

Minutes of Special Meeting of the Shannon Municipal District held on Wednesday, 5th February 2020 at 3.00pm at the office of the Municipal District, Town Hall, Shannon, Co. Clare.

Present: Councillors Gerard Flynn (Cathaoirleach), P.J. Ryan, Michael Begley, John Crowe, Pat McMahon, Carmel Greene Senior Executive Officer, Monica Meehan Senior Executive Officer, Siobhán O'Reilly, Administrative Officer, Patricia O'Neill Staff Officer.

Dúchas na Sionna Members: Olive Carey, John O'Brien and Greg Duff.

VC Vernacular Conservation Ltd: Eoin Madigan, Dominic Keogh and Anthoulis Manoras

Fr. Arnie Rosney Parish Priest Shannon

Apologies Cllr. Cathal Crowe; Liam Conneally

Cathaoirleach Gerard Flynn opened the meeting and welcomed all present. He stated that this special meeting was arranged for the purpose of facilitating a briefing from Dúchas na Sionna in relation to their proposed project at Hastings Cottage in Tullyvarraga, Shannon. He also extended a warm welcome to Fr. Arnie Rosney, PP of Shannon.

Hastings Cottage – Presentation by Dúchas na Sionna.

Members of Dúchas na Sionna Olive Carey, John O'Brien and Greg Duff presented to the meeting the history associated with Hastings Cottage from 1800s to the War of Independence up to the mid 1970s when it was destroyed by fire.

In 2012 the work of conserving the walls of the cottage was commenced by Dúchas na Sionna using the best practice conservation techniques at that time, however these works were not effective and remedial action had to be taken. In late 2019 a cob specialist was engaged and recommended full restoration.

It is proposed to restore and reinstate the cottage in 2 phases

Phase 1 in 2020 – Re-construction of cottage

- Cob walls constructed, thatched roof
- Workshops in traditional building methods during the course of restoration
- Locally sourced clay – in consultation with Clare County Council on surrounding grounds.
- Estimated cost €94, 850 incl. VAT at 13.5% of the house only not including services.

Phase 2 in 2021 – Rebuild out building.

The benefits of full restoration and potential future use of the cottage were outlined:

- Preserve historical importance of the site
- Use as a heritage and training centre for traditional crafts and building techniques
- Educational value
- Tourist attraction in the Shannon Estuary Way
- Meeting venue for cultural and heritage organisations.
- Exhibition space – audio visual presentation
- An addition and new dimension to the Green Infrastructure of the town
- New community asset owned by Clare County Council.
- Resonable cost
- Hosting commemorative events in July 2020

Eoghan Madigan from VC Vernacular Conservation Ltd. addressed the meeting in relation to the training that will be provided during restoration, expected income in relation to same and the time scale involved in construction of phase 1.

- Training to promote heritage crafts in Ireland
- Accredited training provided
- 1 – 2 courses per week depending on demand.
- Timescale – 4 months
- Works will be carried out by contractors, volunteers and paying clients that wish to upskill on trade.

Carmel Greene, Senior Executive Officer acknowledged the work of Dúchas na Sionna to date and commended their enthusiasm for the project and the good working relationship that exists between Clare County Council and the group.

In relation to the proposal Carmel raised the following:

- If the proposal is for public use, there may be a requirement for planning permission – Carmel to follow up with planning
- Fire Certs required for public buildings – Carmel to follow up
- 4 month timeframe – when do they propose to commence works and will it be weather dependent.
- During restoration the public will not be allowed on the site and measures to safeguard the ongoing works will need to be provided around the site
- Phase 2 – Out building – Water and sewerage not costed yet. If open to the public this needs to be considered.
- Regional Skills programme – may have a funding opportunity. Carmel to provide a contact person.
- Funding provided under the Heritage Council to be considered. A presentation should be made to the Heritage Council.

Eoghan Madigan confirmed that it was intended that restoration would commence in April 2020, which would be the ideal time of year coming into the summer months and that a marquee structure would be erected over construction works during inclement weather conditions.

Monica Meehan, Senior Executive Officer advised in relation to funding schemes that could potentially facilitate this proposal

- Town and Village Renewal project for 2020 has not been announced yet and based on the timelines provided for the commencement date, this would be an unlikely option.
- Historic Structures at Risk Fund. Application has been submitted to Planning Department for submission to the Heritage Council by 14th Feb 2020.

Fr. Arnie Rosney congratulated the group on their work to date and emphasised the importance of the need to acknowledge the past. He added that he would like to see a link between the cottage at Slí na Mara and Hastings Cottage and that the Pastoral area would do all it can do to promote the groups proposals.

All the Elected Members fully supported the groups proposals and reiterated the enthusiasm and passion Dúchas na Sionna have for the project.

Olive Carey provided a brief update on the Shannon Wetlands Restoration Project Works undertaken since Sept 2019:

- Site secured – Health and Safety – Site Risk Assessment
- Re- profiling of existing pond – division into three ponds
- Creation of new large pond – all ponds interconnected to allow for overflow in times of wet weather

- Upgrade to existing footpath network.

Works and proposals for 2020

- Installation of information/display signage
- Installation of park benches
- Installation of green recycling infrastructure
- Installation of exercise equipment
- Installation of outdoor nature classroom
- Boardwalk

John O'Brien recapped on the costings and potential savings of the restoration of Hastings Cottage

- Clay could be sourced locally. To be discussed further with Clare Co Co.
- Doors and Windows provided by local voluntary groups
- PSCS – PSDP not included in costings. Estimated cost €3,000 to €5,000.
- Estimated cost of €94,850 is for the house only and does not include the out buildings, water, sewerage, electricity, entrance, roadway and ancillary services.
- Income from training over the 4 months of restoration works could generate approx. €1,000 per week.

This concluded the meeting.

Signed: _____

**Cllr. Gerard Flynn,
Cathaoirleach.**

Signed: _____

Meetings Administrator.

Dated March, 2020