

**KIRRIEMUIR CONSERVATION AREA REGENERATION SCHEME -
STEERING GROUP – 23 JANUARY 2018
CARS PROJECT OFFICER'S REPORT**

SMALL GRANTS SCHEME

The purchase of 17 Bank Street has finally concluded and grant monies have been paid out to the Applicant. The 10% retention payment is due on 31st March 2018. Retention payments are also still due for Visocchi's (31st March) and 5B and 6B High Street (22nd January).

There is no further update on properties awarded grant assistance under the CARS Grants Scheme. An update on grant monies awarded is dealt with below.

FINANCIAL UPDATE (Appendix 1)

As requested at the last meeting in December 2017, an up-to-date Financial Statement has been prepared (see Appendix 1 attached).

The common fund for the Kirriemuir Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) over the period 2013-18, which has been administered by Angus Council, amounts to some £1,149,000. This comprises the approved grant from Historic Scotland (now HES) of £645,000 along with the Council's contribution of £504,000 making up the public sector contribution. Including the 15% contribution from the private sector (owners), this amounts to an overall eligible cost or total investment in Kirriemuir of some £1,290,000.

Appendix 1 shows the breakdown of the expenditure within the various budget headings, including the ancillary projects undertaken to date. As Members will be aware, the budget underspend for the Priority Projects was re-allocated to the Small Grants Scheme due to demand and supplemented by additional monies from the Public Realm (HS contribution) and Training (AC contribution) budgets.

In total, some £348,060 has been invested in repairs to the two completed Priority Project buildings and £498,855 of grant money paid out under the Small Grants Scheme representing a substantial investment of £846,915 in the town's historic building stock. Forty-eight buildings within the Conservation Area boundary, most of which are within the town centre, have benefitted from grant assistance. The amount paid out for small grants is slightly less than the actual grant sums awarded by the Steering Group of £518,759 (a difference of just under £20,000) but the underspend is accounted for with some projects actually costing less than the original sum awarded or from certain grant eligible works not being carried out (e.g. Hooks top up grant).

As a result, there is a small underspend of £22,084 from the small grants budget, supplemented by a grant clawback sum of £725 from the sale of the property at 4 Tannage Brae which was awarded grant assistance for window repairs. It is noted that the flatted property at 41 High Street is also currently on the market for sale and the Selling Agents

have been advised of the contractual requirement to pay back grant monies (£20,000) when this property is eventually sold.

In terms of the budget for Public Realm works, there is however an overspend of some £6,114. The Public Realm budget of £100,000 is funded entirely (100%) by Angus Council. As Members will be aware, the original cost of the works to redevelop and enhance the Square did increase slightly due to the amount of additional works required however this still remained comfortably within the £100,000 budget. Unfortunately the overspend has only recently been brought to light and appears due to a mis-calculation in the level of anticipated excess funding which was offered by CARS towards the collaborative project with the Kirriemuir Dementia Friendly Group. Members will recall that CARS agreed to assist the community-based project with funding which aims to reduce street clutter and upgrade the general environment for local people within the town centre. The cost summary spreadsheet prepared by the Collaborative Working Group (copy sent to Steering Group Members on 10 March 2017) itemised Kirriemuir CARS contribution as £16,370 (£9,720 for re-pointing works in St. Colme's Close and £6,650 for replacement Heritage style lighting) of the anticipated £20,000 budget excess towards the work. However, it is now noted that the cost of in-house Technical Fees (£11,547.40) which had already been incurred for the Square redevelopment project had not been taken into account for any under-spend during calculations to provide funding for the collaborative exercise. The actual underspend in the Public Realm was in fact considerably less than expected.

There have also been some changes to the anticipated spend for the DFK Collaborative Enhancements. The actual cost of the lighting works to replace 4no. column heads with Heritage style lighting has increased slightly (+£176.80) but the cost of carrying out re-pointing works in St. Colmes Close has come in considerably less than was originally budgeted for (-£6,805). Significantly however, the cost to DFK of creating the mosaic mural had increased from £2,500 to £6,500 and the shortfall at that time being offered from the anticipated underspend in the CARS budget. A revised offer of a £4,000 contribution by CARS was gratefully accepted by DFK as a compromise.

Clearly the Public Realm budget is overspent by £6,114 however given the overall cost of the collaborative works and the benefits which have undoubtedly been achieved, not only within the town itself but nationally in terms of the publicity received for this project, the CARS funding contribution to the DFK Group can only continue by utilising some of the underspent funding from other budget headings.

Under the £30,000 Training, Education and Awareness budget, funded entirely (100%) by Historic Environment Scotland, the majority of the funding has been used for the Training Programme in Traditional Building Skills by Frew Conservation Ltd. As Members will be aware, this has been a particularly successful element of the CARS project with some 80 individuals (building professionals/contractors and local people) benefiting from the training workshops. Some additional funding has also been allocated from the Education/Raising Awareness element towards seminar/workshops/talks in conjunction with Angus Heritage Week and the Kirriemuir Swift Conservation Project/Tayside Bio-diversity Partnership. Guided walks and training days were arranged to raise awareness of both the origins and historical development of the town and of the importance of the local swift and bat population being affected by buildings under repair. As a consequence, new nesting boxes have been erected by building owners to encourage the use of original and new nesting locations to

hopefully enable the swift population to increase over the next few years. In addition to funding the development and marketing of the Wayfinding App by the pupils of Webster's High School, the budget has also been used to fund tuition for the pupils to carry out stone carving work as part of the landscape designs for the Square and latterly some hands-on repair works at Reform Street car park. In total, the Training, Education and Awareness budget is underspent by some £8,030 which was directed towards the additional training exercise at Reform Street car park (see below).

In terms of the £150,000 budget for Miscellaneous/Administration costs, some £129,884 has to date been used for the Project Officer PT salary and travel expenses, legal costs associated with reports, searches and registration of documents etc. in respect of grant contract documentation, in-house QS fees for grant project assessments and other ancillary costs relating to hall hire and catering/refreshments for training days and workshops. The projected spend to the end of the project period on 31st March is anticipated at £7,000 leaving a potential underspend of some £13,000.

In total, over the four budget headings, and taking into account the public realm overspend, this leaves a potential surplus of £37,725 which has been agreed by the Steering Group to provide funding towards the additional Training project to repair the carpark walls at Reform Street (£29,904) and to provide funding for the CARS Legacy (£5,000), leaving a potential surplus of £2,821. The wall repair work has now been completed and 2 of 3 valuations paid. The Steering Group may also be interested to note that the work carried out by the pupils of Webster's High was commended at the Scottish Parliament by Bill Bowman MSP for "taking the preservation of their town's heritage into their own hands" (Dundee Courier – 7 December 2017).

As Members will be aware, Historic Environment Scotland has also offered supplementary grant assistance of £34,000 at the request of Kirriemuir CARS to fund any additional grant eligible works which can be completed and claimed for by 31st March 2018. This additional funding is proposed to be used for further training in re-pointing works at Reform Street and as a contribution towards KCC's proposal to erect additional heritage plaques and leaflet revision printing costs. At the time of writing, no details of the cost of the repair work (to the north car park wall) is available, Craig Frew is currently working up all of the costs associated with this however given the height involved, the scaffolding cost is likely to be quite significant (£6,000 + VAT). Both the tutors and the school are again keen to participate in the project. The north wall is in private ownership however until such times as proposed costs are received for the work, no approach can be made to the owner of the building for permission to carry out the repair work.

The Steering Group previously agreed to fund £4,000 towards the cost of the KCC proposal therefore CARS would be looking for a maximum overall cost of £30,000 inclusive of VAT for the south boundary wall repair to come in on budget. An update will be given on this at the meeting.

CARS LEGACY MATTERS

Wayfinding App

Merchandise banners to publicise the Wayfinding App are now available at the museum along with some flyers and badges and a small banner is on display in both the reception area of the school and the library. The cost of the merchandising pack has been paid on behalf of the School to Global Treasure Apps.

Mosaic Mural

It is understood that the mosaic mural has now been completed by Maureen Crosbie and is being attached onto a backing frame for erection within the town centre. A part payment from CARS to DFK towards the cost of this work has been made from the £4,000 agreed contribution.

As per the Project Officers previous report at the 5th December meeting, the proposed location for the mural at the top of Manse Close was not deemed appropriate by Frew Conservation in terms of the wall's structural integrity. As requested by the Steering Group, a structural inspection was carried out by the Council's Structural Engineer to confirm the stability of the wall. His report is as follows:

“A visual inspection of the Kirriemuir Reform Street Car park (Manse Close) boundary walls took place on the 12 December 2017. Karen West, Frew Conservation and Graeme Boyd were in attendance. The reason for the inspection was to establish the car park existing boundary walls condition. The inspection would establish what boundary walls, if any, could be repointed without significant temporary support or remedial stonework required. See below our findings.

Two walls, noted as A on the attached sketch, could not be repointed without significant temporary propping, stone repairs or stone replacement. These walls are being monitored by the Roads Division as there is sign of historic movement.

The wall B, noted on the attached sketch, is in the process of being repointed. These pointing works are being carried by local school children under Frews Conservation supervision.

The Wall C was inspected and found to be in need of repointing. No significant temporary propping, stone repairs or stone replacement would be required. It was agreed that these repointing works could be carried out as part of the Kirriemuir regeneration works.

All other boundary walls are generally in a reasonable condition but would need some repointing works in the future”.

For information, walls referred to as A are the Manse Close and St Colme's Close walls, wall B is the southmost boundary wall in the car park, recently completed and wall C is the northmost boundary wall being considered for a further re-pointing exercise (see Appendix 2).

At this point in time, no firm decision can be made on the proposed siting of the Mural until details of timescales and costs are received from Frew Conservation Ltd. for restoration work to the north wall of the car park.

Legacy Plan

As per the minute of the last meeting, a small working group has met for initial discussions on the proposals agreed at the last meeting to showcase the CARS project at the end of the five-year time period. The group comprised the Project Officer, Cllr Bell as a Steering Group Member, the Council's Communications Officer and the newly appointed Built Heritage Officer. As a basis for further discussion at this meeting, the group considered that given the limited timescale before the end of the project period, it is likely that the proposed daytime exhibition/celebratory event at the Community Hub in Bank Street would not now take place until nearer the end of March. This is to allow for a photographic survey to be undertaken by the Council's Communications team of all the buildings within the designated Conservation Area and which will form the basis of the StoryMap digital exercise, also to be undertaken. Attendance would likely be open to all although specific invites will be sent out to all those who have been involved in the CARS project, i.e. grant applicants, tutors, school staff/pupils, community groups etc. The format for the event still has to be confirmed however it is hoped that Members of the CARS Steering Group will attend on the day as hosts. A Press release will be prepared following this meeting to highlight the Group's proposals with further publicity on this and the erection of the Mosaic Mural as a showcase for the CARS project around early March.