

Minutes of the Pier subgroup and representative of The Craffhub

The Pier Premises Saturday 24th January @ 10.15am

Present: Shelagh Grieve, Kayleigh Tipper, Alison Mainland, Carolyne Tunbridge (subgroup)
Murray Stewart (Craffhub)

Minutes: Gill Wigley (Project Manager)

Prior to the meeting (on the day before) Murray had requested a 'neutral' representative also be present, but this was declined.

Murray had also requested that the meeting be recorded. Gill had replied by email that Murray could bring this request to the meeting on Saturday, but it was unlikely that this would be agreed to. Murray did not bring any recording devices to the meeting and did not make this request of the Subgroup

1. A tour of the building, including the garage and the 'old shop' was undertaken by Shelagh, Kayleigh, Alison, Carolyne and Gill.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

Gill explained that they had been circulated and sent to the Craffhub directors for comment. Prior to approval of the minutes, Murray challenged the wording of the letter issued to the Craffhub on 24.10.2020, stating that in the opinion of the Craffhub this was not clear and was incorrect.

Murray questioned how the Board could approve the Craffhub being out to tender.

Kayleigh explained that the plans and the letter have now been superseded. The letter was not marked as an item for discussion on the agenda, but Kayleigh agreed the wording could have been improved.

Murray highlighted the Articles of Association section 6 regarding business competition. The copy of this article had been circulated to the Subgroup and a copy also given to Murray. Murray questioned what action the Trust had taken regarding any adverse effect and what impact the project will have on their business.

Murray felt that the Board were not acting within the remit of the Articles of Association regarding this. The subgroup said that with the meetings such as today, then feedback was being sought. The Subgroup pointed out that a Community Mandate had been undertaken, and that the results had indicated that there was interest in the café but that this did not necessarily have to be provided by the Craffhub. Gill brought Murrays attention to the past sentence of the paragraph which states 'The Trust acting reasonably reserves the right to be the sole judge of whether any action is necessary regarding any concerns.

A discussion took place regarding 'subsidiaries ' to the Craffhub., and Murray discussed at length the role of CIC's. Kayleigh clarified that REWDT was not a PLC and neither were the subsidiaries. Murray challenged the REWDT accounts stating that no subsidies had been identified in the accounts. Kayleigh stated that the accounts were fully audited and no discrepancies in accounting procedures had been identified.

A discussion took place regarding the bills REWDT had paid, for the electricity and oil and that the £50.00 per month paid by the Craffhub did not cover this. They consider this to be a subsidy. Murray disputed this fact and stated they were never made aware of the actual costs. Gill highlighted that given the heaters were on most of the time, it would be reasonable to assume that the heating bills would be far higher. KT4 comment was discussed and Murray wanted it to be noted the length of time that the Craffhub had been providing refreshments, in some form or another.

The minutes of the meeting were then approved by Carolyne and seconded by kayleigh.

Kayleigh then asked about the Craffhub and their vision for the future.

Murray stated that the Craffhub were happy with 'the way things are'. Currently they are in the process of gathering feedback forms, and although only in the initial stages of this, it had been going well. Visitors are surprised that they are there providing information on tourism. The Craffhub enjoy offering their services. The feedback will be an ongoing exercise. Murray and Shelagh produced a 'footfall' document which highlighted the number of attendees and folk through the door.

Murray commented that there had been 34 community events last year, ranging from local groups, REWDT meetings, housing meetings, NILPS open days, RNLI events and after clarification requested by Alison, walks for Scotland. There are 5 weekly sessions held, ad hoc book club meetings (though these are held also at the Taversoe) and the occasional meet and greet. The Craffhub identify that for them there has always been something'.

Long term they would like a permanent workshop space like the facilities at number 25 in Kirkwall. Murray stated the original idea was to offer a small comfort area for visitors and locals, but they need workshop space and an area for spinning wheels sewing machines

All the members of the subgroup agreed that this too was their 'vision' for this project and everyone noted that joint working going forward would be essential.

Murray stated that 64% of the Craffhub revenue relied in the café and without this the Craffhub would fold. They have been serving refreshments since April 2018.

The kitchen area was discussed and Murray stated that having a smaller kitchen would not be a problem, and their the original intention was not to take all 100% of the current available kitchen space.

Gill asked how were the Craffhub raising awareness of courses/ workshops which they are keen to expand?

Murray confirmed that an Open Day in about 3 weeks' time.

Alison stressed that the Craffhub only had a lease until March 31st 2020 and this meeting was to look at ways for everyone to move forward.

Gill confirmed that £10.00 per hour had been offered by REWDT board to cover community activities.

It was then mentioned that if they were able to return to their previous location then staff would lose their jobs.

Kayleigh and Alison reiterated the fact that now the building belonged to REWDT and in order to make this into a new community space there would have to be compromises. Physically there is a lot of work to undertake in the building and with a sitting tenant this will not be possible. However a workable solution may be able to be found.

Alison suggested that workshops could be held at the School. This has been done previously. Gill highlighted that grant applications could be put in for possible travel costs, and as now grant applications can be applied for to cover workshop costs.

Murray stressed that the Craffhub were willing to work with all other organisations. He sees the future of the Craffhub in expanding the café area, and long term the Craffhub to become self-sufficient; and to that aim that the Craffhub would be happy to pay a commercial rent for their space but here would need to be flexibility surrounding this.

The subgroup directors shared their views on the new community space, with an emphasis on it being a 'place for all', and all community groups

The subgroup explained that this will take time and inevitably there will be an impact on the Craffhub. Gill asked for clarification on recruitment procedures for Craffhub vacancies (Murray to respond).

It was suggested that to facilitate any renovation work being undertaken in the Pier premises, and to ensure the Craffhub still have a shop and the ability to possibly carry out offering refreshments on a streamlined basis, the Old Shop could be offered as a 'temporary home', on a longer lease.

Murray asked for clarification on the length of lease, Gill responded that this cannot be confirmed but at least 12 months if not 2 years.

As REWDT have a blank building canvass from 1.4.2020, then the planning work can begin.

The old shop is recognised as not being ideal, but as a solution going forward and the intention has always been to have a permanent home for the Craffhub as indicated in the Community Mandate.

A list was drawn up of alterations that would have to be made in order for the Craffhub to move.

These were:

Heating, Secondary Glazing, removal of a partition enabling a small kitchen area to be built, the toilet to be fixed (already on previous snagging list) lock on new door, 2 exits to be checked, and the gutters to be cleared. Painting may be required. Murray asked about the roof space above the room as Shelagh had noticed a roofing hatch. Gill advised on the grounds of Health and Safety that this was not currently recommended..

Gill asked if the Craffhub would wish an 'all inclusive' rental agreement including electric, or if they would want their own electricity meter.

Murray highlighted that there could be issues with a combined meter, and it may be beneficial that the Craffhub were responsible for their own costs . Murray will confirm. The phone line was also discussed, this is seen as a priority as most customer pay by card. There are currently 2 phone numbers allocated to the shop, and Shelagh agreed with Gill to test these if the rental was to go ahead.

Discussions had taken place previously that morning regarding the garage, and it was suggested that all community groups be invited to attend a garage clearing day in March. The area outside the shop was also discussed and the Subgroup agreed that if required the area could be 'flattened' and a new concrete base installed. This could be used as a seating area for locals and visitors alike. Murray requested that a shed be put there, Alison said that all options would be considered.

The timescale was noted, and it was agreed by the Subgroup that the proposal to relocate the Craffhub will be discussed at the Strategy Meeting on Saturday 1st February as full Board approval would be required.

Gill explained that a budget would need to be set for the alterations, and to bear in mind that no funds had been allocated for any pier development. This could be discussed at the next Budget meeting on Saturday 22nd. February.

The Action Plan going forward was confirmed as:

1. Business as usual for the Craffhub until March 31st, 2020 only.
2. Murray to approach the Directors of the Craffhub with the proposals for the old shop, and to seek feedback
3. Murray to inform Gill by the end of the week regarding their decision
4. Gill to feedback by Friday morning decision of Craffhub so they can discuss on Saturday morning.

The meeting closed at 13.15pm.