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**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ERROGIE CHURCH STEERING GROUP HELD AT ERROGIE CHURCH AND VIA MS TEAMS**

**AT 11.00 am ON TUESDAY 10TH SEPTEMBER 2024**

**Present** Caroline Tucker (CT); Jillian Barclay (JB); Gareth Jones (GJ); Sarah Byrne (SB);

Fiona Ambrose (FA); Abi Discombe (AD); Molly Fraser (MF); Fiona Larg (FL); Alex Sutherland (AS); Janet Sutherland (JS)

**Apologies** John Parrott; Mark Henderson.

**Chair**  Caroline Tucker (CT)/ Gareth Jones (GJ)

**In Attendance** Kirsteen Campbell SFCT (KC)

**Minutes** Caroline Tucker (CT)/Kirsteen Campbell (KC)

1. **INTRODUCTION**

Meeting opened by CT at 11am.

1. **MINUTES**

GJ **PROPOSED** and JS **SECONDED** the Minutes from the steering group meeting held on 9th July 2024 and these were **AGREED** as a correct record and **APPROVED** by the Chair.

1. **ACTIONS FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES**

Take forward planning of visits to similar attractions for information and inspiration on how to present heritage and biodiversity:

* GJ to take the lead with support from AD, who has agreed to help.
* Timespan in Helmsdale and The Crannog Centre, Loch Tay to be added to the list.
* Preference is to hold visits on a weekend to enable as many people as possible to be involved.
* Further discussion needed.

Add new members to SharePoint:

* Members to let CT know if any issues occur.

Visual element of Governance documents:

* GJ to share with group when complete.

How the Biodiversity group can work with the Church sub-group:

* SB to update in Biodiversity section.

Options for job creation in biodiversity and/or heritage:

* Paused for the time being and will be discussed by CT and GJ in due course.

Heritage funding applications:

* SB and FL have been working on this.

GJ to meet with Community culture sub-group:

* Complete.

CT and JB to work with up-coming artist re exhibition:

* Complete.

Steering group management with DTAS:

* To be done. CT and GJ to work on this.

1. **REPORT OF ACTIVITY IN AUGUST**

CT shared her report with the group which had been circulated prior to the meeting. Key issues from the report include:

* Broadband has been installed at the church.
* Parking – CT has been working with Catriona Fraser (SFCT Chair) and progress is being made. There is a continued need to handle this sensitively.
* Successful Community and Culture meeting.
* Inquiries for building use are coming in now and the community has shown interest in using the building for various events.

1. **COMMUNITY AND CULTURE**

AD presented the key points from the report (which can be found in the Sharepoint folder and will be shared with the meeting minutes):

* GJ noted the success of the Community and Culture subgroup as a starting point for the component, and he thanked AD for stepping up and facilitating this.
* The subgroup, which comprised adults and children, came up with ideas on how the church can be used as a community space and these will form the basis of a community survey.
* They intend to offer advice, and support other groups, such as the Heritage or Biodiversity groups to help promote social events in the Church.
* A pot-luck lunch has been organised and the subgroup hope to hand out the survey at this. This is provisionally booked for 6th October 2024 at 1pm.
* Action: Pot-luck Lunch to be advertised on social media etc.
* The subgroup to list all budgetary requirements for the lunch.
* Facilities were discussed by the subgroup with the main concerns being:
  + Parking
  + Toilets
  + Kitchen
* Looking forward, the subgroup hope that the church will be used as an informal community space, out-with booked events. The group acknowledged the difficulty with this at the moment given the lack of facilities to make this feasible.
* The subgroup also looked at the idea of the church being used as an emergency shelter. JS advised that Stratherrick Public Hall is already kitted out for this. Further discussion had about a wider strategy surrounding all Trust buildings in an emergency situation.
* The group discussed the importance of liaising with other buildings who hold events to ensure similar events, dates and times, do not overlap.
* AS raised the issue of who’s responsibility it will be to facilitate events, including key distribution etc, and the costs involved. The group agreed and the need for clarity on how the facility will be used to be discussed.
* AD suggested that laminated instructions for using the heating and WIFI etc be available to users.
* Actions: CT to ensure laminated instructions for heater and user info for WiFi is printed in laminated for users. CT to ask Matt Rhodes to ensure heater is fully fueled throughout the winter.
* AS asked the group about the distribution of defibrillators. CT responded that she has contacted Neil Kirkland on this matter.
* The subgroup suggested that the Biodiversity or Heritage groups have a table at the lunch event if desired.
* Following pot-luck lunch, subgroup will collate feedback from survey.
* Action: GJ and AD to review feedback and pull together provisional budget to bring to next steering group meeting.
* Discussion had on ensuring the three main focal points of the building (heritage, biodiversity and community & culture) all work together.

1. **HERITAGE**

FL highlighted the following:

* Funding application to the SFCT Large Grant fund in progress following a meeting with SB.
* SB identified that scoping study required to work out feasibility.
* FL mentioned the possibility of linking as a satellite to Inverness Castle:
  + This could encourage visitors to IC to visit the quieter local glens.
  + To use the technology already in place at IC.
* AS suggested a tie-in with Dunlichity Church in Strathnairn – CT added that she was keeping an eye on developments there.
* GJ mentioned the use of the Forest School by the Heritage Group which will be discussed out-with this meeting.

1. **BIODIVERSITY**

* SB explained that the group met a few weeks ago and have been working on a number of small projects. She also noted that the group is now constituted.
* Project list mainly focussing on outside micro-projects and will move into the Church when suitable activities arise.
  + Wildflower meadow at Errogie Corner progressing. Surveying done over the summer, now had its first cut and a display board is being put together.
  + Further sitka clearance at Ault na Goire.
  + Group AGM will be in November.
  + Organising a couple of talks – Trees for Life before Christmas, and hopefully one about red squirrels.
  + Hoping to tie in with work that the Pathways group have been doing on the App, talk and presentation for this to be confirmed in November.
  + Discussion had about the importance of sharing what the group are doing, both in terms of talks but also activities – there may be other community members who would be interested in taking part too. Possibly use the Green Team Facebook page?
  + Swifts - CT shared the notes on Swifts from John Parrot (available in the Sharepoint folder and will be circulated with the minutes).
  + Discussion had on the need to take down swift boxes – the ones that are currently up are only temporary structures. Potential improvements have been identified to make them more sustainable and user-friendly. Tweaks are also required to ensure recording technology works. Also it would be good to run a community workshop to build them, and encourage others along to build their own.
  + Action – JP to include detail of the technology required in his paper for the next meeting.
  + SB took the opportunity to explain the work she has been doing as part of the Heritage Group funding application investigating possible technologies for integrating heritage into the building. She has been working with AV Technology in Aberdeen on immersive options for the church using projectors and multi-use screens. Invitation to Aberdeen Science Centre to see what can be done.
  + Important that system is future-proof, low maintenance and accessible to everyone – education of children of all ages as important as an adult audience.
  + The group discussed the App and SB gave more information on how this will work. A change in the name from Pathways so that the APP is more general to include other groups etc. Integration between groups and a platform that is universal and accessible.

1. **EVENTS/ACTIVITIES**

CT went through upcoming events and potential books at the church:

* Cycling event on Saturday 21st September
* Private Christening on Sunday 15th December
* Possibility of using the church for dog training sessions on a Monday or Wednesday in October and November.
* Possible Bat and Astronomer on 8th November.
* App talk (not likely to be held at church but with links to heritage and biodiversity so important to make the group aware) – 23rd November, tbc.
* Luvvies also have an event at Gorthleck Hall the weekend of the 25th and 26th October.
* Group to confirm dates of events to be held. These will be shared on social media. AD offered to help with any set-up required for events at the church.

1. **COMMUNICATION**

JB gave an update on Comms and highlighted the following:

* Autumn magazine is in progress and upcoming events to be included. Deadline for submissions is 27th September for circulation mid October.
* Group to provide info on upcoming event dates and a report with photos, specifically AD to focus on community & culture, SB to provide an update on wider biodiversity and JP to write a swifts piece.

1. **FUNDRAISING**

* SB requires figures for Archivist – GJ to check.
* Other than Heritage application as mentioned earlier, her main focus is on an Expression of Interest for a large National Lottery fund, which is due in at the end of October – this all ties in to Heritage. If accepted, the full application is due in early next year.

1. **BUSINESS CASE**

* GJ noted how positive it is that three groups have come together to share ideas and that the building is being used. He noted the importance of structuring a persuasive business case in the correct order and asked for approval for preparatory work to commence – this received full agreement from the group.
* Next step is to start with the correct structure and framework
* Think about main funders (National Lottery is the biggest) - what do they need/ want to hear?

1. **AOB**

* CT introduced the possibility of phased development for the building. It is evident that there is a need for kitchen and toilet facilities to be developed to encourage further use.
* Discussion had on further requirements in next phase – heating, access to gallery. Need to ensure that plan is scaleable, and also need to understand capacity, we do not want to carry out work that will then need to be undone.
* JB mentioned the upcoming Art exhibition by Matthew Rhodes, which is due to run for a week from Friday 25th October.
* The group highlighted that the church could be used by other artists to hold exhibitions as well, and suggested a follow-up with other local artists?

1. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

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