

HISTORIC MONUMENTS COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE 133rd MEETING HELD IN THE CENTRE FOR COASTAL AND MARINE RESEARCH, UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER ON WEDNESDAY, 5TH APRIL 2006 AT 10.30AM

PRESENT:

Mr Richard Black – Chairman
Mr B Black
Mr T Canavan
Mrs Rosemary Evans
Mrs H Lanigan Wood
Mr Conor Mallon
Mr John Moore
Dr Elizabeth McShane

IN ATTENDANCE:

Ms C Foley, EHS (items 2.2, 6-14)

Mr C Francey, Secretariat

1.0 HMC VISIT TO UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

Prof A Cooper, Head of Coastal Research Group, University of Ulster, introduced his team of Mr T McErlean, Ms R McConkey and Mr W Forsythe. He gave some background information on the establishment and role of the Coastal and Marine Centre.

Mr McErlean outlined some of the work involving EHS and the maritime archaeology service such as archaeological assessment/mitigation process, survey and research, maritime records and the raising of public awareness of the maritime heritage.

Mr Forsythe outlined some of the recent archaeological excavations on Rathlin Island. He highlighted the Mesolithic flint finds, sherds and caves. The team were aware of earlier finds of a silver brooch of the Viking period and a possible Viking boat burial. There was also evidence of kelp gathering and burning for bleaching linen in the 18th century.

A number of concerns were raised in connection with the degradation of resources. The Centre was engaged in trying to educate the locals and carrying out effective monitoring. The value of survey work was highlighted and the need to continue with a systematic survey of sites in order to monitor and protect them. Currently though there was a shortage of staff in maritime survey work. It was recognised, however, that site preservation was good in the remote parts of the Island and this was less of a burden on resources. The research team was currently carrying out a survey of ports and harbours to evaluate their state of preservation.

The Chairman thanked Prof Cooper and his team for an interesting presentation.

1.1 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Dr F McCormick, Mr D Flinn, Mr I Hill, Mr P Walsh, Mr J O'Neill, Dr K Muhr and Dr C Lynn.

1.2 RETIREMENT

The Chairman informed members that Dr C Lynn was due to retire from the service at the end of April. In his absence the Chairman wished to record Council's thanks to Dr Lynn for his outstanding contribution to the work of Council and wished him well on his retirement.

2. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

2.1 Derry's Walls Conservation Plan

Members noted the minutes of the meeting of 8th March 2006. A further meeting of the Steering Group is to be held soon to debate the protection of the Wall's and other heritage aspects. There is to be further consultation on the Conservation Plan.

2.2 Titanic Quarter

2.2.1 The Chairman reported that he and Mr F Robinson, HBC had discussions with Mr A Shannon, Permanent Secretary of DSD about the future of the HMS Caroline, the SS Nomadic and development of Titanic Quarter. In the course of these discussions a number of issues were raised about plans for the Nomadic and the lack of any overarching plan for Titanic Quarter. He had expressed his concern about the lack of coherency and an overall view on plans involving scheduled monuments and listed structures.

2.2.2 Mr Moore informed members that the issues involving the development of Titanic Quarter had been discussed at the last meeting of JCIH on 14th March (draft minutes included in papers). JCIH members had expressed concerns about what appeared to be a lack of an overall Masterplan for Titanic Quarter, in the understanding that there is a masterplan in preparation for some of the area and had taken the decision to write to the Minister.

2.2.3 There was a view that Council should raise its concerns in the public domain. However, the Chairman took the view that Council should use its powers in an open and transparent way to effect change within Government. He informed members that Mr Shannon had offered to arrange a presentation of Titanic Quarter plans to Council so that it can be better informed of what is proposed for the area. Ms Foley pointed out that any such presentation of the plans would not be fixed in stone because of the current necessarily proposals.

2.2.4 It was noted that Titanic Quarter has a number of existing planning approvals for part of its site but there was no overall plan for many of the features. The Chairman is to meet Mr Peover, DOE Permanent Secretary and Mr Rogers, EHS Chief Executive to see if HMC can contribute to the steering group led by Planning Service. If Council's endeavours to influence the development of an overall plan which embraces the heritage aspects are unsuccessful, steps could be taken to place Council's concerns in the public arena. In the event that this is necessary Council would need to consider a strategic approach on how it handles the media and perhaps consider any legal implications.

2.2.5 EHS has been participating in a Steering Group set up by Government to co-ordinate plans for the whole area. As part of its role, EHS has been involved in preparing a detailed strategic position statement for Phase 2 development and this will be used to inform the planning application. It was noted that a shorter version of the conservation statement had been tabled at the JCIH meeting. The Secretariat is to circulate a copy of this to Council members. With the development involving 4 government departments the Chairman highlighted the need for a joined-up approach. Ms Foley pointed out that in the case of the Science Park site, EHS will only have the opportunity to respond to the planning applications but with its involvement in Phase 2, EHS has been able to input to the pre-planning process.

2.2.6 Ms Foley informed members that she had seen a Masterplan for the Titanic site and would be willing to present this and give an update on Phase 2 development.

2.2.7 It was agreed that Ms Foley should give a presentation at a joint meeting of HMC and HBC on a date to be arranged.

**ACTION: Present plans to joint meeting of HMC and HBC
EHS**

**Circulate copy of conservation statement to
members Secretariat**

2.3 Review of Public Administration

The Chairman referred to the recent announcement by the Secretary of State on Better Government for Northern Ireland - Final Decisions of the Public Review. He highlighted the section on page 23 relating to the proposals for the statutory advisory councils.

2.4 Ancient Monuments Board for Wales

2.4.1 The Chairman informed members that he had received a letter from the Ancient Monuments Board for Wales. Its Chairman had indicated that the Board was reconstituted from the 1 April as the Ancient Monuments Advisory Board to the Welsh Assembly.

2.4.2 Mr Black informed members that under the structures of the Welsh Assembly there is now a Department for the Environment, Planning and Countryside which has its own Minister and Civil Service. Initial comments on the effectiveness of this new Department are good. In view of the proposed designation of a National Park for Northern Ireland it may be useful to contact the website of this Department for information on such issues as National Parks.

2.5 Review of Environmental Governance

2.5.1 The panel to carry out the Review of Environmental Governance has been appointed. It was agreed that a sub -group should be set up to consider and prepare a submission for this panel.

2.5.2 Council is also to set up a sub-group to consider the Marine Bill consultation paper and invite Mr C Breen, UU Centre of Coastal and Maritime Research to take part in the process.

**ACTION: Form sub-group to consider consultation papers
Chairman**

3. MINUTES OF 132nd MEETING of 15TH FEBRUARY 2006

The minutes of the 132nd meeting of the 15th February, were agreed.

4. MATTERS ARISING REPORT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE 132ND MEETING.

4.1 Built Heritage Restructuring

4.1.1 The Chairman referred to previous discussions on the staff restructuring within built heritage.

4.1.2 He had met Mr Rogers, Chief Executive for further talks on the staffing resources and he had agreed that the delay in resolving the staffing issues was intolerable. Mr Rogers met with the EHS staff for talks on the staffing proposals and he is to discuss the issues with the Permanent Secretary and let the Chairman know the outcome.

4.1.3 Council took the view that the bottom layer of the staffing within the built heritage should be filled irrespective of the current situation regarding the restructuring.

4.1.4 Members felt that it might be useful to assess the inadequacies and problems of the current situation within built heritage and then consider a plan of action which could address the needs. They also suggested that either Mr Rogers or a representative of senior management should attend the next meeting of Council to update members on the staffing situation.

ACTION: Contact EHS for update on restructuring
Chairman

4.2 HMC Report

4.2.1 A sub-group of Council is to be set up to consider the format of the HMC Report. A sample report from the Ancient Monuments Board of Wales was tabled.

4.2.2 Members stressed the importance of a strategic approach which establishes clear objectives for the Report. In the meantime, the Chairman asked for contributions to the Report to be sent to the Secretariat.

ACTION: Submit contributions to the Report

Members

Arrange meeting of sub-group

Secretariat

4.3 The Ice House, Portballintrae

Claire reported that the developer involved in the planning application which included proposals for the Ice-House in Portballintrae, lost the planning appeal. This means that although the adjoining Salmon House, which was not protected, can be demolished by the developer he has lost the right to build a replacement structure.

4.4 Charlemont Fort, County Armagh

Claire reported that the EHS direct labour organisation will be carrying out some work to the doors of the fort in order to prevent vandalism of the site.

4.5 EHS Conservation Work

Members were keen to have a presentation report on the EHS conservation works programme being prepared by Ms M Gormley, EHS. Claire undertook to follow this up and will prepare a report for HMC later in the year.

ACTION:

Follow up

Ms Foley

5. ANY OTHER MATTERS ARISING NOT ON MAIN AGENDA

There were no other matters arising.

6. REVIEW OF LIST OF SCHEDULED HISTORIC MONUMENTS IN NI (HM431)

6.1 Ms Foley tabled a paper on the Review of the Schedule of Historic Monuments 1996-2006. She informed members that this review was carried out every ten years in order to identify the way forward

The Chairman asked that a sub-group of himself, Dr McCormick, Mr B Black, Mr T Canavan and Mr J Moore be formed to consider the consultation document on the Mourne NP when it becomes available. In the meantime the consultants report on boundaries is to be circulated to members.

ACTION: Circulate boundary report to members

Secretariat

13.2 Maritime Centre

It was agreed that the Chairman writes to the University and EHS about the loss of a marine survey worker and the withdrawal of funding.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING :

The next meeting is to be held on 23rd June 2006.