The Derry Walls Management Group: Implementation Group Meeting

18 December 2019

Venue: CCI Derry/Londonderry

Attendees: 
- Bronagh Ramsden (Chair – HED)
- Claire Cromie (Tourism NI)
- Manus Deery (HED–Advice & Regulation)
- Odhran Dunne (Visit Derry)
- Margaret Edwards (DCSDC– Heritage)
- Maura Fitzpatrick (DCSDC-Regeneration)
- Aisling Gallagher (CCI)
- Maybelline Gormley (HED State Care)
- Martin Graham (Tourism NI)
- Colin Greer (DfC-NWDO)
- Jonny McNee (DCSDC – Planning)
- Tony Monaghan (DCSDC– Regeneration)
- Edward Montgomery (HIS)
- Paul Rafferty (DCSDC – Licensing)
- Jim Roddy (CCI)
- Paul Mitchell (HED- minutes)

Apologies: 
- John Chittick (DOJ)
- Roisin Doherty (DCSDC – Museums)
- Jennifer O’Donnell (DCSDC – Tourism)

The meeting began at 10:40.

1.0 Introductions and apologies.

BR welcomed all to the meeting – especially AG, the new Derry Walls manager - and apologies were noted. BR informed the group that the Friends of Derry Walls were no longer represented on the implementation group but would continue to be represented on the Strategic group and would thus receive the Implementation Group’s minutes. BR thanked the Friends for their participation in the Implementation Group.

BR amended the running order of the meeting to accommodate those members who needed to leave early.

1.2 Matters Arising

MGo said that whilst the previous meeting agreed that there should be an additional regulatory sign placed at the Craft Village, she felt that a sign there might lead to too much signage clutter. There was a discussion about possible alternative sites, e.g. Hangmans’s Bastion or Castle Gate. MG queried as to whether the currently empty pedestal at Castle Gate could be used, but TM confirmed DCSDC intended to place a sign there. After discussion the meeting agreed to place the new sign at Castle Gate.
**Action: MGo to arrange new sign/pedestal at Castle Gate.**

MGo raised the issue the slippery pedestrian walkway under Castle Gate. CG said that DfI was aware of the issue and that he had liaised with Robert McCartney (DfI – Roads).

There was a discussion on the preferred options (e.g. sandblasting, installing a handrail or changing the surface) but the meeting would wait on the formal communication from DfI as to the way forward.

MG raised the issues of flooding at New Gate.

**Action: AG said she would write to Robert McCartney (DfI Roads) to see what the issue was and what remedial action was being taken.**

### 2.0 Operational Issues

#### 2.1 Visitor and tourism update

OD gave an update on and shared plans for the new 7 day a week visitor centre to be based in Waterloo Place. He said that the new centre would be ready on 31/03/20 with an official unveiling in May 2020. He said he envisaged an up to 20% increase in footfall on the Walls abutting Waterloo Place.

There was a brief discussion on the augmented reality app (“Walls Alive AR”) and CC said it was already in existence as a prototype.

MGr shared Tourism NI’s “Embrace a Giant Spirit: Experience Development Framework”, emphasising the “Giant Spirit” as Tourism NI’s experience brand. MGr highlighted ‘Unlocking the Walled City’ as one of the new 23 tour guide led visitor experiences that were to rolled out in January 2020, further detail of which are available here: [https://www.embraceagiantspirit.com/experiences/](https://www.embraceagiantspirit.com/experiences/)

CC then gave a presentation on the results of the footfall counters that had been installed at various access points around the Walls in September 2019. These statistics fed into an online portal and could be analysed by counter location, date, time etc. These sensors not only counted footfall, but could also be used to pinpoint busiest days and times, visitor flow and where the popular access points are, information which could be used to predict the busiest times of the year and in turn pinpoint where resources needed to be concentrated for wear and tear.

CC has provided the login details for the online dashboard to HED and has requested feedback from the group on the information from the counters.

#### 2.2 Vegetation management

JR reported that CCI Wardens were on top of vegetation on the carriageway and had developed a removal cycle – February, late Spring/early summer, late summer.
However he raised the wider issue of clearing vegetation on the Walls/ Gates etc. being in part impeded by requiring access to properties.

**Action:** MGo to arrange meeting with JR and SMcM to discuss wider issue of vegetation management.

**Action:** MD said he had yet to send his email about vegetation management but would do so before the above mentioned meeting.

### 2.3 Conservation update

MGo said the work on the plinth was competed, and that there were ongoing repairs to some coping stones and removal of graffiti.

### 2.4 Lighting update

There was a wide ranging discussion on the issue of lights pursuant to both the vandalism on the western perspective and the fact that some lights appeared not to be working.

TM said that before seeking funding to repair / replace the vandalised lights some sort of mitigation procedure needed to be in place to ensure that it will not happen again. MD reported that he had been unable to meet with the relevant DCSDC maintenance manager who was absent on sick leave and said he felt that the steps at Richmond Street/ east walls were also very dark.

**Action:** TM to meet with the relevant consultant engineer to see what can be repaired or replaced.

JR said that the issue of lights on and around the Walls needed to be addressed in a holistic sense with possibly a small focus group under the auspices of CCI compiling an audit of who owned what lights and dealing with any defective lighting issues as they arose. MD said that DfI were responsible for lighting for safety and security, whereas HED was responsible for display lights.

**Action:** MD to convene meeting between HED, DfI, CCI and DCSDC to address lighting issues around Walls.

**Action:** AG to progress audit of lighting around the Walls.

### 2.5 Cannon update

TM reported that the condition report on the cannons would be circulated on 19 December 2019. TM said that the DCSDC maintenance team had already strengthened the carriages of 4 cannons in response to the report.

MF said that the report – which surveyed each cannon and detailed what repair was required for each – would hopefully be a catalyst for sourcing funding from partners.

There was a discussion about the maintaining the non-historic carriages and whether paint should be stripped or replaced with fresh paint or lacquer or varnish.
Action: TM to ask the report author the best process to adopt regarding treating the carriages.

2.6 Planning update

JMcN said that the DCSDC Local Development Plan had been finalised and he shared a summary with group members.

JMcN presented the planning update and discussion ensued, in particular, on the plans for the gate at Bishop Street Car Park and the 3 storey commercial building next to the Verbal Arts Centre.

Action: MG to consult with HED planning team re: the commercial building and draft a formal response to the planning application.

2.7 Derry Walls – Trading Places.

PR gave a presentation on the options for permitting imbiss stalls on the walls. He said that under the Street Trading Act there were 3 types of trading licences (stationary, mobile and temporary), but that stationary licences could only be issued for designated streets, which the Walls currently were not. The Walls did not need designation for the issue of mobile licences. PR said that if the group wished he would propose the Walls be made a designated street and it could be made clear that DCSDC would only issue a licence with the permission of HED.

Discussion ensued on the practicalities of licences and the fees charged and possible income. BR said that the group would discuss further and be in touch.

Action: PR to summarise trading options in an email and send around the group.

3.0 Minutes of previous meeting / Action Log

The meeting discussed the action log and discussed the following issues that had not been dealt with in the meeting

- scheduling of water bastion: MG said she had met with the relevant scheduling archaeologist and reported that water bastion was on the list for consideration for scheduling.
- dog leg: the meeting noted the following written update from JC: “the gate allowing pedestrian access along Bishop Street through the dog leg now opens from 6am to 7pm on a weekly basis. We are keeping this under review. As things stand plans to redesign the dog leg structure are on hold.”
- terms of reference for the Access Audit.
  Action: Margaret Edwards (DCSC – Heritage) to share.
- social media guidelines: MD said he had drafted such guidelines.
  Action: MD to circulate to the group.
• Audit of furniture on the Walls.
  Action: AG to share
• Management plan. MD said he made some minor amendments to the plan and included a wording about members of the management group being trained in conservation principles commensurate with their levels of responsibility. BR said she would consider the wording prior to its publication.
  Action: MD to circulate management plan.

The meeting approved the minutes of the previous meeting.

There being no other business the meeting concluded at 1pm.