



Scottish Government Building,
1F North,
Victoria Quay,
Edinburgh,
EH6 6QQ

Mr. Craig Brooks
Chairperson
Friends of Campsie High Kirk
(By email)

Email: OPTS@kltr.gov.uk
Website: <http://www.kltr.gov.uk>

Our ref: BV 1424/23

Date: 12 / 09 / 2024

Dear Mr. Brooks,

**CAMPSIE HIGH KIRK, LENNOXTOWN - "THE PROPERTY"
CASE NUMBER: BV 1424/23**

A Notice of the King's and Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer's ("KLTR") decision under the Ownerless Property Transfer Scheme ("OPTS") in relation to the property is attached.

The KLTR has considered the application from Friends of Campsie High Kirk ("the Applicant") to acquire the Crown's interest in the property and is satisfied that it meets the criteria set out in the Ownerless Property Transfer Scheme. The KLTR intends to progress the potential sale of the property to the Applicant under OPTS.

We thank you for your application and wish you every success with your endeavours.

The enclosed Notice sets out the reasons for the KLTR's decision. We would draw the Applicant's attention to the notes contained in the Notice providing information about the effect of this decision.

A copy of this letter has been sent to East Dunbartonshire Council for their information.

Yours sincerely

Paul McGuigan
Senior Casework Manager

On behalf of the KLTR



Notice by the King's and Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer: Ownerless Property Transfer Scheme (OPTS)

The King's and Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer ("KLTR") has considered the application by Friends of Campsie High Kirk (SC053341) (the "Applicant") to acquire the Crown's interest in Campsie High Kirk, Lennoxton (the "property") and is satisfied that the application meets the OPTS criteria. As a result, the KLTR is minded to transfer the property to the Applicant and the reasons for this decision are as follows:

1. Intended Owner - Satisfied

The Applicant is an appropriately constituted community body for the purposes of OPTS.

The KLTR is satisfied that this criterion is met.

2. Public Interest - Satisfied

The factors considered in relation to public interest demonstrate that a transfer of the Crown's interest in the property to the Applicant would be in the public interest for the following reasons:

- The KLTR considers that the application aligned with the aims and objectives of the OPTS process. The Applicant is interested in taking ownership of the property with a view to carrying out remedial works and utilising it as a central community events space.
- The KLTR considers that the documentation provided in support of the application displays a wide level of public engagement and research in defining the benefits the proposals would bring to the local residents and wider population that the hub intends to attract and, if delivered successfully, a high proportion of the local community would benefit. The proposals clearly outline the anticipated social and economic benefits the hub would bring to an area which features in the most deprived 10% of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020.

The KLTR is satisfied that the Public Interest criterion has been met.



3. Definition of Community - Satisfied

The application contained a list of 123 postcode units within the G44 postcode area defining the local community, accompanied by a map clearly showing the extent of the community boundary. The KLTR is satisfied that the application appropriately defines the community, that the group have engaged with them, and that the definition is inclusive and open. These postcodes encompass the entirety of the Lennoxton area, approximately 4km², and include nearly 2000 residential properties and multiple commercial businesses.

The KLTR is satisfied that the Definition of Community criterion is met.

4. Community Interest and Support - Satisfied

The factors considered in relation to community interest and support demonstrate that a transfer of the Crown's interest in the property to the Applicant would be in the public interest for the following reasons:

- **Has the Applicant discussed plans with other local, regional or national organisations?**

The Applicant has provided evidence of engagement with several key organisations. This includes a letter of support from the Local Authority, East Dunbartonshire Council, intimating that the proposal aligns with their strategic goals. The KLTR noted that the Council approves of, and has practically supported this community-led initiative to preserve the building as an important heritage and cultural icon of Lennoxton and were providing in-kind support. Given the nature of the property, the Applicant has also been able to evidence wider support from a number of historic and war grave preservation societies.

- **Is there demonstrable support for the project within the community? How has this been demonstrated?**

The Applicant provided strong supporting information by way of demonstrating community interest and support for the application from within the defined community.

The Applicant put in place measures at an early stage to ensure suitable community engagement. The KLTR notes scope for further engagement with other stakeholders in the arts and culture sector and that the Applicant has identified a strategy to strengthen engagement and build membership numbers, which he considers will address this point. The Applicant carried



out a leaflet drop to all residential properties within the defined community, held public presentations within local community venues, set up a social media group to engage the public, and carried out a survey to gather both support and the opinions of the community. The survey received 487 responses, of which 484 (~99%) were in favour of the Applicant's proposals and it is reasonable to assume that support will increase as proposals develop.

The KLTR is satisfied that the Community Interest and Support criterion is met.

5. Sustainability & Environmental Impact - Satisfied

The KLTR has considered all 3 pillars relating to sustainable development – social, economic and environmental – and is of the view that the evidence provided in relation to sustainable development demonstrates that a transfer of the Crown's interest in the property to the Applicant would be in the public interest for the reasons outlined below:.

- **Social and Economic**

The application provided strong evidence of social and economic need which the proposal seeks to address.

Evidence was provided to show that Campsie is an area of high need on the SIMD (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation). This area has particularly high levels of deprivation in terms of income, employment, and health. The application notes that part of the village is among the 10% most deprived areas in Scotland (SIMD) 2020. The application notes that in a recent EDC consultation, it has been highlighted that Lennoxton was a place "people pass through, not a destination in itself".

The proposals set out the wide-ranging social benefits to the community by the creation of specific services including educational, gardening and arts classes that will benefit mental health for all ages.

The economic plan is for the Kirk to attract more visitors to the area and for the increased footfall to generate income for local businesses. The business plan projects a healthy 3,000-4,000 visitors per annum in years 1-3 and demonstrates potential to create local employment and volunteering opportunities to service this demand.



- **Environmental**

The KLTR considers that this project would provide an environmentally sensitive solution to a building that is facing decay and dereliction and successful delivery of the community's proposals should improve the local area for future generations, particularly as it is one of the parts of Scotland with fewer heritage assets in comparison to other areas.

The project addresses the decay of a heritage building and improving the area as proposed should benefit local residents, visitors and future generations alike. The Applicant intends to consult with Zero Waste Scotland to ensure an environmental approach is taken to delivering the proposals. This includes, but is not limited to, the use of reclaimed materials in the construction and fit out of the site. The Applicant has documented an aspiration to implement a number of initiatives that fall within Scotland's Circular Economy Bill.

The KLTR is satisfied that this criterion has been met.

6. Project Funding and Viability - Satisfied

The factors considered in relation to project funding and viability demonstrate a transfer of the Crown's interest in the property to the Applicant would be in the public interest for the following reasons:

- The evidence provided in the application in relation to project funding and viability demonstrates that a proposed transfer of the property to the Applicant would be good value for money and, therefore, be in the public interest. The Applicant has provided clear and consistent budget information in the application, which has been key to determining a satisfied score for this criterion.
- A clear income stream was provided by the Applicant to the extent they were able to, to address the ongoing sustainability of the project in relation to ongoing costs.
- The Applicant has noted that the valuation report for the High Kirk outlines necessary repair works, including vegetation removal, structural assessments, stonework repairs and internal fit-outs. Their current plans focus on stabilizing the building as an open-air, managed ruin rather than fully restoring it. The Applicant noted in their application that they recognise significant capital funding is needed for site clearance, structural reinforcement, and refurbishing smaller spaces. The potential diverse funding sources they have identified include National Lottery Heritage Fund, Historic Environment Scotland and Council regeneration funding.



- The Applicant indicated that a full funding strategy will be developed once cost estimates are finalised. The application therefore demonstrates that the group has a good understanding and awareness of how to identify and manage risk, and their Risk Register sets out how the group intends to progress applications to funders prior to any transfer date.
- While uncertainty remains over initial costs of bringing the site to the requisite health and safety standard to host outdoor events, the Applicant is proactively addressing this through commissioning a feasibility study to ascertain starting costs as part of their Scottish Land Fund stage one application.

The KLTR is satisfied that the Project Funding and Viability criterion has been met.

CONCLUSION

The KLTR is satisfied that there was sufficient evidence in the application across all criteria, particularly in relation to community support, forward planning, funding/project viability, to suggest that the Applicant could successfully take this project forward.

The KLTR considers that approving the application will provide an opportunity for the community to return a vacant and particularly derelict building of significant cultural value into an economically viable use for the benefit of the local community and visitors alike for generations to come.

The KLTR is therefore of the view that the application meets the required criteria and, as a result, the application has been approved.

NOTES

In determining whether the application meets the OPTS criteria, the KLTR has taken into account all of the information available to him at the time the decision was taken.

In approving the application, the KLTR provides the Applicant with 8 months from the date of this Notice to raise the necessary funds and conclude the transfer of the property (see point 5 in section 2.1 on page 6 of the OPTS Guidance at:

<https://www.kltr.gov.uk/media/3obhwypx/opts-guidance-march-2024.pdf>).