**Errogie Church Meeting - Notes**

**Date: Wednesday, 29th November, 2023**

**Meeting time: 11:00am**

**Meeting location: The Wildside Centre, Whitebridge**



**Present:** Tony Foster (TF) – Chair,Caroline Tucker (CT), Robbie Burn (RB), Gareth Jones (GJ)

Fiona Ambrose (FA), Margie Elgar-Bond (ME-B), Mark Henderson (MH), Alex Sutherland (AS), Janet Sutherland (JS)

**Apologies:** None

1. **Welcome.**
* TF introduced Robbie Burn (RB), the Trust’s new CAP Officer, to those present.
* It was noted that there were no apologies.
1. **Summary of the Errogie Church project so far**
* Errogie Church was purchased 4 years ago by Stratherrick & Foyers Community Trust for £92k following a consultation with local residents to gauge desire/ support for a community building in that area.
* Further consultation was done with the community and the residents as to how they would like the building to be used, and an extensive list was drawn up; some of these items are being incorporated into other Trust projects/ properties, some have been dropped, and some have been progressed within the Errogie church project.
* Architect firms invited to tender for phase 2 of the project. Simpson and Brown selected primarily because of their experience in heritage and conservation Architecture.
* Simpson and Brown also involved in phase 1 of the project – ensuring the building was wind and watertight. All set to begin this phase in March 2022, but delayed for a year due to the presence of bats. In that time there was an increase in costs for this phase for two reasons:
1. The work required for the bats
2. Increase in cost of materials.
* SFCT had two options, first to hold off and hope that costs drop, or secondly to push on and get the work done now. Decision was taken to get work done now, as by holding off there was a risk of further deterioration to the building and therefore a further increase in costs.
* Work commenced January 2023.
* Alongside preparation for phase 1 works, Simpson and Brown commenced work on preparing plans for phase 2 of the project. A further consultation was run by the architects and was open to the whole of the community. On the back of the feedback gathered, the first set of plans were created and circulated, and changes made to plans on the back of responses from the community.
* A planning application for phase 2 was submitted in May 2023. Planning permission received October 2023.
* Doors Open Day held in October 2023 in conjunction with Highland Archaeology Festival. Good attendance and positive feedback.
* TF has been working in the business case for Errogie Church – sent to SSE for comment and recommendations adopted. SFCT received support from the Accelerate Programme through Community Enterprise, funded by the Scottish Government. A consultant from Accelerate reviewed the business case and further recommendations were made. TF in process of incorporating suggestions. Updated business case to be circulated for comment shortly.
* Now that we have planning and the business case is almost complete, the next stage is applying for funding.
1. **Review Actions from previous meeting**
* CT summarised actions from last Working Group meeting held on 4th October 2023.
* Collation of queries and suggestions to feed to Architects. All info will be passed on and discussed further with the Architects once ready to move on with phase 2, once funding in place.
* Conversation with Colin Ross with regards to paths, road narrowing and on-street parking – this is all tied in with the development of the Errogie village improvement scheme and funding. Colin Ross identified no immediate requirements for roads dept in the planning conditions but will keep us up to date with any proposed developments in this area.
* ME-B noted that the plans visible at Wildside did not seem to include a cross-section showing locations of insulation. Do we have this? CT said she would check.
* MH expressed concern that there is very little documentation on the SFCT website related to the Errogie Church project, only the plans that were submitted for the planning application. CT acknowledged this and will add additional documentation to the folder.
* MH also queried the need for 8 air-source heat pumps as indicated on the plans. What is the aspiration for heating this building?
* TF noted that SFCT have received funding to carry out a review on heating all Trust properties, and this will provide info on the most efficient ways to heat each building. The aim for Errogie will be to provide the most efficient means of heating the building within a reasonable cost parameter.
* It was agreed that insulation was also an important factor in holding the heat. AS pointed out that it is an ever-changing situation in terms of the latest technology and insulation, so it would be sensible to keep abreast of this.
* ME-B asked to see the heating review. TF to forward this.
* MH asked what the current thought was for insulating the building. CT updated that previous conversations with the Architects regarding insulation is that all walls would be insulated. She also noted that following feedback from those at the Doors Open Day, and others, there is a feeling that some of the stone wall should remain exposed, so a conversation needs to be had about making this happen. Those in meeting agreed.
* Flooring is also an issue – what is happening to this?
* TF said that the existing floorboards will be coming up and likely to be replaced.
* Further action to be done to nail down specifics on heating, insulation and flooring.
* ME-B suggested the possibility of external rendering on rear wall to help with insulation.
* ME-B asked if there was any change in the parking situation, specifically in relation to field adjacent to church. CT updated that Farraline Estate were happy for the field to be used as overflow only. No work is to be done to improve the land. Other options are still being looked into within the vicinity of the church, slow and delicate process but we do have options available.
* MH asked what other options are available if we don’t get anywhere with the land, for example running a shuttle bus? TF said that this has been discussed previously and is an option that is being considered.
* FA added that a shuttle bus was no use for tourists. She also pointed out that the business case states we are looking to increase the use of the building by groups, this will be very difficult if there is nowhere to park.

**Actions:**

**CT to add all relevant project documents to project page on website**

**TF to forward heating report to ME-B**

**CT to locate documentation relating to insulation and heating.**

**CT, TF and GJ to continue to explore parking/ transportation options**

1. **Planning application and next steps**
* As noted in point 2, planning permission has now been granted, and this is a positive step forward.
* Now that we have this plus the business case, the fundraising team will begin to look into funding applications – we will not be able to progress with phase 2 until funding is in place.
* MH asked if there was a strategy for phase 2; will it be a phased approach or do we have a target start date?
* GJ answered that the answer to that will be driven by funding.
* Discussion had about phasing options, is there potential to do the kitchen and flooring next?
* ME-B supported this by saying that insulation and heating should be a main priority.
* TF re-iterated that now that we have the costings, we cannot proceed until there is further funding in place. If we were to do it in one block, we are estimating a start date of March 2025. The fundraisers are working towards funding applications, and funders have been approached, including SSE and The Heritage Lottery. We are also looking into potential local authority funding on the back of the recently completed place plan.
* FA asked if it would be possible to apply for smaller pots of funding which could be used on small parts of the project, therefore starting earlier than 2025. If it was done in phases, other funders would be able to see progress too. This was supported by JS who agreed that a drip-feed solution might be a better option. This could also leave the extension at the front to last, as this is the least essential part of the of the project.
* GJ answered that whatever form progress takes will be dependent on what funding will allow.

**Action – CT to speak to Architects about options for phasing**

1. **Activities within the church**
* CT updated that following our last meeting we had held a successful Doors open day in the church, and the board are keen for the church to be used by the community. She asked if anyone had any thoughts on activities that they would like to see in the building just now?
* GJ added some context to this; the decision was taken that the work completed at phase 1 would allow the building to be used in the interim – options include a craft market in the summer, art, craft or photography exhibitions for example. The building is within walking distance for some of the community, so let’s embrace what is on offer and move beyond the negatives.

**Action – Contact CT if you would like to suggest/ organise an activity.**

1. **Errogie Residents Group**
* GJ introduced the idea of an Errogie residents group as a way of encouraging each community to take ownership of their own geographical area. This does not need to be project-specific, it is wider than this, and will assist with pushing the needs of each specific area forward, and can be led by the Community action plan. Should also include Torness.
* Communication could be done via a WhatsApp group, may not be a need for ‘meetings’.
* MH put his name forward.
* CT indicated that she had been in conversation with Julie Welburn, who has recently moved to the area and she would be keen to be involved.

**Action – GJ to take this forward in capacity as Errogie resident.**

1. **Next meeting**
* Suggested for last week of January 2024. CT to set up doodle poll to identify most suitable date and time.
1. **AOB**
* GJ asked those present if they would be interested in getting more hands-on within the project, now that we move into the next phase. He encouraged everyone to think about whether there is a particular aspect they would like to be more involved with, and if so to contact himself or CT.

Meeting closed.