

The Craithub response following meeting of the REWDT sub-group for the Pier premises that took place on Saturday 25th January 2020.

We understand that from 1st April The Craithub will not have their current lease renewed and instead will have an option of a new lease for the old shop area at the Pier. The intention is to continue trading in retail of arts and crafts, provision of workshops and to serve refreshments. This relocation to a much smaller premises will be a temporary measure whilst extensive refurbishment takes place in the rest of The Pier Premises. The current timescale is unknown but expected to be between 12 and 24 months.

We hope that a project plan with critical path, milestones and dependencies will be issued as this would be beneficial to all parties.

In the intervening 8 weeks, REWDT will support The Craithub to make this move by undertaking necessary repairs, decoration, ensuring adequate heating and installing a small kitchen/preparation area with necessary equipment required to operate in a vastly reduced area. Welfare facilities i.e. the toilet and hand wash basin must be renovated fit for use by staff and customers and disability access arranged to both the old shop area and the toilet facilities.

The external area outside of the old shop area will also be tidied up and additional covered external seating will be provided¹ asap to accommodate the increase in numbers over the summer season.

All fixtures and fittings purchased and installed by REWDT will remain the property of REWDT and The Craithub will rent accordingly.

A separate meter is preferred for utility bills – but this could be phased in later if timescales are prohibitive. BT and card machine would need to be set up and operational on day one.

It is understood that REWDT may need to apply for a change of use for the old shop area and this needs to be done as quickly as possible through OIC planning.

The reconfigured kitchen/prep area will also need signing off by environmental health.

The Craithub will need some storage and a small office space and understand that this may be provided by an external temporary structure. If this is not in place for 31 March The Craithub request the use of some of the snug area or another suitable area until another arrangement can be made. There will not be sufficient space to store workshop materials or place a small office in the old shop area along with crafts, workshops and refreshments.

We seek agreement that if the intended work on the old shop area is not completed in time for us to move and be operational by 31 March 2020 that we will have an extension of our lease in the areas we currently use until such a time we can move in the old shop and operate effectively.

In principle The Craithub Directors accept the suggestion to move to the old shop area as a workable temporary solution to allow REWDT to continue with their plans for refurbishment of the whole building while allowing The Craithub to continue trading in some capacity, providing the above concerns are addressed.

¹ Heating and lighting in this area to also be considered

The Craffhub Key facts - Financial year 01 Feb 2019 to 31 Jan 2020²

We have employed **8** part time staff during the last year and paid out over **£22,000** in salaries

We have a regular band of volunteers who have clocked up a total of 839 volunteer hours between them³

We have served approx. **5026** people in the cafe

The shop, workshops and Café combined have taken £39350⁴ (an increase of 30% from the previous accounting year) against expenditure of £36516 (an increase in raw materials and consumables and a 73% increase in salaries) Our trading patterns reflect seasonal tourist variations with our busiest time between Easter and the end of September and quieter off-season period between October and March

We have catered for groups large and small and have held 31 different events including workshops, and community events.

It should be noted

The proposed plans will have a significant effect on our ability to continue the growth that we have worked extremely hard to achieve in order to become self-sustaining. Our ability to earn the same or increased revenue is likely to decrease and therefore our ability to provide employment for island residents at the same level will also reduce.

The facilities and event capability for customers and visitors will also be significantly compromised during this transitional period.

Background context to current proposed plans

In July / Aug 2019 Speculative plans and an options appraisal document were presented by external consultants Duncan Bryden & Steve Westbrook to the REWDT Board to examine preferred uses and community hub development potential should the Pier Restaurant be acquired by REWDT.

Transfer of ownership took place on 6th January 2020

The options appraisal stated that a subsequent more detailed feasibility study and business plan would examine the preferred option in more detail.

To our knowledge this hasn't happened yet and we are not sure whether current decisions have been based on the initial speculative drawings and options appraisals or some other criteria such as a detailed feasibility study and business plan that includes a funding appraisal and would put figures on the chosen preferences but as yet has not been put to the community for consultation.

² Actual figures compiled to date

³ We enable flexible working allowing people to work hours that suit them. Residents who would find it difficult through circumstances to apply for standardised working hours or commit to a standard contract

We have offered employment and voluntary opportunities to

- Residents with health problems
- Residents that are registered carers for people in their home
- Residents with family commitments
- People who are retired that still want to feel useful and part of the community
- People who live alone that enjoy the opportunity to come out and meet people in a safe environment
- We have given teenagers from the age of 14 upwards valuable work experience during the holidays and at weekends in the busy season

⁴ Accounts for year end 31 Jan 2020 still to be verified

Within the options appraisal it states in section 3.2 The Crafhub

A permanent home for the Crafhub was overwhelmingly supported by the community mandate. The Crafhub CIC is a social enterprise run as a Community Interest Company Limited by guarantee. The sub-lease of the property from REWDT began in April 2018.

The Crafhub is staffed by paid employees and volunteers. Activities include café, craft sales craft workshops.

Following the issue of the initial documents a short paper (11 July 2019) was submitted to REWDT directors that expressed some concerns at this early stage and included

The proposed layouts presented significant issues for The Crafhub on areas we rent. There is a proposal to move the kitchen and there was no space allocated to The Crafhub to replace the garage area which we need for storage and to provide and grow our workshops.

The Crafhub had a long discussion with the consultants at the time and raised concerns that if any of these proposals go ahead, arrangements must be considered to allow The Crafhub to carry on with their business as they do now.

Highlighting the need for a well thought out phased development that does not upset the already fragile economy, does not lose jobs or lose facilities and service provision at The Pier which we have worked very hard to resurrect, maintain and continue to improve.

It was also stated that as The Crafhub and its employees (as the only occupants of the premises) would be directly affected by any future plans it is hoped that we would be fully included in any future discussions relating to the premises we rent and that we are kept fully informed of progress

The Crafhub did not receive a response to these early concerns and the proposed plans were only revealed in any detail on Saturday 25th January 2020.

The impact of what is now planned should not be underestimated, not only in respect of The Crafhub and our community but the effect on the island as a whole, in particular with regard to visitors and groups coming to our islands during the coming season.

Christina Cox

On behalf of The Crafhub Community Interest Company