



Directors/Trustees Special Meeting Monday 8 November 2021

Present

Jill Patrick, Douglas Johnston, Stuart Ogg, Mari Jackson, Gill Bell, Jon Park, Geoff Peart, Crawford Gordon, Steve Barnet.

Apologies

Gavin Fleming

The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the position of the Trust regarding the current discussions concerning the future of the village shop.

As the Trust's representative on the local group set up by the Community Council Douglas outlined the current situation, highlighting the following points:

- A local group set up by the Community Council comprises representatives from the Community Council, Maitland and Carol, (previous owners of the shop), Douglas Barr and Douglas J as the Trust's representative. The group has met twice. A questionnaire is currently being drafted and will be agreed at the next meeting of the group at the beginning of December and then circulated around the village to gather views as to what is required from the shop.
- Alistair, the current shop owner has made it clear that he will not be reopening the shop, the building will be refurbished, following the fire, and then put on the open market and he has indicated that he has already had approaches from interested parties.
- The Trust could register its interest in purchasing the property under the community right to buy legislation, either now or under a fast track process when the actual property is on the market.
- There are grants which the Trust could apply for to buy and renovate the property if it took ownership. This could be an option. Once refurbished the Trust could then lease it to an operator, possibly at a rent which reflects the financial viability of the business.
- Historically, the shop has experienced a slow decrease in profitability and viability.

Following discussion the following points were agreed:

- The Trust will do what is required including submitting a fast track registration of an interest to buy should that be required as a result of the work of the group set up to consider the future of the shop and informed by the results of the survey of local residents. The Trust will not however register an interest at this stage.
- The Trust does not have the capacity to take on the management of the shop given its existing commitments to manage existing assets including the community centre, the Glebe Park, and undertake path projects etc. The Trust believes that it would be best if a private operator took on the shop.
- The Trust supports the idea of a professionally produced option appraisal funded through the Windfarm Fund and believes this would help inform future decision making by the shop group, the Community Council and the Trust. This could be instigated by the shop group supported by the Community Council and the Trust
- To help retain the option of keeping the shop, the Trust suggests that the Community Council writes to the Council's planning service highlighting the importance of the shop to the village as this could help negate the possibility of a change of use.

Action: the Trust will inform the shop group of its decisions.