



Minutes of the Oldway Mansion and Estate Working Party

19 April 2018

-: Present :-

Councillor Chris Robson (Chairman), Councillor Lynn Sykes, Councillor Christine Carter, Councillor Nicole Amil, Kevin Mowat, Colleen Moon, Paul Hawthorne, Louise Gilson and Lorraine Stewart

(Also in attendance: DCA Consultants)

71. Minutes

Minutes of the last meeting were agreed

72. Matters Arising

Oldway Mansion visit still to be organised – Action LSt

73. Exclusion of the Press and Public

Was proposed by NA and seconded by LS to exclude press and public

74. Presentation of Business Case from David Clarke of DCA Consultants

DC presented his report which was sent out by email for the Working Party to read prior to the meeting.

DC advised that his team had consulted with local stakeholders, which included attending the Friends of Oldway AGM. KM asked if they are confident that they have consulted with a wide age range including younger residents of Torbay. DC advised that he feels that they have consulted with a wide range of residents in Torbay.

In general Oldway Mansion was found to be useable but there are some issues with dry rot in the building and some urgent remedial work is required. The gardens are being maintained but work is required to improve them.

KM thanked DC for his letter with suggestions regarding how the environmental conditions of the building should be maintained to mitigate against the dry rot, however, the Council's insurers advised differently so not all the recommendations have been implemented.

PH commented that he has seen an increase in the deterioration of the building over the years and when the building was in use and occupied by the Council there weren't so many issues.

Public consultation has demonstrated that there is a demand for Oldway to be saved and in particular for keeping it in public use.

DC went through the high level options considered by the consultants, including :-

- * Dispose of the building
- * Establish a new single use for all accommodation
- * Develop a managed solution with a range of compatible uses
- * In the case of Oldway, the scale of the building and the distinctive nature of some major spaces suggested a managed solution

Niall commented that if the Council's decision were to dispose of Oldway, either the freehold or by long leasehold, it should be noted that it may still come back to be the Council's responsibility if things didn't work out. The public will still contact the Council regarding any future issues. DC advised that they hadn't identified a single use for the building.

Some of the Objectives identified in the report are :-

- Be operable on a sustainable basis without long term Council subsidy and retain public access
- Recognise gardens as a precious historic asset and a popular place of recreation
- Respond to community interest and ideas for future use of Oldway
- Make changes in ways that are sensitive to architectural and social values
- Identify a plan for future governance
- Prioritise works and uses which offer the potential for financial contribution from a wide range of funders

Some of the uses and viability issues identified were :-

- Access and enjoyment of the Heritage attraction - interpretation rather than a museum
- Events and hires business, building on the wedding and celebration history of the site
- Accommodation - the distinctive holiday let business
- Arts and Cultural events - in the mansion, rotunda and gardens
- Possible office work space rentals

- Catering and other merchandise sales
- Car Parking

PH asked about Little Oldway and if it would come back to Torbay Council when the lease expires. KM advised that he would look into this matter.

The report recommends a phased strategy to implement options as follows :-

- Phase 0 - open a cafe on site again/have occupancy in the building
- Phase 1 - Urgent repairs - the opportunity to undertake the immediate repairs to prevent further deterioration
- Phase 2 - Main works - complete all repairs and renovations/create self catering apartments /carry out works to Rotunda and Gardens
- Phase 3 - Final commercial opportunities

DC then showed proposed timetable from 2019 with operating of cafe through to fully opening in 2030.

The costs were identified as follows :-

- Phase 1 - £1,871,000
- Phase 2 - £12,000,000
- Phase 3 - £1,000,000
- Total cost should be around £15,000,000

Sustainability and governance issues :-

- If phased programme is fulfilled they are confident that the site can become self-sufficient
- Keeping up to date with long term maintenance to ensure doesn't fall back into disrepair
- Try fundraising options involving community and volunteers

Challenges for the Council :-

- Prioritising Oldway over other cultural projects
- Taking a leadership role in expressing vision for Oldway

The opportunity :-

- A fully conserved and restored Oldway Mansion and grounds
- Telling its heritage story as well as performing functions for the town
- Helping Torbay to drive the renaissance through cultural activities
- Still owned by the Council and providing benefit to the community
- Generating income and enabling long care and maintenance of Oldway

CM queried about the rateable value (RV) of Oldway and whether it would be split for the different sections - CR commented that it would need to be classed as separate hereditaments and would be separated out with different organisations paying for relevant sections.

PH asked about what happened with Torre Abbey if this happens - KM advised that the Torre Abbey application for HLF funding should be submitted on 14th June 2018 before a Council decision is made about Oldway.

KM asked what the long term plans are for the stables. DC advised that he doesn't believe any opportunity exists for any enabling development. KM commented that he would like this to be confirmed in the report, with a clear rationale.

CR asked the Working Party if everyone was in agreement to recommend the report's findings to full Council - All agreed.

PH raised his concerns over enabling development and potential disposal by sale. He wanted to understand how this matter would be addressed. KM advised that the covering report that is presented to Council will have recommendations from the Working Party and also the officer's recommendations, which might include alternative options including disposal.

KM indicated that it will be the Council that make the final decision. It was agreed that it would be taken to the June Council meeting and CR asked DC if they can attend to make the presentation to the Council meeting.

CR also asked DC if he could attend again to carry out an all Members briefing and to provide a presentation, followed by questions and answers. It was suggested that the briefing could be held at Oldway Mansion.

PH asked if the report can be made public and KM advised that would check with Governance Support first. CR asked for the Members briefing to take place first and then the report can be made public. KM advised that this will need to be agreed and as the commissioning officer he would first have to accept the final report. The report would need to remain private and confidential until this happens.

PH asked if a press release could be issued to advise the public as to the current situation to keep them informed. KM & CR agreed to work together on a press release.

CR declared the meeting closed.