

IN CONFIDENCE

HISTORIC MONUMENTS COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE 146th MEETING HELD IN THE CHESTNUT SUITE , LISBURN CIVIC CENTRE, LISBURN

ON

WEDNESDAY, 27th AUGUST 2008 AT 1.30PM

PRESENT:

Mr R Black, Chairman
Mrs R Evans
Mrs H Lanigan Wood
Mr C Mallon
Dr K Muhr
Dr L McShane
Mr P Walsh

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr J O’Keeffe, NIEA
Ms C Foley, NIEA
Ms R Robinson, NIEA
Ms M Gormley, NIEA
Mr B Bleakley, NIEA

Mr C Francey, Secretariat

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Mr I Hill, Dr F McCormick, Mr J Moore, Mr J O’Neill, Mr T Canavan, Ms A Moreno, Mr B Black and Dr B Williams.

2. CHAIRMAN’S BUSINESS -

2.1 HMC Reconstitution

The Chairman reported that he had been advised by the Planning and Environmental Policy Group (PEPG) that the Minister is not minded to have a representative from the Rol to sit on the forthcoming reconstituted Council. He had informed PEPG of his disappointment and concerns about this decision given the long history of the valuable contribution made by the Rol, and the welcome dimension of another jurisdiction which assists Council in considering various policy issues. Interestingly, it was noted that NIEA has a representative which sits on the Royal Irish Academy in the Rol. He has asked for a meeting with the Minister to discuss his concerns. However, PEPG has advised him that it is trying to find a suitable solution to this problem.

Council gave its unanimous support for the Chairman’s approach in making his views known to the Minister.

2.2 Archaeological Research

The Chairman reported that he had received a reply dated 27th June, from the Minister about Council’s position statement on archaeological research. He is to have a meeting with the Minister to discuss the issues in due course.

2.3 Visit of Heritage Council

The Chairman informed members that the Archaeological Committee of the Heritage Council is to visit Belfast on the 24th September, and is keen to include members in discussions with NIEA. The Secretariat is to contact the Heritage Council to find out its itinerary for the day and let members know the arrangements.

ACTION: Contact Heritage Council about its visit Secretariat

2.4 Skipper Street/High Street, Belfast - Development

Mr O'Keeffe tabled a paper on the proposed development taking place at the corner of Skipper Street/High Street, Belfast involving demolition of buildings and the extension of the Merchant Hotel. He had inspected the site and was satisfied that archaeological test trenching will be carried out and excavations made before building work starts.

2.4 Coat of Arms - Belfast

The Chairman mentioned that he had received a communication from a resident in Dorset who is holding a stone carving of the Belfast Coat of Arms. He circulated illustrations and members agreed that it was an outstanding piece. The resident was seeking to return the carving and his enquiry has been directed to the Heritage Officer of the Belfast City Council.

3. MINUTES OF 145TH MEETING OF 25TH June 2008

The minutes of the 145th Meeting of the 25th June 2008 were agreed subject to the following amendments:

Item 4.2 page 2 – 1st para. Second sentence
Delete 'successful' Add in ' effective in limiting damage'

Item 6 page 3 – 4th bullet point
Delete 'between the two can be addressed'

4. MATTERS ARISING REPORT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE 145TH MEETING

4.1 Devenish Island

Members were informed that an agreement was reached with the owner on access to Devenish in June 2008.

Mr O'Keeffe reported that the round tower on Devenish Island had to be closed to the public for a short period because of vandalism. Unfortunately the NIEA vessel used to transport staff to the island is in need of repair and the other boat used is very limited in how many passengers it can take. As a result staff were late in arriving on the island and unable to prevent damage to the tower. However, this has highlighted some of the problems associated with the round tower and he undertook to update Council on the measures needed to resolve them.

ACTION: Update members on action taken Mr O'Keeffe

Members were concerned about lichen and ivy growing on many monuments, which had become an excessive problem because of the very wet summer, and suggested that when it takes remedial measures for this that NIEA also includes monuments on Devenish Island and White Island

5. ANY OTHER MATTERS ARISING NOT ON MAIN AGENDA

There were no other matters arising not on main agenda.

6. PROPOSALS FOR SCHEDULING for 2008-09 (HM453)

In accordance with the requirement for NIEA to consult with Council under Article 3(6) of the Historic Monuments and Archaeological Objects (NI) Order 1995, Ms C Foley, NIEA presented 10 sites proposed for Scheduling in counties Antrim, Tyrone and Fermanagh .

Council endorsed the scheduling of the following sites:

County Antrim

ANT 040:010	Glynn, medieval parish church
ANT 043:032	Muckleramer, standing stone
ANT 044:013	Carncome, standing stone
ANT 045:036	Ballyclaverty, barrow
ANT 047:068	South West Ballycarry, large ecclesiastical enclosure
ANT 055:054	Ballyhill Upper, barrow
ANT 055:054	Kilcross, standing stone
ANT 064:014	Mullaghglass, Castle Robin, extension of scheduled area

County Fermanagh

FER 192: 075	Coagh, barrow
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County Tyrone

TYR 056:005	Derryallen, stone circle (remains of)
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Members raised a number of points in relation to the following sites:

ANT 040:010 Glynn

Members were concerned about the small size of the scheduled area around the church. Ms Foley explained that as the graveyard is still in use then the building only is protected, but if the graveyard were not in use the protection could also apply to the graveyard.

ANT 044:013 Carncome

Members suggested that the boundary of the scheduling should be extended 5m into the lawn on the south side of the stone.

ANT 055:054 Barrow, Ballyhill Upper and Standing Stone, Kilcross

Members suggested that the boundary of the barrow and ditch at Ballyhill Upper should be extended to the east and to the south.

A question was raised about guidelines for determining the boundary of standing stones . Ms Foley explained that NIEA used the guideline of a 5m radius for standing stones. Members suggested that the barrow and standing stone should both be scheduled within the one area unless NIEA finds that there are

constraints which would prevent this.

FER 192:075 Barrow, Coagh and

TYR 056:005 Derryallen, Stone Circle

Members pointed out that there was another barrow north east of this site which was known as Moynahan North. Ms Foley undertook to check this out. Members also suggested that instead of a circular measurement for the boundary of the Coagh site a triangulation method should be used. A similar approach should also apply to the stone circle at Derryallen

Action

7. PRESENTATION ON ACCESS ISSUES INVOLVING MONUMENTS IN STATE CARE (KINBANE CASTLE) (HM454)

The Chairman welcomed Mr B Bleakley, Head of Regional Operations, NIEA. Ms Robinson gave a presentation on the access issues associated with Kinbane Castle on the north Antrim coast. She informed members that there were still some concerns about ownership of the outcrop on which the Castle is situated. The surrounding landowners maintain that NIEA only owns the fabric of the Castle walls, but NIEA argues that it owns all within the curtain wall. This issue has still to be resolved. Ms Robinson explained that the other factor affecting access involved ownership of the cliff pathway and steps leading down to the site, which were vested by Moyle District Council in 1974, but who, in recent years had taken little to do with their maintenance. Following a landslide in 1999 the government Construction Service carried out a survey of the path and the surrounding cliff area and recommended that the area required cliff netting, rock bolting and repairs to the path at a cost of £40,000. NIEA sought a contribution to the cost of the work from Moyle DC, but without success. NIEA decided to press ahead with the work and meet all costs in order to ensure ongoing access to the Castle. New access steps and other appropriate work was completed in 2002 and the path was re-opened in August 2003. However, in September 2003, as the result of an accident at the Castle, the access path was temporarily closed again, and this became a permanent closure following a further rockfall which occurred on the path at the headland access steps. In response to this, cliff netting was carried out on the headland in 2005. As a result NIEA has spent over £100,000 on maintenance measures since 2001. Ms Robinson pointed out that there was also a need for conservation work to be carried out to the Castle and this was a key target in the current NIEA Business Plan. The work will be undertaken over the next 12 weeks at a cost of £110,000. This will mean an expenditure total of over £200,000 over the last number of years and this raised the issue of whether or not access to the Castle will provide value for the resources which have been allocated to the site. She also pointed out, that under the current legislation of the HMAO Order 1995, 'the public shall have access to monuments'.

In the meantime, NIEA took new measures to prevent access to the path and Castle, but despite this the public were able to circumnavigate the gate and fencing to gain access to the site. In order to do this the public were putting their lives at risk and on the advice of the Health and Safety staff modifications were made to the gate and fencing. The Health and Safety staff have carried out an inspection of the site and made a number of recommendations, but as they are not qualified to comment on this type of landscape and associated structures, they have proposed that the NIEA should seek the advice of the NI Health and Safety Executive. A geo-technical survey of the cliff face is also to be undertaken and it is hoped that discussions on the issues will take place with Moyle DC with a view to its involvement in carrying out remedial work. Ms Robinson outlined a number of the other measures proposed by the Health and Safety Report such as the

placement of a barrier to prevent access to the headland, and protection of all dangerous drops.

Future developments for the site include purchase of the land where the Castle is sited and the possible acquisition of the remainder of the headland. Agreements were also to be set up with Moyle DC for the management and maintenance of the pathway and steps including a contribution towards costs. Consideration would also have to be given to formalised health and safety guidance for dealing with this type of monument.

Mr Bleakley suggested that careful consideration should be given to the costs of the ongoing safety work and whether or not it was worth trying to preserve access to the site. There was, however, a possibility that grant-aid could be provided by the Tourist Board for such work.

Members felt that the issue Council had to consider was strategic in nature. Kinbane Castle was clearly a spectacular monument in a magnificent setting and its heritage had a substantial tourist potential. It was recognised that this was a type of monument which the public had a desire to visit. Members suggested that in order to consider all the arguments, NIEA should arrange for a cost benefit analysis in complying with health and safety legislation. From a historical perspective, Council took the view that the public should have access to this and other similar type monuments. From a safety point of view it could be argued that if NIEA draws up a priority list of safety measures and can demonstrate that the options have been considered and reasonable action taken, then legally it had done all in its power to protect the public.

In conclusion, Council suggested that NIEA draws up a suitable strategy which would accommodate access to monuments and affect the associated management issues. In arriving at its strategy it should take into consideration the Assessment of the NI Health and Safety Executive and such other bodies with responsibility for historic monuments, such as English Heritage and Historic Scotland. The outcomes should be presented to Council in due course.

ACTION: Consider a suitable strategy and present to HMC NIEA

8. GUIDANCE FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE BUILT HERITAGE OF THE CANALS AND INLAND NAVIGATIONS OF NORTHERN IRELAND (HM 456)

Ms Foley introduced the paper on canals and inland navigations of Northern Ireland. She explained that NIEA started work on a draft paper back in the 1990s. Under devolved government DCAL became responsible for canals and inland waterways and the guidance paper was then considered by both DCAL and NIEA. However, there have been delays in drafting an appropriate paper and therefore NIEA has decided to develop the guidance on its own as this is a matter of such public interest.

Council welcomed the paper and deferred discussion of it until Council's next meeting.

ACTION: Include on Agenda of next meeting Secretariat

Members noted that the specification for Lock 3 of the Lagan Navigation has been completed and the work is due to start in early September.

9. SCHEDULING OF MONUMENTS IN GUARDIANSHIP (HM455)

Ms M Gormley, NIEA tabled a paper on the scheduling of monuments in guardianship and gave a brief overview of the key areas such as (a) the legal context (b) guardianship statistics (c) activities at state care monuments (d) advantages to scheduling and (e) the

way forward . There were some 133 sites of monuments in state care which are either owned outright or in guardianship; either way NIEA has responsibility for work on them.

Council took the view that it would need to consider what advice NIEA receives from the Departmental Solicitor's on the legal implications on scheduling of state care monuments before it giving its recommendation.

10. HMC REPORT

Work on the HMC Report is ongoing and a deadline was set for all articles to be finalised by the end of September 2008. The Chairman and Mr O'Keeffe are to meet with Ms Gail Pollock, NIEA to consider a number of illustrations for the Report.

11. MEMBERS REPORTS

There were no members reports.

12. HMC VISIT TO SCOTLAND

The Chairman informed members that arrangements for Council's study visit were well advanced. An outline programme for the visit had been drawn up and would be circulated to members.

ACTION: **send members copy of itinerary** **Secretariat**

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

13.1 Monuments - Signage and Interpretation

Members noted that Regional Operations and Built Heritage are involved in a joint approach to the development of a policy on signage and interpretation associated with monuments in state care. However, they commended NIEA on the development of its educational approach to historic monuments.

13.2 Conference

Dr Muhr informed members of the First International Conference on the Early Medieval Toponymy of Ireland and Scotland being held at QUB on the 5th/6th September 2008. Details are to be circulated to members by the Secretariat.

ACTION: **Circulate details of conference** **Secretariat**

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting is to be notified to members in due course.