

Item: 4

Community Development Fund Sub-committee: 22 February 2024.

Application Number 0/5/8/85.

North Ronaldsay Trust – North Ronaldsay New Kirk.

Report by Corporate Director for Enterprise and Sustainable Regeneration.

1. Purpose of Report

To consider an application from North Ronaldsay Trust for assistance towards the refurbishment of the North Ronaldsay New Kirk into a multi-functional space and visitor attraction.

2. Recommendations

The Sub-committee is invited to note:

2.1.

That North Ronaldsay Trust has applied for assistance from the Community Development Fund towards refurbishment of the North Ronaldsay New Kirk, comprising renovation of the building to create a base to showcase the heritage of the building and the island, as well as a multi-functional facility for events and a warm hub for islanders and visitors, at a total estimated cost of £290,953.

2.2.

That, on 26 November 2019, when considering eligibility of projects funded by the North Isles Landscape Partnership Scheme in applying for grants from the Community Development Fund and other Council funding, the Policy and Resources Committee recommended:

- That community-led projects which had provisionally secured part-funding from the North Isles Landscape Partnership Scheme be considered eligible to seek co-funding from other Council funding streams, including the Community Development Fund.

2.3.

That messages of support have been received from the undernoted:

- North Ronaldsay Community Association.
- North Ronaldsay Dark Skies representative.
- North Ronaldsay Community Council.

- The Orkney Sheep Foundation.

2.4.

The North Ronaldsay New Kirk is an approved project within the North Isles Landscape Project Scheme.

It is recommended:

2.5.

That a grant amounting to 16% of total eligible costs, up to a maximum sum of £47,000, to be met from the Community Development Fund, be offered to North Ronaldsay Trust towards the New Kirk refurbishment project, subject to:

- Confirmation of the subsidy control position to the satisfaction of the Corporate Director for Enterprise and Sustainable Regeneration.
- Confirmation of a full funding package.

2.6.

That powers be delegated to the Corporate Director for Enterprise and Sustainable Regeneration, in consultation with the Head of Legal and Governance, to determine whether appropriate security can be put in place and, if so, to conclude an Agreement, on the Council's standard terms and conditions, with North Ronaldsay Trust in respect of the funding detailed at paragraph 2.5 above.

3. Background

3.1.

The North Ronaldsay Trust was established in 2000 and is a Company Limited by Guarantee with charitable status. The Trust is run by a board of eight Board members local to or originally from the island of North Ronaldsay. The Trust has been involved with the delivery of several complicated island developments in the past which also comprised complicated funding packages and difficult timescales. It is planned that the New Kirk project be progressed during summer 2024 at the same time as the Trust's Community Resource Hub project at Trebb which was awarded a Community Development Fund grant in November 2023.

3.2.

The visitor attraction content element of this project, including photographs, digital displays and screens, improved image presentation, creation of artwork, furnishings and wall hangings, is not part of the project spend in this application. The content element has been granted a further £17,000 from NILPS.

3.3.

It is envisaged that the visitor attraction element of the project will be included in a separate Economic Development Visitor Attraction/Facilities application to be submitted by the end of January 2024 requesting £48,000.

3.4.

The North Ronaldsay Trust has several objects and powers included within its constitution to benefit the North Ronaldsay community including relieving poverty, providing help for the aged, disabled and infirm and community education, particularly to promote opportunities for learning for the benefit of the general public. This includes a remit to establish, maintain, develop and operate a centre or centres providing facilities for business, childcare, community learning, healthy living initiatives, educational and cultural activities, training activities, leisure, pursuits and accommodation for community groups and for public sector agencies which provide services or benefits to the community, and which may include refreshment facilities.

3.5.

During the island community consultation phase to determine the Island Development Plan for North Ronaldsay, the importance of the provision of recreation and social facilities was generally highlighted as important for enhancing the quality of life on the island as well as addressing the lack of housing and available office space. As a result of the consultation the aspiration to renovate the New Kirk was included in the Island Development Plan.

3.6.

The project has a complex funding model that is still to be fully confirmed. The project has £150,000 North Isles Landscape Partnership Scheme (NILPS) support already in place. The NILPS funding requires to be spent and claimed by September 2024 which results in this project being time bound. An application to the Economic Development Visitor Attraction scheme will be considered as a separate application for part of the building renovation as a co-ordinated package of funding.

4. Project Proposal

4.1.

The North Ronaldsay Trust purchased the North Ronaldsay New Kirk in 2001 and wish to renovate the Kirk building to create a multi-functional building including the base to showcase the heritage of the building and the island existing as a visitor attraction which will include a small kitchen and toilet facilities, for events and as a warm hub for islanders and visitors. The New Kirk is a key project identified in the Island Development Plan that the community felt was vital to preserve and enhance to maximise community benefit, increase much needed tourism offer and also build on the rich and unique heritage and history of the island.

4.2.

The building works at the New Kirk, North Ronaldsay, which have been awarded planning permission include the following:

- The installation of replacement rainwater goods.
- The installation of secondary glazing.
- The creation of an access ramp.

- The installation of a waste-water treatment plant.
- The improvement of access.
- The creation of a car park.

4.3.

The project costs have been determined by a quantity surveyor. The proposed funding arrangements, are outlined below (exclusive of VAT as North Ronaldsay Trust is VAT registered):

Eligible Costs.	£.	Funded by.	£.
Renovation of Kirk building and surrounds.	284,953.	North Isles Landscape Partnership Scheme.	150,000.
Quantity Surveyor.	5,000.	(OIC) CECLDF.	45,953.
Project Management.	1,000.	(OIC) Visitor Attraction element.	48,000.
		Community Development Fund 16%.	47,000.
TOTAL.	£290,953.	TOTAL.	£290,953.

4.4.

It should be noted that, apart from NILPS, the (OIC) CECLDF funding and the (OIC) Economic Development Visitor Attraction Scheme are still to be confirmed. The creation of an upgraded visitor attraction is in line with the criteria of the Economic Development Visitor Attraction/Facilities scheme.

4.5.

There is considerable urgency regarding the project timing as the NILPS funding has to be spent by 30 September and claimed by 31 October 2024. The contractor also has to be on site and commencing work by 1 March 2024 in order to make the completion deadline.

4.6.

The North Ronaldsay Trust will continue to maintain and promote the new facilities once the project is complete and promote the project and its funding through its website and social media presence.

5. Project Appraisal

5.1.

The project proposal submitted in the application is accompanied by the island development plan and confirms the intention that the project is for the use of the community and visitors to the island.

5.2.

Letters of support in relation to this project have been received from the following groups and individual:

- North Ronaldsay Community Association.
- North Ronaldsay Dark Skies Representative.
- North Ronaldsay Community Council.
- The Orkney Sheep Foundation.

5.3.

The Community Development Fund and its predecessor, the Community Development Fund for the New Millennium, have supported a wide range of development projects involving sports and recreation and community facilities.

5.4.

With regard to North Ronaldsay Trust's application for support towards the New Kirk project, the following is an assessment and evaluation against each of the approved assessment and evaluation criteria:

5.4.1. Evidence of need

- North Ronaldsay Trust updated the Island Development Plan in 2022. This plan identified a range of projects that the community prioritised. The New Kirk was one of these projects which the island residents felt was vital to preserve and enhance to maximise community benefit, increase much needed tourism offer and build on the rich and unique heritage and history of the island.
- The New Kirk proposal which underwent a community consultation exercise in the form of a survey resulted in 11 responses. It was demonstrated from the returned surveys that the residents were in favour of the plans to enhance the asset and create additional facilities, improve the energy efficiency and preserve island heritage. Increasing the content quality has been on the trust's agenda for many years.

5.4.2. Achievability

- The North Ronaldsay Trust is run by a volunteer committee of eight board members. The board possesses a wide range of skills and experience to deliver this project. The Trust also has a Community Development Manager who will oversee the progress of this project along with a project management team made up of a Project Manager who specialised in community capital projects and a local

Architect and Quantity Surveyor who specialises in heritage community projects. The board works closely with the heritage group which is managing the content element of the project which will be displayed in the Kirk.

- Members of the Trust and committee have been involved in the coordination of previous projects, which received funding from various sources involving complicated funding packages and these project remain in operation to date. Currently, the Trebb Community Hub Project is underway enabling synergies around contractors, logistics and economies of scale. The same contractor is appointed for both the New Kirk and Trebb project with different sub-contractor teams deployed which streamlines the process for the Trust and also builds in additional resilience.

5.4.3. Sustainability

- The project aim is to help sustain and enhance opportunities in North Ronaldsay across various elements of island life; recreation, heritage and social interaction. By gathering these opportunities under one roof the project can benefit from energy efficiencies and overall cost management and facility management. It is envisaged that this project will be self-sustaining via the hire fees charged for usage as well as visitor donations. This project will help support future island developments and create part-time seasonal employment opportunities which is vital for island residents.
- The extensive energy efficiency programme will create a sustainable, warm and affordable asset for the Trust to manage, the savings created by this model will be used to maximise community benefit across the island against priorities set out in the 5-year island development plan and also create much needed reserves for short and longer term maintenance.

5.4.4. Serving the local public and having lasting benefits

- This New Kirk project will enhance a valued community asset for the island as well as enabling the heritage of the building and content to be shared with the community and wider visitors. The upgrade of the energy efficiency measures will allow the Trust to utilise finite resources to benefit the community and create a sustainable asset. In addition to the heritage value of the building, the project also creates an additional unique facility that can be used for activities such as music, arts and crafts and storytelling but also for much needed community events such as weddings and funerals which is rich in island tradition.
- The project will provide enhanced social and well-being opportunities to the whole community as well as visitor facilities. The enhancement of the heritage content offering will create a modernised approach which will future proof the project for generations to come.

5.4.5. Opportunities provided or upgraded

- The project will create a sustainable community asset by increasing the energy efficiency of the building through high specification of insulation. It will enhance the heritage of the building by restoring the stain glass windows. The project will also enhance the building by connecting water, electricity and Wi-Fi so visitors and residents can make use of the facilities such as the kitchen and toilet. A new

septic tank will be installed which meets building and environmental conditions. There will also be enhanced road and car park to allow improved access. The various facets of this project have been designed to be as cost effective and beneficial as possible to all existing and future members of the community of North Ronaldsay.

- The new facilities will assist in raising the profile of North Ronaldsay as a place to live and visit. In addition, the facilities will provide new opportunities for community participation and recreation within the island with an additional community kitchen facility and toilets for visitors and residents to use. Investing in the content and digital displays will offer a richer experience for everyone.

5.4.6. Enriching quality of life

- The project will provide the facilities to enable the community to socialise and encourage participation in activities which will promote health and wellbeing. The facility will be open to as wide a demographic as possible and will help encourage a healthy lifestyle within the community and provide new social opportunities for individuals, families and visitors to North Ronaldsay. It will be a vital all-weather asset that will be an additional focal point for tourist and visitors to learn about the unique heritage and culture of the island but also give the residents a place to go with friends and families to enjoy the island's history.

5.4.7. Value for money

- Project costs have been identified through completion of competitive tender for the various works contained within this project, ensuring best value for money. When the tender phase was completed, the project team and the board met the contractor and agreed a cost saving exercise to ensure the project was deliverable without compromising on quality and community outcomes.

5.4.8. Partnership funding

- North Isles Landscape Partnership has agreed to provide capital grant support of £150,000 (An additional £17,000 for content which sits outwith the capital element).
- An application to the Economic Development Visitor Attraction Fund which requests £48,000 will be submitted by the end of January 2024 with a decision expected in February 2024.
- An application to OIC Crown Estate Community Local Led Development Fund is submitted requesting £45,953. This fund is classed as external funding. A decision is expected in February 2024.
- Volunteer time from members of the community of up to 50 hours has also been identified. This demonstrates strong local support for the project as well as fund raising which is continuing.

6. Links to Council Plan

6.1.

The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the Council Plan strategic priority theme of Strengthening our Communities.

6.2.

The proposals in this report relate directly to Priority C1 Social Care/community led support of the Council Delivery Plan.

7. Links to Local Outcomes Improvement Plan

The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan priorities of Sustainable Development and Local Equality.

8. Financial Implications

8.1.

In December 2022, a further £1,000,000 was allocated to the Community Development Fund, with £100,000 ring fenced for Community Councils.

8.2.

At present there is sufficient budget within the 2022 Community Development Fund tranche to consider this project.

9. Legal Aspects

9.1.

Subject to section 9.4, there are no legal constraints to the recommendations in this report being implemented and the relevant powers are contained in section 20 of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003.

9.2.

If grant assistance is to be provided by the Council, a legally-binding agreement will require to be entered into between the Council and the recipient setting out the terms on which the funding is being provided.

9.3.

In accordance with the Community Development Fund Guidance, if grant assistance is to be provided by the Council and the total project cost exceeds £10,000, then the Community Development Fund Sub-committee will determine whether appropriate security should be taken over any appropriate heritable property improved as a result of the project.

9.4.

Any financial assistance provided by the Council will need to be assessed to determine if the financial assistance proposed meets the definition of a subsidy under section 2 of the Subsidy Control Act 2022 (the 2022 Act). If it is determined that the financial assistance is a subsidy, then it will need to be provided in a manner compliant with the provisions of the 2022 Act.

10. Contact Officers

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