

Clerk's Statement: All Saints Church Proposals 15th November 2017

Since July 2017 the Commissioners have been liaising with government in relation to the proposal to acquire All Saints Church and operate it as a community facility. During this period regular meetings have taken place with senior officers at the Department of Infrastructure including project managers and officers of the Local Government Unit. These officers have engaged with the proposals and acknowledged the intention to refurbish the building through a 'schedule of works' that aimed to minimise the costs to the ratepayer.

At the Commissioners meeting on the 1st of November misgivings amongst the Board about the manner in which the project was being progressed were made evident by several Members.

Following the submission of further information in regard to the petition submission to the Local Government Unit, the clerk met with Officers of the Local Government Unit on the 14th of November 2017. At this meeting the Commissioners were advised to reconsider the manner in which the project had been progressed to date.

In the light of this discussion and advice given by the Local Government Unit at yesterday's meeting, I issue the following series of recommendations in regard to the All Saints Church Proposal:

Clerk's Recommendation: All Saints Church Project 15th November 2017

The recommendation of the clerk is that the current petition preparations are brought to a conclusion and a pre-petition process be 're-started'.

The following are general recommendations for initiating and progressing the project:

1. That a nominated officer of the authority oversee the production of an assessment of the need and value for the community of a public facility in Lonan and reports in writing to the Board.
2. An additional and consequential report to be produced detailing the activities that will take place in the building. This to give indication how the building will be adapted to support these uses.
3. On the passing of a resolution by the Board that the need/value of the facility is proven, that the local authority arranges for a structural survey of the building and appoints a Quantity Surveyor to assist with preparing costings of the refurbishment and adaptations.
4. That a consequent 'Schedule of Works' is then produced by the nominated officer and a tender process initiated and prosecuted in line with the local authority's Standing Orders (Part 2 – Making of Contracts p13 onwards).
5. The nominated officer will liaise with the QS and obtain costings for the project and the long term management of the facility: these costings to include full details of all consequences of the projects to the ratepayer incurred by the refurbishment and through the operation of the facility over a ten year period. A report on any predicted rate borne expenditure is to be presented to the Board in order to assist them in assessing how much 'value for money' the facility will provide to the ratepayer.
6. That full legal advice is sought from the advocate nominated by resolution of the Board on all aspects of any transaction of the building and its future operation.
7. That the nominated officer and QS monitor the project as the refurbishment works take place.

8. That the nominated officer produces a strategy for the operation of the building as a community facility over a ten year period.
9. That a related maintenance plan be costed for a ten year period.
10. That varied and effective means of consulting with the public are identified during both the 'pre-petition process' and the 'petition process' itself.
11. That no officer or Member of the Commission with any pecuniary or personal interest takes part in discussions or votes on any matters relating to the project to refurbish All Saints Church and operate it as a community facility.

Budgeting for the pre-petition process

An estimate of the cost of each stage of the above preparations to be prepared and approved by the Board prior to the initiation of the process.

The final recommendation to the Board is that all procedural and financial matters undertaken are conducted in accordance with the Standing Orders of Garff Parish District Commissioners and within the terms of both the 'Corporate Governance Principles and Code of Conduct' for local authorities.

Martin Royle

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Garff Parish District Commissioners