



FRIENDS OF SEAFIELD HOUSE

MINUTES of the SEVENTH MEETING

Friends of Seafield House Committee

THURSDAY 16 MAY 2013, 10.00 am

9 Wellpark, ALLOWAY KA7 4QD

PRESENT

Rob Close (RC), Chair

Lianne Hackett (LH), Secretary

Rosemary Paterson (RP), Seafield Co-ordinator/Committee Member

Fiona Walker (FW), Vice Chair/Committee Member

Brian Williamson (BW), Co-opted Member

and

Patrick Lorimer (PL), Architectural Advisor

APOLOGIES

Kirsty Menzies (KM), Committee Member (Website & Social Media)

Ann Mott (AM), Hon Secretary and Founding Friends Liaison

FORMALITIES

1.0 Welcome

1.1 The meeting was opened with a welcome from the chair, and thanks to BW for hosting the meeting

1.2 Apologies were noted as above.

2.0 Date of Next Meeting

2.1 This was agreed as Thursday 13 June 2013, at 10.00 am. The venue was agreed as Loudoun Hall, Boat Vennel, Ayr.

3.0 Minutes of Last Meeting

3.1 The minutes of the previous meeting, 11 April 2013, were approved.

4.0 Matters Arising Therefrom

4.1 There were no matters arising.

ADMINISTRATION

5.0 Financial Report [6.0]

5.1 Present balance in the bank is £786.00. It was noted that there are still monies owed to PL and BW.

5.2 LH to prepare an on-line membership form.

5.3 In view of recent events, it was agreed that the meeting should move directly to discuss the NHS Viability Assessment.

SEAFIELD HOUSE

6.0 NHS Viability Assessment [7.0]

6.1 The Friends had been invited - at short notice - to a meeting with members of the Viability Assessment Team. This had taken place yesterday, 15 May 2013, at Ailsa Hospital. LH, PL, BW and FW had been able to attend. The invitation was issued to FoSH's Architectural Adviser, Patrick Lorimer. PL circulated the invitation to the FoSH Committee; Marcus Binney, President of SAVE Britain's Heritage with whom FoSH is working closely on its campaign to SAVE Seafield House; Andrew Arrol, Patron FoSH and conservation adviser; and FoSH conservation engineering adviser Charles Blackett Ord.

6.2 The NHS had been represented by Iain Gairns [IG] (NHS), John Stevens [JS] (Fairhurst), David Tough [DT] and Russell Rutherford [RR] (both Ryden). The meeting was reported as having been amicable on all sides.

6.3 Copies of the NHS's Viability Group consultants' reports were made available to FoSH by email in advance of the meeting.

6.4 The NHS had been asked by South Ayrshire Council [SAC] to widen the remit of the study, and had been challenged by SAC to look at wider options than had previously been considered. It was also noted that SAC has suggested that the present blanket Tree Preservation Order could be reviewed in looking at all options to market Seafield House.

6.5 JS confirmed that the cost of stabilisation of Seafield House is in the order of £500,000. It was also his opinion that although he gives the present condition of the building as fair, without essential works as set out in the report being undertaken, it would survive only one more winter.

6.6 JS noted that more of the interiors survive than had been suspected.

6.7 When asked, IG stated that the NHS's current position is to obtain as much as possible for Seafield House, as cleanly as possible - i.e. the NHS is looking for an unconditional sale.

6.8 PL set out FoSH's concern that IG planned not to commission an options appraisal. PL further said that the Viability Group had not in any way completed its task inasmuch as it had not tested the viability of any future use etc. PL said that FoSH agrees that a further, more detailed options appraisal study is required, though IG stressed that the NHS would not be willing to fund this. It was agreed that FoSH would approach SAVE Britain's Heritage, Strathclyde Building Preservation Trust and others to investigate potential funding sources.

6.9 It was agreed that a further meeting to include those who could not attend because of the short notice would be of benefit to all sides. JS confirmed his willingness to meet with all FoSH professional and technical advisers.

6.10 The NHS must demonstrate that the building has been effectively marketed before being able to make any further application for Listed Building Consent [LBC] to demolish. IG indicated that such an LBC application was not currently planned. However, a more intensive campaign to market the building will be pursued by Ryden, including through a Developers' Open Day.

6.11 IG invited FoSH to contribute to the marketing campaign, including the Developers' Day, by way of historical input. PL & BW agreed. LH noted RC's record as an architectural writer & historian of note & mentioned the publication on Seafield House that RC & BW are writing for FoSH. PL noted FoSH's concern that a longer timetable than is proposed is required to market such a sensitive, important and unique building. FoSH members present expressed FoSH's willingness to help the NHS with marketing & raising awareness of Seafield House.

6.12 FW & PL noted FoSH's concern that the repair works to stabilise the building would not be undertaken in advance of this next marketing phase. IG reiterated that the NHS was unable to accept SAVE Britain's Heritage's offer of a free gutter clean, but was unable to say why.

6.13 It was felt by this meeting that efforts should be made to retrieve some of the surviving interiors, e.g. the bust, the fireplace, to secure their continued existence.

6.14 It was also agreed that FoSH should suggest to NHS, and SAC, the benefits of including Nightingale House, the former Seafield Stables, with Seafield. These buildings are all but empty, and would add an attractive, more easily resolved, element to the package, and any profits from its development would be used to help offset any shortfalls incurred at Seafield.

6.15 An email had been received from IG, expressing thanks and a belief that the meeting had been positive. It was remitted to LH to reply in kind, expressing our wish to work with them, as noted above, and to ask that consideration be given to looking at Nightingale House as part of the same package.

7.0 Information Board [9.0]

7.1 It was reported that permission had been obtained from NHS, and that the information board had now been erected on the wall to the right of the main entrance to Seafield.

7.2 BW had emailed his thanks to Iain Gairns.

7.3 The board had been produced and installed free of charge by Owen Kerr Signs. It was agreed that the chairman write thanking them. LH to action.

CAMPAIGN PROMOTION

8.0 Future Exhibitions [12.0]

8.1 LH had prepared a discussion paper. It was agreed that consideration of this be delayed to the next meeting.

EPHEMERA and INFORMATION

9.0 Ephemera [14.0]

9.1 LH had prepared a discussion paper. It was agreed that consideration of this be delayed to the next meeting.

10.0 Arrol Cup [FoSH5, 21.0]

10.1 RC reported that he had now seen, held and photographed the Arrol Cup owned by Prestwick St Nicholas Golf Club. It was gifted in 1893, and is for competition by members of clubs in the West of Scotland. It is a silver vase, made by Sorley, silversmith, Glasgow, which stands about 15 inches high, with a chased image of a golfer in front of the club house on one side, and the lengthy inscription on the other. It stands on a pedestal, gifted by Lady Arrol in 1912

9.3 Photographs will be circulated in due course.

The meeting closed at 11.45 a.m.

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