

Minutes of the The Oldway Mansion and Grounds Steering Group (Working Party)

13 June 2022

-: Present :-

Councillor Darren Cowell, Kevin Mowat, Councillor Lynn Sykes, Councillor Swithin Long
and Councillor Cat Johns

(Also in attendance: Jo Jones, Yvette Ball, Dave Blanchard, Iris Butler, Jacob Brandon,
Louise Gilson, Lorraine Stewart, Anna Tolchard, Joe While, Kathy Hughes, Mary Jenkins,
Su Sanders and Peter Welsby)

Apologies received from: Chris Robson, Paul Hawthorne, Colleen Moon and Tim Eley

325. Minutes

All agreed that the minutes were an accurate record of the last meeting.

326. Matters Arising

Covered in the agenda.

327. Budget

KM advised that there have been some unforeseen security costs that have been encountered since 1st April. There have been 2 security officers in place for this period. Discussions are ongoing with Torbay Council insurers about the requirements going forward with regards to the level of cover required which will have an effect on how much the budget is overspent by.

JW advised that there was agreement for the underspend from last years budget of £10k to this years budget which gives an annual budget for 22/23 of £123k. However the security costs have not been budgeted for.

Maintenance issues – DB attended today and provided an update on the issues that have been tackled to date and the issues that are still pending. DB shared his screen to display his report and ran through the highlights.

KM advised that he will now be speaking to DC and the Oldway Trust to discuss how the required works can be prioritised.

YB asked KH and the Gardens group, to keep Dave Blanchard and TDA colleagues updated on any events that are taking place within the tearooms and the gardens so that works can be organised to avoid any conflict.

KH asked KM & DC if it is possible for the Friends of Oldway to take forward one of maintenance requests as a project to fund via the money raised through the tearooms and she suggested the boarding up of the colonnade. KM and DC both agreed that this would be a great idea and asked JW if he could look into how this could happen through TC policies and procedures. ACTION – JW

KH will arrange for agreement through the Friends of Oldway committee.

328. Project Director Appointment update

KM advised the working party that the recruitment process for the Project Director has now been completed. Three extremely strong candidates were interviewed and all three were extremely passionate about Oldway. The successful candidate was Katherine Findlay who has previously completed work with Torbay Council on the Heritage Strategy. KM advised that KF may spend one day a week at Oldway but reminded all that this is not an open door opportunity for anyone to meet with KF. KM is suggesting that KF allocates an hour a week to the various groups and Trustees. KF will start one day a week from this Thursday and then will be working on 3 days per week from 11th July. A press release will be issued shortly to provide an update to the public.

KM ran through the duties detailed within the job description for KF as Project Director.

IB asked if KF role will expand on the Governance work that has been discussed over the last couple of years for the various groups. KM commented that Lucy McCall from DCA has been carrying out this piece of work on behalf of Torbay Council and the final report should be with KM and DC shortly which will then be issued to the relevant groups.

329. Trust update

DC advised that Jacob Brandon and Iris Butler have recently joined the Oldway Trust as interim trustees. JB provided an introduction for the group.

DC updated that within the governance work carried out by DCA, a skills matrix has been created along with job descriptions for new trustees to be advertised for. The original trustees will then step down and reapply as new trustees, if interested, or they will stand down permanently.

PW commented that he is very disappointed in the process of interim trustees being appointed as the Gardens Group were not notified of this process happening and feel that a member of the group should have been offered the opportunity to apply as the Gardens Group are very important part of Oldway and members do have the relevant knowledge. KH commented that there was no discussion with the Friends Group either on the process.

DC commented that there will be opportunities for people with the appropriate skills to apply in the future to become a new trustee. It was stressed that the Governance is different for representation.

330. Friends of Oldway Group update

KH advised that an important committee meeting was held recently, and a decision was made that the Friends of Oldway and the Tearooms will be split up to keep the Friends of Oldway as a smaller group who support the various groups and carry out fundraising. The tearooms are going to become a social enterprise – CIC and there are various benefits for this and maybe some funding available to apply for, for funding for staff.

The tearooms continue to be very busy and there have been lots of functions held. There are still some issues with volunteering especially over the weekends. KH advised that the Tearooms continue to hold Duke of Edinburgh students with a new student starting soon. A new member of staff is going to be recruited and KH will return to the part time hours that she is paid for.

KH updated that in the last few days, an author has come into the tearooms who has written a book which is based at Oldway, when it was a country club. The book has been dedicated to all of the volunteers and a number of books has been provided to be sold and the profits to be split between the two groups.

331. Oldway Gardens Group Update

PW provided an update on the Gardens Group. The group have been operating for over 2 years and have recently hit the 15,000 figure of volunteer hours recorded. The age range of volunteers ranges between 7 and 86 years of age. Continuing to work with various groups including the probation services and mental health groups.

There have been two visits recently from Alison Hernandez, Police and Crime Commissioner to see the work being carried out by the probation service.

PW advised that the plant stall is working well, and all money raised is put back into the gardens group.

The planting programme is continuing, and sustainable plants are being used. PW updated that there is a workshop on site where all maintenance on the equipment is carried out onsite and this has been very successful.

DC and KM both thanked all the volunteers from both groups for all of the hard work carried out within the gardens and the tearooms.

KM advised that from the governance work carried out by DCA, it has been identified that there needs to be a formal arrangement between the Council and anyone who makes use of the Oldway Estate. Paperwork is being prepared to regularise the occupation of the tearooms and the work of the gardens group.