

**KIRRIEMUIR CONSERVATION AREA REGENERATION SCHEME -  
STEERING GROUP – 13 DECEMBER 2016  
CARS PROJECT OFFICER'S REPORT**

**PROJECT UPDATES**

Warehouse, Ogilvy's Close and Former Hooks Hotel, Bank Street

Since the decision of the Steering Group at their last meeting in September to withdraw grant funding awarded to the above project, there has been no further correspondence from the Applicant other than to acknowledge receipt of the formal letters from Legal Services and to advise that his Solicitor would be instructed (dated 4 October).

To date there has been no further work carried out within the site. The condition of the building continues to be monitored by the Council's Planning Service.

**SMALL GRANTS SCHEME UPDATE**

One new grant application has been submitted under the Small Grants Scheme and will be discussed under the next Agenda item.

Repair works have now been completed for projects at Marywell Brae, Glengate, Bank Street and High Street and grant monies either paid or currently pending payment.

Concerns have been raised with a number of Applicants/ property owners as regards the remaining timescale for grant eligible works to be carried out and claimed for by the final accounts deadline of 31 March 2017. A number of properties which were awarded grant assistance have not yet started with grant monies tied up until works are completed. All Applicants/ property owners have responded, as follows:

Visocchi's, High Street – awarded £14,793 (20/10/2015). The Applicant has advised of a start date at the end of January 2017. The replacement window frames are being manufactured by a local joinery company who have experienced a slight delay due to other work commitments. They are however aware of the grant award and the requirement to have the works completed on time.

Ogilvy Arms, Flats 5B and 6B – awarded £40,000 total (20/10/2015). The applicant/ developer has acknowledged a delay in the works but has confirmed that scaffolding will be erected and work will commence on their return from annual holiday on 9 January 2017 to be completed by the end of March. The window refurbishments will be carried out at the same time.

Bank Street properties (Church, 10 Bank St/ 1 Manse Close/ former Church Centre, 17 Bank St) –

It was intended by the respective Agents that restoration works to adjoining properties at 1 Manse Close and the former Church Centre at 17 Bank Street would take place

simultaneously by the same contractor in order to minimise costs of scaffolding etc. The delay in works being started was due primarily to stalling of the proposed sale of the Church Centre in order to generate funds for the repair works to the Church. The sale of the property has not been progressed due to the business interests of the potential purchaser. A meeting was held last week with the Project Officer, Agents and Developer to look at options in order to try and move the works forward i.e. whether the Church carry out the works but are subject to clawback of grant monies or whether to carry on with the sale of the building. Since then, the potential purchaser has instructed the sale to proceed and hopefully will soon make an approach to have grant monies transferred in order to initiate a start to the grant eligible works. Whilst 17 Bank Street still remains uncertain at this time, it was agreed that works will start at the Church and at Manse Close in the New Year.

Since our last meeting, the Project Officer has pursued previous grant enquiries from the owners of 6 – 10 Glengate, and 2 – 8 Bank Street. Whilst he is still interested in applying for grant assistance, the owner/developer at 6 – 10 Glengate has been unable to generate estimates from contractors in time for consideration at this meeting. It is hoped that the application (estimated full £20,000 grant) will be submitted in time to enable completion by the end of March. In addition, the property at 2 – 8 Bank Street (former Franchi's building) is in three separate ownerships, one business and two residential, where one of the owners intends to sell and does not wish to apply for grant funding. Despite their interest, none of these grant applications have been submitted for the consideration of the Steering Group as anticipated.

Being mindful of the timescale left to complete any works under the Small Grants Scheme, the Steering Group may wish to consider widening the priority area boundary to include other buildings within the Conservation Area boundary which are outwith the town centre. There is also the option of financing grant eligible works for example as part of a shopfront improvement/repair scheme or other concentrated funding, however this may again not be feasible due to time limitations.

A grant application is also expected to be submitted for the Gairie Inn, in Schoolwynd in respect of window repairs on the front/public elevations of the building. As the number of windows involved extends to 17 in number, in addition to possible stonework repairs, the grant eligible works could easily amount to the maximum allowance under the Small Grants Scheme.

The new grant application to be considered under the next Agenda item has been submitted by the property owners on a speculative basis. They were previously advised of the priority funding area however have decided to pursue any potential grant assistance in order to progress the necessary repair works to their property.

## **Public Realm Works**

Final works are being completed this week which include laying the remaining replacement slabs and the radial slabs around the Peter Pan statue. The total cost of works expended to date amount to £88,422 (Physical Works £ 76,174 and Fees £12,248). A total of £100,000 had originally been budgeted for Public Realm works as Angus Council's sole contribution. There now remains some £11,578 available funds in the budget.

Work has continued to develop the collaborative project alongside Dementia Friendly Kirriemuir to consider the removal of redundant or unnecessary signage and enhance the public realm. A draft action plan of proposed works is currently being developed and will be presented to the Steering Group at the meeting. The development of this project would also seek improvement to St Colme's Close as a key pedestrian route within the town and consider re-pointing of the stone boundary walls as part of the public realm improvements.

## **Update on Other Matters**

### Legacy and Kirriemuir Charrette

Following the agreement of the Steering Group to make a financial contribution towards the development of an App for Kirriemuir, some progress has been made by the appointed Working Group (comprised of Webster's Head Teacher, school pupils and Community Planning Officers from Angus Council). The Group met last week to discuss matters relating to funding, roles and responsibilities, framework and timescales. Further contact is to be made with Abertay University, local historical connections including the Gateway to the Glens Museum and the CARS Project Officer although the group is aware that funding has to be used by the end of the financial year 2016/17. The next meeting of the group is on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> December.

Details of an App which has already been developed by a company based in Edinburgh, Global Treasure Apps were forwarded by the Project Officer to Community Planning. The app was demonstrated at a Scottish Town's Partnership event in Dundee, providing an interactive display which can enhance, educate and entertain the visitor experience of a destination. The company can build the digital platform through a series of workshops with young people to deliver their own heritage based trail for the town. It is hoped this may prove useful to the group.

### Traditional Building Repairs and Maintenance Training

The Kirriemuir CARS Training programme for 2016 concluded the first week of November with a workshop/seminar on "The Repair and Upgrading of Sash and Case Windows". This proved to be our most popular training event yet with over 30 bookings from a mixture of homeowners, building professional and two local joinery contractors.

In total, during the course of this year, some 80 individuals have benefitted from the training events in traditional building repair skills at a total cost of £16,369 from the Training budget. In addition, a local catering company and the Parish Church in hiring out the venue have benefitted financially from the event programme. Funding was also given for training purposes to enable the school pupils to get involved in the stone carving sessions carried out as part of the revamp works to enhance the Square.

### Historic Environment Scotland: CARS Annual Seminar

The Project Officer attended the above annual gathering of CARS Officers in the Scottish Borders in early November. Scottish Borders Council was also awarded a similar package of funding towards the heritage led regeneration of Selkirk town centre, at the same time as Kirriemuir, as part of Round 5 from (then) Historic Scotland. The event was held in Selkirk

but included a trip to Kelso, subject of a now completed THI/CARS investment. Whilst it was an interesting but hectic day, with much travelling around, it did provide reassurance that the Kirriemuir CARS is on track with Selkirk in terms of levels of investment in projects, problems and opportunities as well as providing a useful networking opportunity with other CARS Project Officers and Historic Environment Scotland.

### Rural Parliament Visit

The project visit by the Scottish Rural Parliament to Kirriemuir on the afternoon of Saturday 8 October was disappointing in terms of lack of anticipated numbers. Only two delegates from an expected number of 20 actually attended on the day, to the disappointment of many of the local groups who had organised events for their visitors. A lovely thank you letter was however received afterwards from one of the delegates, quite impressed by the physical works undertaken to date through the project.... "I was amazed by CARS and the work that has been done to so many buildings around Kirriemuir. What a difference the project is making to the look of the town. Please thank Karen again for her presentation and then our wander around the town which made me realise what a big difference the project is making, and what a beautiful place Kirriemuir really is".

The Scottish Rural Network, organisers of the event have acknowledged and apologised for the poor attendance across all Saturday event activities and will be discussing ways to ensure this does not happen again in the future.