

**ANGUS COUNCIL**

**COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE - 26 MAY 2015**

**KIRRIEMUIR HILL TOILETS AND CAMERA OBSCURA - VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT**

**REPORT BY STRATEGIC DIRECTOR - COMMUNITIES**

**ABSTRACT**

This report seeks homologation of the decision to give the keys to the Kirriemuir Regeneration Group to prepare for the opening and operation of the Camera Obscura and Community use of the Barrie Pavilion to coincide with the 85<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the opening of the pavilion in June. The report also seeks approval to allow the toilets to be operated on a volunteer basis for a trial period of one year with support and assistance from Angus Council from 1 June 2015 and seeks approval to transfer the resources outlined in this report.

**1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) homologates the decision of the Convener and Vice Convener of the Communities Committee, in consultation with the Kirriemuir members and the Strategic Director – Communities to agree to the volunteer management of the Barrie Pavilion and operation of Camera Obscura with support and assistance from Angus Council from 1 May 2015 and note the keys have been handed over to the Group;
- (ii) agrees to the Volunteer Management of the toilets with support and assistance from Angus Council;
- (iii) agrees provision of financial resources on a pro rata basis as outlined in the report;
- (iv) commends the Kirriemuir Regeneration Group (KRG) for their efforts in Volunteering and the entrepreneurial spirit enhancing the options for the local community and users of Kirriemuir Hill.

**2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS COMMUNITY PLAN/SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT/COPORATE PLAN**

This report contributes to the following local outcomes contained within the Angus Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement 2013-2016:

- Communities that are prosperous and fair
- Communities that are learning and supportive
- Communities that are safe and strong
- Communities that are caring and healthy

**3. BACKGROUND**

Members will be aware of the drive at the local and national level to grow community resilience and create opportunities for community volunteering and community ownership of projects, buildings and land. Angus Council have made excellent progress in this area of work in advance of the current Community Empowerment legislation that is making its way through the Scottish Parliament.

#### 4. CURRENT POSITION

The experience of working with communities and working through Community Asset Transfer has provided vital experience that has been invaluable in assisting the new and energetic Kirriemuir Regeneration Group with this project.

The Kirriemuir Regeneration Group have been recently formed and constituted. The purpose of the group is to engender community support and work with existing organisations to revitalise Kirriemuir and make it an interesting and enjoyable place people will want to visit and re-visit.

The objectives of the Group are:

- 1) To re-open and manage the Camera Obscura within the Barrie Pavilion under an initial Agreement with Angus Council with a view to affecting an eventual Community Asset Transfer;
- 2) To open and manage the Barrie Pavilion as a visitor attraction and amenity under an initial Agreement with Angus Council with a view to affecting an eventual Community Asset Transfer;
- 3) To recruit and manage a team of volunteers who, after suitable training, will assist in the day to day operation of the Camera Obscura, the Barrie Pavilion and any other properties under the Group's remit;
- 4) To work with other organisations to promote Kirriemuir as a place to visit;
- 5) To work with other organisations to engender community involvement in current and future projects for the benefit of Kirriemuir;

In pursuit of these objects the Group is non-political and shall act in a fair and non-discriminatory way.

Angus Council operated the toilets at Kirriemuir Hill, which are attached to the Barrie Pavilion, through Tayside Contacts, with the toilets opening between April and October. Annual costs are made up of water charges, maintenance charges and the cost of opening, closing and cleaning along with necessary supplies. In 2013/14 the total cost of operation (excluding National trust for Scotland (NTS) costs and contributions) was £9,918. The maintenance costs were largely down to additional painting to refresh the building for the Commonwealth Games Queen's Baton Relay. Breaking the costs down the charges for the last year were Water, £562, Maintenance £4,929, Toilet Opening and Closing and Cleaning £3,927, Electricity Charges of £500.

Angus Council have met with the group on a number of occasions and discussed the possibility of the group taking over the running of Camera Obscura and providing tuck shop services refreshments and possible community events in the Pavilion. In addition Angus Council have suggested that if the Group take over the running of the toilets then the Council, with Member approval, would pay the Group the monies normally paid to Tayside Contracts.

These resources will enable the Community Group to enhance the toilets, paint the internal walls (not the wood panelling) and refresh the interior of building and ensure the building is an attractive place to be in and be used. Members will be aware that the interior of the building has not had much attention in the last 10 years. The Community Group have indicated that they will look into the opening hours of the toilets and tailor those to activity on the Hill to offer a more responsive service. The group will assist with any group bookings that the NTS have on their books and have reached agreement with the Kirriemuir Cricket Club re the use of the Pavilion.

Members are asked to note that the necessary insurances are in place and Tayside Contracts have been given a month's notice in accordance with the current contract arrangements.

**5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The cost of the partnership will be contained within existing budgets. Angus Council will continue to maintain the building and pay for the services and the KRG will receive £2,618. Non-financial assistance will also be provided to the group.

**6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

The development of this partner represents an enhancement of partnership working and further demonstration of the Council's commitment to working with local communities ahead of the Community Empowerment and Renewal Bill requirements and an agreement between the Council and the Group will need to be developed proportionate to the arrangement being reached.

**NOTE:** No background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

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