

## **Minutes of the Board meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2023 at Whinhill.**

Present: Fiona MacKinlay, Jerry Bishop, Richard Hickson, Andrew Senior (Chair) Alison Davies (Minutes).

Board members agreed this was a special Board meeting to consider the tenders which had been returned in respect of the Heritage Hub. Therefore the minutes of the Board Meeting of 31<sup>st</sup> August will be on the agenda of the next full Board Meeting. A further item will be community fundraising.

### **Item 1 – Tenders evaluation process**

JB presented the cost/quality analysis which the Construction sub group had undertaken. These were done before the tender prices had been seen.

Issues further explored included:

- The financial health of the contractor with the lowest price tender had been checked and found acceptable.
- The significant differential in the Preliminaries category explained why there was such a big difference between the lowest and highest tender.
- The tenders had been purified by the QS and the preferred contractor was Hendersons of Wick at a price of £395,452. There are still a few points which the QS needs to investigate.
- The Architect (Blueprint, the Contract Administrator) will check and sign off the work undertaken on a monthly basis before bills are paid.

The Board approved accepting the tender from Hendersons subject to obtaining the permission to start from the Heritage Lottery contact, Ross Crawford. JB has asked Mark at Torrance Partnership to send the tender documents so that these can be passed to Ross and a meeting has been pencilled in for Wednesday next week. If approval to start is given, we anticipate a start date of first week in November.

Ross will also be appraised of the Heritage Hub Community Appeal (which had been discussed earlier by the Fundraising sub group) and the pending Crowdfunding campaign.

Further points raised by the JB and Board members included:

- Liability Insurance – clarifying the position in terms of what the Contractors insurance covers, and Historylinks insurance. What physical areas are defined internally and externally for the contractor's staff and for H/L staff and volunteers.
- Funding Plan: We have confirmed funds of £573,588 including two definite pledges. So setting aside the funds still needed for the Fit Out, staff costs etc, there is now a surplus on the construction side of £42,731. We will seek Heritage Lottery's approval to have this vired across to offset the still outstanding fund raising target which is £71,088. (See spreadsheets attached).
- The contract is a standard one in Scottish law, ie the QS accepts the tender on our behalf. There is a penalty per week for lateness should this occur but it is unlikely this would be pursued.
- Access to the Back Office should be possible most of the time and it is possible to work from home. Only the doorway into the Extension would require work. This raised the question of protecting the doorway into the archive store room with plastic sheeting and other exhibits in the main museum as required.
- Welfare Access: it would be preferable if the contractor could bring his own. H/L kitchen and toilets are needed for staff and volunteers. JB will check this out at the appropriate time.

## **Item 2 – Further Fundraising**

There is still a sum of £71,088 to be raised which might be reduced if we are permitted to vire the surplus funds as previously described.

- The Board approved the measures planned including an urgent Community Appeal for items such as tables, chairs, crockery etc which would target Heritage Society members and individuals and businesses. Higher value items will also be added if they can be identified. This would be launched by Wednesday next week if possible along with an A5 leaflet and posters. LM to liaise with schools to request use of schoolbag post. The way of donating would principally be via the Paypal Donate button on the website but this would require rewording by Plexus so that the 'ask' is clearly for the Heritage Hub Fit Out.
- It was agreed that there should be a shed sale on 14<sup>th</sup> October and preparations including the sale of the shed should proceed urgently.
- This would be followed by a Crowdfunding Campaign with a broader focus, especially to appeal to the American golfer segment, via the RDGC Newsletter.

- We have submitted an EOI for the Engagement Officer to the Community Regeneration Fund and asked for clarification of timeframe. AD/LM working on the EOI for MGS with a deadline of 3/10. SSE Fund launches soon with a deadline of November.
- AD to lead on both of these. RH has sent a long list of possible funders to LM and AD will review.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> November 10.30am Whinhill**