The Derry Walls Management Group: Implementation Group

27 September 2019

Venue: CCI Derry/Londonderry

Attendees:  Apologies:
Bronagh Ramsden (Chair – HED)  John Chittick (DOJ)
Manus Deery (HED – Advice and Regulation)  Roisin Doherty (DCSDC – Museums)
Margaret Edwards (DCSDC – Heritage)  Odhran Dunne (Visit Derry)
Maura Fitzpatrick (DCSDC-Regeneration)  Aeidin McCarter (DCSDC – Events)
Maybelline Gormley (HED State Care)  Jonny McNee (DCSDC – Planning)
Martin Graham (Tourism NI)  
Colin Greer (DfC-NWDO)  
Mark Lusby (FODW)  
Tony Monaghan (DCSDC – Regeneration)  
Edward Montgomery (HIS)  
Jim Roddy (CCI)  
Paul Mitchell (HED- minutes)  

The meeting began at 10:45

1.0 Introductions and apologies

BR welcomed all to the meeting and apologies were noted.

2.0 Operational issues

2.1 Management Plan updates

MD said there some minor changes to make to the management plan, which he would then circulate amongst the group and arrange to have it placed on the DfC website.

Action: MD to amend, circulate and place on website accordingly.

2.2 Regulatory signage update.

There was a discussion on the recently installed sign opposite the Playhouse and it was agreed that in order to be consistent with other signs, it should be placed on a pedestal rather than the wall. The same approach will be taken with the additional sign to be erected near the Craft village.

Action: MGo to arrange signs to be placed on pedestals.

2.3 Vegetation report

There was a discussion on vegetation on the carriageway and vegetation on the Walls.
JR said that now the CCI wardens had been trained in vegetation management the priority was to remove vegetation from the carriageway. Additional discussions with HED curatorial staff are needed to set agreed parameters before wardens undertake vegetation removal on the faces of the walls. Issues with regards to access to private property were discussed.

**Action:** JR to develop work plan to deal with vegetation on carriageway. JR to set up meeting with HED Curatorial staff to agree parameters for vegetation removal on face of Walls.

MD said he had not, as of yet, drafted his email regarding vegetation management, but would do so presently.

**Action:** MD to complete summary email regarding vegetation management.

### 2.4 Conservation Update

MGo said that Stefanie McMullen and Tommy Campbell were completing their condition report on the Walls and that there would be a yearly cycle of condition inspections on the Walls.

There was a discussion on water ingress and drainage issues – especially at New Gate - and MGo asked if the DfI Roads were planning a drainage survey.

**Action:** JR to write to Robert McCartney (DfI) about drainage issues.

MGo said restoration work had been completed at the plinth. MGo said that the contractor was permitted to remove graffiti from the plinth but not from the historic fabric of the Walls. TM said he would reiterate this situation to the contractor.

**Action:** TM to ensure contractor doesn’t attempt to remove graffiti on the Walls themselves. MGo to arrange for graffiti removal at the plinth.

The meeting noted that a swarm of mason bees, which had taken residence at a café over the summer, had now left. The advice from Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute was that they were largely harmless and were a migratory species.

### 2.5 Lighting update

MD gave a brief background update to the Western Perspective lighting project and informed the meeting that a stretch of lights between Butcher Gate and Royal Bastion had been vandalised shortly after they were turned on.

There as a discussion on cost of and possible repair/replacement; whether the other lights in perspective could be turned on; whether CCTV could be installed; and potential threats to staff installing / repairing lights. It was decided to turn remaining
lights on but not to highlight this with a press release. MD said he would convene a meeting with TM, ME and Paul Higgins (DCSDC maintenance manager) and to discuss the next steps.

**Action: MD to convene said meeting and report back.**

### 2.6 Cannon update

MF said that the draft conservation report on the cannons had been submitted and that restoration would cost c£160,000. MF said that animation and booklets were being prepared in the Tower Museum to help raise awareness of the restoration.

TM said he would circulate the report when finalised but that four of the cannons’ carriages needed metal bars to strengthen them at the cost of c£1000. TM raised the issue of wider restoration costs and whether the group could respond collectively to meet the funding requirements.

JR asked if the council could paint the non-historic wooden carriages.

**Action: TM to circulate report, once finalised, and report on the painting of non-historic carriages.**

### 2.7 Planning update

The meeting noted the planning updates provided by Jonny McNee – works to Foyle Street bus station (ref: LA11/2018/0804/F); and a retail unit in the Richmond Centre (LA11/2019/0408/F); a proposed 3 storey commercial building on lands adjacent and to the east of the Verbal Arts Centre (LA11/2019/0434/F); a fit out of commercial premises at Waterloo Place (LA11/2019/06787/F); and a family justice centre in Bishop Street (LA11/2019/0764/F - LA11/2019/0767/DCA).

CG updated on a Council-led and DfC funded project to improve the environs of Bishop Street Car Park. This project includes the removal of a portion of the wall facing on to Bishop Street and Stable Lane, softening of the wall boundaries to the Masonic Hall and St Augustine’s Church Hall, a ramped pedestrian access route from the Car Park to Palace Street and works to improve the gated access between the Car Park and Grand Parade. A discussion followed on the proposed improvements to the gated access.

### 2.8 Scheduling at Water bastion

MG said that she had spoken to the relevant archaeologist (Liam McQuillan) and that no scheduling was currently being undertaken, but he had agreed to look at Water Bastion for future scheduling if sufficient evidence was provided.

**Action: MG to source relevant information regarding water bastion and send on to Liam McQuillan.**
2.9 Dog’s leg – DOJ landscape options

BR read out the following update from John Chittick:

- The DoJ are committed to removing the block to pedestrians caused by the dog leg structure at Bishop Street/Bishop Gate.
- Removing access control into the Fountain Estate at this location is not an option, we have therefore decided to replace the dog leg with a new entrance that allows pedestrians unfettered access along that side of Bishop Street and through Bishop Gate, whilst replicating as closely as possible the current configuration of the dog leg.
- CPD are currently working on a single design option and I can share that with you when it is ready. It will draw upon 3 designs produced earlier this year.
- We have just written to MLAs in the area advising them of our intentions, this will be followed by a letter to residents.
- In the meantime in the interests of pedestrian safety we will soon reopen the gate through the dog leg (known as the events gate) to allow for pedestrian access along Bishop Street.

The group discussed this update and agreed it would like to see both a copy of the design option and the letter sent to the MLA.

**Action:** JR to write to John Chittick requesting a copy of the design option and letter.

2.10 Visitor and tourism updates

MGo said that a new Derry Walls guidecard was currently being finalised.

MGr said that a recent visitor attitude survey reflected well on the city and that visitor spend was up 20-25%. He also highlighted Tourism NI spend on the ‘Taste the Island’, ‘Slow Food’ and Halloween festivals.

2.11 Digital Visitor Pass

ML arrived at the meeting at 12:23.

There was a wide ranging discussion about enhancing the visitor experience on the Walls – encompassing the digital visitor pass, augmented reality experience, the recently installed footfall sensors, tourist cluster points, tourist dwell time, the Living History displays, - and how to get tourists to not just tour the Walls, but to engage with wider history and go into the museums, the craft village, churches etc.

**Action:** MGr said he would share the visitor attitude survey (mentioned at point 2.10).
2.12 HED application form

MG proposed setting this matter aside for the strategy group due to proposed new Walls management procedures.

**Action:** MD to update the Management Plan with new Walls management procedures.

ML queried if rights of ways to the Walls were written down detailing access to the Walls (BR said that they most likely weren’t) and said he had been delayed getting to the meeting due to an event. ML said that communication within the Management Group about proposed events was poor. PM said that information about proposed events was circulated to a sub group of the management group as set out in Management Plan.

2.13 Access Audit

ME said she and MGo had met to discuss the access audit and the Audit was now with the heritage subgroup of DCSDC and she would share the terms of reference of work to be done once approved.

**Action:** ME to share terms of reference of work for to be carried out once approved.

2.14 Social Media principles / guidelines

MD said he would progress further the drafting of social media guidelines further with ME.

**Action:** MD to circulate guidelines once drafted.

The meeting noted the recently broadcast RTE programme ‘Nationwide’ which featured the Walls and wider city.

3.0 Minutes of previous meeting (06/06/19)

At 2.2.1 of the previous minutes ML criticised the design and location of the signs and took issue with the wording on the still draft minutes which said that the “meeting agreed ... for additional signs”. ML pointed out that he did not agree with the signs and asked the minutes be amended to record his dissatisfaction. MGo pointed out that the use of the word “agreed” in the previous minutes was accurate as the Management Group was a collegiate body; nothing had been imposed as a fait accompli; and there had been, over a period of many months, significant discussion on the signs which had been redesigned to reflect members’ concerns.
BR agreed to amend the minutes to record ML’s dissent.

Action: PM to amend the minutes accordingly.

At point 3.0 (of previous minutes), MD said that he would take his proposed review of the Conservation Plan to the Strategic Group.

At point 2.7 (planning update) MGo said she had not yet written to Jonny McNee setting out concerns about a 3 storey building adjacent to the Verbal Arts Centre, but would do so very shortly.

Action: MGo to write to Jonny McNee accordingly.

At point 2.9.2 (insurance cover) ME confirmed that insurance cover with the council was indeed £10 million. MG said that HED would need to raise its cover accordingly.

Action: MG to arrange for HED to raise its insurance requirements for Derry Walls events to £10 million

Also at point 2.9.2 JR said that he had spoken to Paul Rafferty (licensing manager at DCSDC) and he would like to invite him to the next meeting of the Management Group to do a presentation on making the Walls a designated area for trading.

Action: PM to invite Paul Rafferty to the next meeting.

At 4.1 (AOB – street furniture) – JR said that he has spoken to the relevant business owner about relocating their bins; and CCI had also completed an audit of all the ‘furniture’ on the walls that would help determine whom to contact should remedial action be required.

Action: JR to circulate audit accordingly.

4.0 Other

4.1 AOB

ME said that there was an upcoming Heritage Transforming neighbourhoods, details of which she would share once confirmed.

Action: ME to share conference details with group.

JR introduced his report on vegetation at the Gates and said the next step would be a conditioning survey to see what needed to be done to develop a business case and action plan.

MG said that there was an event planned for the 28/09/19 at Artillery Bastion that unfortunately could not be approved due to insufficient information being provided and
the short turnaround required to get the necessary information. BR suggested that maybe HED needed to publicise the application process with a basic set of principles that treated all applicants fairly. MG said that she would think about possible new guidelines including, for example a checklist.

**Action: MG to reconsider guidelines accordingly.**

ML reported that 475 people visited the plinth as part of EHOD weekend.

ML said that he felt that communication between the Strategic Group and the Implementation Group was poor and that the Implementation Group was short-term in its ambitions.

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

The meeting ended at 13:30