

Asset Transfer Request Form Continuation Sheets

3A continued terms and conditions.

Of particular concern to the trustees prior to asset transfer include the following:

- The ingress of water into the Mill that continues. This is despite upgrading of drainage works having been undertaken recently at the rear of the Mill building. We believe there may be a leak from the pond and in particular from where the pond links to the wheel (see report attached to our letter to Aberdeenshire Council of 14th June, 2018). The trustees would expect this issue to be resolved prior to asset transfer. We would welcome discussion on the best way of resolving this problem.
- As outlined in the feasibility study remedial work is required to the burn wall to be completed as soon as is possible. We understand execution of this work is currently under preparation by the council and it is anticipated will be completed prior to asset transfer.
- We are aware that there may be certain access issues, specifically around the use of the path that passes Mill of Benholm Cottage. MoB Enterprise would need to be satisfied that a Vehicular Right of Way over the length of the track leading down to the Mill was in place. A finalised boundary of the site would have to be agreed upon prior to the transfer
- Despite recent works involving site drainage, there appears to be issues surrounding spring water from the braes at the rear of the Grain Store. We would hope the Council would partner us in resolving this problem.
- The timber surround to the smoke outlet on the roof of the Mill kiln is showing serious signs of decay. This is an iconic part of the Mill's profile. It is unlikely that it can be repaired and will therefore need to be replaced with an identical piece of kit. Listed building considerations will probably be an issue and necessary action will certainly precede asset transfer.
- The reed bed system will need to be assessed to check it is still fully functioning.

MoB would not wish to discover that major drainage work and or repair to the pond is required once they own the asset. We would recommend that a thorough survey of the pond and associated drainage issues is undertaken by a suitably qualified professional as soon as possible.

We would also be hopeful that, in the spirit of cooperation, Aberdeenshire Council would consider continuing to undertake essential maintenance and grass cutting for the first few years that MoB Enterprise take on the site.

Benefits of the proposal

4.2 continued

In addition we plan to offer a range of learning opportunities through a timetable of craft, traditional skills and forest learning workshops. The facilities will also be available to local sporting clubs and groups.

The community will benefit from increased volunteering opportunities, this will build confidence in individuals and enhance community resilience.

A celebration of heritage and a strong sense of place will increase pride in the area and the community will be actively encouraged to become involved in the running and management of the Mill, again increasing skills and community capacity.

Improvements to the woodland area are carefully considered to balance enhancement of the natural habitat with safety of access for the community as well as the general public.

The café will give preference to locally sourced fresh foods benefitting local food producers.

The tendering process for the redevelopment work at the Mill of Benholm will provide opportunities for local builders, architects and construction professionals, enhancing the local economy.

It is hoped that the redeveloped Mill and café will become a tourist attraction drawing people into the area with all the associated benefits this brings to the local economy.

4.4 continued

Lack of funding could result in the further deterioration of the Mill buildings as well as further restrictions to the accessibility of the grounds to the general public. We propose to minimise these risks through a staged approach to redevelopment of the buildings and the grounds as outlined in our business plan. We also plan to work closely with our business and heritage advisors who have considerable experience of similar projects and of attracting funding.

We plan to be an inclusive organization that welcomes the views of the local community. Through our newsletter and regular public meeting we plan to keep the community up to date with our progress and actively involved in the Mill's future. This should safeguard against any group feeling negatively affected by our project.

The local community will be actively encouraged to become members of MoB and to have their say on the way forward. There will also be opportunities for individuals to become trustees, therefore ensuring a robust board in the future.

It could be that certain groups that currently use the site may not be able to in the future. In the case of Police Scotland for firearms training it may be that an alternative venue will need to be found. Mearns Healthy Living Gardeners, who use the upper gardening beds on the site may have to relocate but would be welcome to use the rejuvenated, more accessible garden area. Whenever possible we would hope to work with groups to enable them to use the grounds.

If the effluent processing system (pumps, tanks reed bed and associated pipe work) breaks down at any stage of its processing there could be a leak of raw sewage into the burn which could be seen as an environmental contamination issue. An assessment of the current state of the effluent treatment system will be required with an appropriate plan in place for any breaches at any stage of the processing system.

4.5 continued

The trustees are a group of committed local people with a range of skills and experience. Several of the trustees have experience of running their own business and managing projects. Their careers have given them experience in a range of industries from farming to quantity surveying, managing support services for adults with learning disabilities, general management, insurances, building construction, commercial legal considerations, contract preparation etc. (CVs available on request).

The trustees are well connected within the local community with a number of them being Community Councilors. This allows them to regularly update the community on developments and to communicate with local councilors. There is also close involvement with the local Rural Development Partnership (KDP) thus giving access to the help and advice on offer from them.

The trustees envisage making use of the wealth of skills available amongst the members and friends of MoB in the local community, through seeking advice as appropriate and through forming working groups around particular tasks.

MoB is now looking at funding to put a Development Worker in place who can drive the business plan forward, can assist with applying for funding and oversee the redevelopment work. This individual will be supported and managed by the trustees. A robust set of procedures are being developed that will underpin the management of the site.

5.1 Level of Support continued.

MoB has continued to engage with the community by holding a number of “open day” events which have proved extremely popular especially with families. These events keep people up to date with progress and encourage the community to keep using the site and to be involved with its future.

The trustees are also communicating with a range of stakeholders that may be interested in using the mill’s facilities in the future ... these include training providers, community groups and charities.

MoB recently hosted a Tourism Networking Event that brought together representatives from visitor attractions throughout the Mearns. This provided the opportunity to update them on plans for the mill and attendees discussed how groups could work together to promote the area. It is hoped that the mill can become an important part of the area’s tourism offering.

A newsletter has been launched that will be sent out regularly to a contact list of supporters ... the newsletter is sent out to well over 100 people and keeps them up to date with progress.