposal to be funded and to start the phased works then, the Council would need to take on a project director role to take this work forward.

CR commented that he believes that even if the decision is made to sell, that the reserve should be used to address the dry rot immediately. As it could be that even if sold that the building may end up back with Torbay Council in the future if left unoccupied.

CR commented that he believes that the Council should start to proceed with phase 1 and he agrees with most of the recommendations stated in the report but believes that the works should start in 2018.

DS asked if any of the large hotel groups have been contacted to see if interested and KM advised no as the auctioneers/agents who looked at it believed they wouldn't be interested. CR commented that there isn't an option of a hotel in the report only self-catering apartments. KM commented that the officer recommendation would include the need for soft market testing.

CR read out some wording amendments that he believes should be made to the recommendations and there was unanimous support for these changes.

Working Party Recommendations –

That the broad blueprint for the potential Oldway restoration project, set out in the DCA Consultants' report entitled "Oldway Mansion – Options Appraisal", be accepted and that work toward its realisation be commenced.

That this intention be communicated to the community and to potential institutional stakeholders so as to secure early support in principle.

That the Council engages with the 'Friends of Oldway' and with local catering operators to explore the potential for early opening of a café offer, with the estimated capital costs of £60,000 to be met from the Oldway Mansion Reserve.

That further consultation be undertaken with conservation accredited architects to identify a strategy for immediate management of the dry rot outbreak so as to minimise further damage during the 2018 dry rot active season.

That the urgent repairs and limited improvement works identified in Phase 1 of the restoration project be immediately developed and commissioned, up to the amount of £2 million as shown in the DCA report and to seek further approval from Council if these costs are likely to be exceeded.

That the Council continues, in parallel with this commission, a process of vision and business development, project testing and consultation, engaging with potential funders to seek to develop a strategy for application for major funds with the submission process commencing during 2019.

That the Council considers and resolves any further enabling development proposal based on a full review of detailed planning and valuation advice.

That a Project Director/Coordinator be appointed, on a 12 month contract funded from the Oldway Reserve Fund, to support the Council's Officers, adding capacity and proven expertise in the management of similar projects so as to manage the development process, control risk and ensure that deadlines and gateway reviews are met and conducted to the highest standards.

79. Review the budget for year ending 17/18 and for 18/19

KM handed out information on the outturn position for 17/18 and the budget forecast for 18/19.

KM explained the main information in the reports is to reassure the Working Party that the asset is being managed.

80. Event hire enquiry for Oldway Mansion

KM explained that a production company who would like to use Oldway to hold a theatre production.

KM would like advice from the Working Party over this enquiry. All agreed that it is not a good idea for this to take place there with the building being empty currently and in its current condition and the costs that would be incurred would not be a good idea at present time but this could change in the future.

81. Any other business

GO stated that in the budget it doesn't show the Tor2 fee for garden maintenance - KM confirmed that this cost is included within the Tor2 contract within the council budget. If the Friends of Oldway would like to organise the gardens then he would be able to speak to Tor2 to see what saving this would incur.

DS suggested that using Oldway grounds to hold events and possibly contact local businesses/public to assist.