

Minutes of the St Monans and Abercrombie Community Council meeting held on Wednesday, 25 November held by Zoom conference call.

Present: P Copland (Chair); S Bridges (Secretary); V Salvage (Vice Chair); W Buchan; M Ashworth; H Ironside; B Morris; G Bell; M Syme; Cllr Docherty; Cllr Holt and Cllr Porteous.

In attendance: David Smith, Julian Jackson and Ally Kearney, Trustees of the Jim Mathew Camera Collection Trust ('the Trust').

Members of the public: None as this was a private meeting in accordance with Fife Council's 'Scheme for the Community Councils' para 9.4 (b).

1. Welcome and Apologies

V Bland, and S Collier had sent their apologies. Mr Bridges and Mr Bell disclosed their interest as Trustees of the Camera Trust at the beginning of the meeting.

2. The Trust's application to the St Monans Common Good Fund

Noting that the meeting had previously received a copy of the Trusts' business plan, Mr Copland welcomed Messrs Smith, Jackson and Kearney to the meeting and invited them to provide an update on the objectives and business plan of the Trust.

Mr Smith emphasised the unique nature of the camera collection currently situated within the heart of the village and the importance that it could play in allowing St Monans to become the established "photography village" for Scotland. He noted the popularity of the break water to photographers and the Easton photographs.

Mr Kearney introduced himself and explained his connection with Jim and Dorothy Mathew, through researching an article on the collection for the BBC. He noted that the Trusts website had received a considerable number of hits from across the world which demonstrated the international goodwill and potential appeal that the collection had.

Mr Jackson also introduced himself. Both he and his wife had been family friends with the Matthews. Julian had over fifty years' experience in historic cameras and camera restoration. He noted that Dorothy had approached him after Jim's death to advise her on the collection and that he had been responsible for cataloguing and valuing it. He is in regular contact with Dorothy.

Cllr Holt raised a number of questions. While she acknowledged that the site and the collection was a 'real bargain', she was concerned that there was an over-reliance on the CGF as a source of funding and no other grant-giving bodies. What therefore was the plan to seek further funding?

Mr Smith explained that a key issue for applying for further funding was dependant on the Trust actually owning the building and the collection – a classic 'chicken and egg' situation! That said, Mr Smith highlighted;

- The Heritage Lottery Fund had been approached. They had been very positive about any application and the Trustees intended to apply for £10,000.
- Other fund awarding bodies were being sought. If anyone had any suggestions, Mr Smith would be pleased to hear from them.

- To date, the crowd funding had raised £3,000 and plans were in place to refresh this campaign shortly. (NB currently as at 27 Nov, it is now £3,500)
- The trustees are finalising planning to seek corporate sponsorship (including national businesses with a photographic connection) and individual monthly giving.

Leaving aside the purpose of the CGF application (i.e. to secure the building and the collection) it was noted that the immediate financial future was sustainable with regards to maintaining the building and its contents. Appropriate insurance cover was in place and utility bills were being paid. These outgoings were relatively low.

Mr Smith agreed with Cllr Holts suggestion to revisit the application and cover the points discussed above in more detail.

Cllr Holt also suggested that the trustees should ask Council officials if it would be possible to make a presentation to the full NE Fife committee when it met on 9 December at 9.30am to consider the application.

Mr Copland asked how much pressure the Trust was under to purchase the assets. Mr Jackson confirmed that Mrs Mathew was getting a little anxious about the time it was taking and she was keen to conclude and take comfort that her husband's legacy had been secured. She was not in the best of health and had just celebrated her eightieth birthday, but she wasn't being demanding about progress.

It was also noted by Mr Bell that the building itself had the potential capability to be used by the community for a variety of purposes. It would be a community asset.

Mr Copland thanked the Trustees for their informative presentation and Messrs Smith, Jackson and Kearney left the meeting.

Mr Buchan again asked if the camera collection would remain within St Monans community if the Trust was to fold. Mr Bell stated that, in the unlikely event that the Trust was to wind up, the camera collection would not be broken up and the building would remain a community asset under new management.

After a further brief discussion, Mr Bridges proposed (Mr Copland seconded) the following motion:

That the Community Council of St Monans and Abercrombie is fully supportive of the Common Good Fund application for £12,500 made by the Jim Matthew Camera Collection Trust.

Every Community Councillor member present confirmed their agreement to this motion.

3. Future public Community Council meetings

There was a brief discussion about Community Council meetings being held virtually in order to comply with current Covid restrictions. All of the Councillors were in favour of such an approach citing some of the positive examples from other local Community Councils. It was noted that the Pittenweem hall could be available as it was now designated as 'covid secure'. However, numbers were restricted to 20 individuals and was therefore considered restrictive. It was noted that Zoom could allow up to 100 attendees.

It was therefore agreed that the Community Council would hold a virtual Zoom meeting in January 2021. Steps to publicise the event will be put in place and also guidance to remind residents who cannot attend the virtual meeting, to contact one of community councillors with their questions.

4. Any other business

Mrs Ashworth reported that four young adults had been arrested and charged with wilful fire setting and vandalism around the farm at Abercrombie. Not all were from St Monans.

The next public meeting of the Community Council will be on Monday 18 January 2021 at 7.30pm by video conferencing.

Chair P. Cooper
Date: 18/1/21.