

**IN CONFIDENCE**

**HISTORIC MONUMENTS COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF THE 137<sup>th</sup> MEETING HELD IN  
THE ALDER ROOM, LISBURN CIVIC CENTRE**

**ON**

**FRIDAY, 9<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2007 AT 1.30PM**

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**PRESENT:**

Dr F McCormick – Acting  
Chairman  
Mr B Black  
Mr T Canavan  
Mrs R Evans  
Mr D Flinn  
Mrs H Lanigan Wood  
Mr J Moore  
Dr K Muhr  
Dr E McShane  
Mr J O'Neill  
Mr P Walsh

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

M P Simpson, Deputy Secretary  
(Item 6(a) only)  
Mr R Rogers, EHS (Item 6(a) only)  
Mr M Coulter, EHS  
Mr K Neill, EHS  
Mr D Hurl, EHS

Mr C Francey, Secretariat

**1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from the Chairman, Mr C Mallon, Mr I Hill and Ms A Moreno.

The Chairman welcomed Mr Paul Simpson, Deputy Secretary to the meeting.

**2. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS**

**2.1 Archaeological Research**

The Chairman reported that a number of members of the Archaeological Research Group met with the private sector on the 26<sup>th</sup> January, to discuss the issues around excavations and storage.

Currently, a position paper on archaeology in Northern Ireland is being developed for Council and it is hoped to have this in time for Council's next meeting.

**3. MINUTES OF 136<sup>th</sup> MEETING of 8<sup>TH</sup> December 2006**

The minutes of the meeting of the 8<sup>th</sup> December 2006 were agreed.

**4. MATTERS ARISING REPORT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE  
136<sup>th</sup> MEETING.**

#### **4.1 EHS Conservation Work**

Mr Neill tabled a report on laser scanning of carved stones and informed members that a paper on management suggestions will be submitted to Council at its next meeting. EHS had used a LiDAR scanner for recording large monuments but it may not be suitable for scanning carved stones in order to produce a replica. Currently, EHS is investigating the suitability of a CYRAX scanner for this type of work.

Council was impressed with the type of scanner used for recording monuments and recognised its benefits, particularly for Boa Island. It was important that in order to facilitate the best use of a scanner that adequate resources should be available. Council suggested that EHS contacts Prof B Smith, QUB, who has expertise in geology and conservation stonework, to discuss some of the issues around the most suitable type of scanner. Mr Neill pointed out that the LiDAR scanner was currently the best for EHS needs.

A planning application involving the Boa Island site was still active and Mr Neill undertook to report on the current status of the application at the next meeting.

**ACTION: report on planning application**

**Mr Neill**

#### **4.2 Proposed Mourne National Park**

The Chairman tabled a copy of Council's response to the proposal for a Mourne National Park.

It was noted that at a recent public meeting about the NP there was strong opposition to it from local farmers.

#### **5. ANY OTHER MATTERS ARISING NOT ON MAIN AGENDA**

There were no other matters arising and not on the main agenda.

#### **6(a) REVIEW OF ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE – Update**

Mr Rogers gave an update on the Review of Environmental Governance. He informed members that the Panel's interim report of September did not produce any firm conclusions. The final report is likely to be available in May. The Panel had carried out a number of further investigations into issues arising from the submission of evidence. EHS had been asked to respond to some 46 questions and sent a response in January. This was followed by a further meeting with the Panel on the 23<sup>rd</sup> January.

The EHS Management Board had deliberated on the issues and a majority of the Board had favoured externalisation of the Agency with all its existing functions remaining. However, the minority view argued that the built heritage should be treated in a different way i.e along the same principles as the built heritage agencies in Wales and Scotland. The main advantages of externalisation under a NDPB meant that (a) there was more scope for an

NDPB to be more critical of government (b) with integration of all the functions within an NDPB there were economies of scale, particularly in regional operations and educational initiatives and (c) if the built heritage was separated there was a concern where its functions could be transferred to.

There was some debate on the benefits of externalisation and the type of model appropriate for an NDPB. Members also considered the implications for the built heritage of the Review of Public Administration and the transfer of planning functions to local councils. Mr Coulter expressed the view that there was an argument for the built heritage to remain at central government level and close to strategic planning. In this scenario there would be a need to address the appropriate structures for the built heritage functions and consider issues around conservation, enforcement, sustainable development and the raft of duties outside the planning context. Members were concerned that there would be a lack of expertise in the built heritage field within local councils; they took the view that there would not be sufficient resources to spread over the new councils. In order to address this shortage a substantial injection of resources would be required. It was also important to ensure that proper recognition was given to archaeology at local level.

Mr Simpson, Deputy Secretary, gave an update on the work in progress in the transfer of functions to local councils. He outlined an overview of the political scene within Northern Ireland and the implications for the transfer of functions if there is an increase in the proposed number of new local councils. Notwithstanding the final outcome in the political arena, he estimated that the transfer would have to be effected within 2 to 5 years.

Members noted the current structures for the environmental issues within RoI and its approach to integration of all the heritage aspects and the problems of regulatory input.

Some members were concerned that with the current Review of Environmental Governance and the transfer of functions work on the ground would be jeopardised. However, Mr Rogers assured Council that the on-going deliberations on a new model would not prejudice the work of EHS.

Mr Rogers outlined the next steps in the Review and undertook to send the Chairman a formal memorandum of the points raised in the EHS response to the questions posed by the Panel.

**ACTION:    Send memorandum to Chairman                      Mr Rogers**

The Chairman emphasised the need for any new structures set up to be properly resourced and have appropriate legislative powers which are effective in the protection of the built heritage. He thanked Mr Rogers and Mr Simpson for attending Council to discuss the current issues of the Review and progress of the transfer of functions.

## **6(b). Built Heritage Restructuring**

Mr Coulter gave a presentation on the new structures, staffing and vacancies of the built heritage. He explained the new arrangements meant that for

management purposes Northern Ireland had been split up into 5 separate areas with appropriate staffing levels for both PHM and PHB. Mr Coulter pointed out that in the case of the management structures for monuments and archaeology, EHS was not looking for specialism but staff must have archaeology as a preferred qualification. Basically, EHS was looking for a broad base of expertise which could inter-relate. Currently, there are 8 vacancies and it is hoped to have these filled by the spring of 2007.

Members commended Mr Coulter on his restructuring proposals.

## **7. EXCAVATIONS AND PLANNING CONSULTATIONS (HM 438)**

Mr Hurl introduced the paper on excavations and planning consultations carried out during 2006/07. He highlighted the number of excavation licences and extensions issued during that period and the work undertaken by the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, QUB on behalf of EHS. Mr Hurl referred to a number of projects carried out by CAF. He also informed members of the outcomes of developer funded excavations on the South/North Gas Pipeline. Council noted that the results of the North/South Gas Pipeline are due to be published this summer.

Mr Hurl highlighted the number of planning consultations dealt with throughout the year and mentioned some of the difficulties in the consultation process. It was hoped that the introduction of Planning Service's digital ePIC system for dealing with consultations online, will help to eliminate many of these problems. It was important that PS has all the relevant information from the built heritage in the determination of planning applications.

The Chairman thanked Mr Hurl for his informative presentation.

## **8. WALLED CITY CONSERVATION PLAN**

Mr Deery gave a presentation on the Walled City Conservation Plan. He gave some background information leading up to the drafting of the Plan which is part of the Signature Destination Project for Londonderry. Mr Deery informed Council that Phase 1 of the project involved drawing up a Conservation Plan and a Management Plan for the Walled City. Phase 2 involved a lighting strategy, built heritage programme, cultural animation and environmental improvements.

The Conservation Plan was subject to a consultation process and was endorsed by the key stakeholders. It is due to be published by the end of March and launched formally at a late date. The Management Plan is almost complete and has been subject to the same consultation process as the Conservation Plan.

The Chairman thanked Mr Deery for his update. Council congratulated Mr Deery on his handling and development of the Plans. It was agreed that if any of the members wished to have a copy of the Conservation Plan they should contact the Secretariat.

## **9. MOURNE WATER SCHEME**

This item was deferred until the next meeting in April.

**10. HMC BUSINESS PLAN**

It was agreed to set up a sub-group to consider the HMC Business Plan.

**11. HMC REPORT**

It was agreed to set up a sub-group to consider the final drafting of the HMC Report.

**12.. JOINT COMMITTEE FOR INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE**

Members noted the draft minutes of the JCIH meeting of the 12<sup>th</sup> December 2006.

Members expressed concern about the proposed new development of the Ulster Museum. There were a number of contentious areas regarding the new plans and the HBC had made its views known about these, particularly the lack of any space for the industrial heritage. Some modifications had been made as a result of the HBC views but these did not include the industrial heritage. The JCIH wrote to Mr Cooke, Chief Executive of National Museums NI on the 4<sup>th</sup> January, expressing its concerns about the lack of provision for the engineering artefacts.

In the light of this, members raised concerns about the plans for the display of the Megalith from County Armagh and it was agreed that the Chairman should write to Mr Cooke asking what the intentions are for retaining this.

**ACTION: Write to Mr Cooke** **Chairman**

**13. LOWER BANN ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

There were no issues to report regarding the LBAC.

**14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

**15. DATE OF MEETINGS FOR REMAINDER OF YEAR 2007**

Council agreed the following dates for the remainder of the year:

- Thursday, 26<sup>th</sup> April
- Friday, 8<sup>th</sup> June
- Wednesday, 29<sup>th</sup> August
- Friday, 26<sup>th</sup> October
- Wednesday, 12 December.
  
- Outing - 15<sup>th</sup> May