

Minutes of Special Meeting of West Clare Municipal District held on 14th July , 2015 at 10. am in Marina Building, Kilrush, Co. Clare.

Cathaoirleach sa Cathair:

Cllr. C. Curtin,

I Láthair:

Cllr. P.J.Kelly, Cllr. R. Nagle, Cllr. I. Lynch, Cllr. M. Hillery, Cllr. B. Chambers, Cllr. G. Keating.

Apologies:

Cllr. B. Slattery

Officials present:

Ms. A. Haugh, Area Co-Ordinator & Director of Service,
Mr. C. Feeney, A/Senior Executive Engineer ,West Clare Municipal District
Mr. J. Corry, Administrative Officer & Meetings Administrator.
D. Whelan, Scattery Island Group
M. Nolan, Scattery Island Group
E. Brennan, Scattery Island Group
F. Frawley, Scattery Island Group
R. Brew, Scattery Island Group
R. Glynn, Scattery Island Group
L. Marrinan, Scattery Island Group
T. Burke, Scattery Island Group

Cllr. Curtin welcomed everyone to the meeting .Cllr. Lynch indicated that there was a great mtg last week with Scattery Group, Clare Co Council & the OPW. He added that this meeting was an opportunity for the Scattery Group to provide details to the West Clare MD on how they came about, what their plans were & where they want assistance from Clare Co Council. Cllr. Keating agreed that there was great potential for Scattery Island & he believed that this could be the first Destination Point off land on the Wild Atlantic Way. He added that it could be a great boost to tourism in Kilrush. He suggested that development should be done bit by bit to clear the scrub, provide access ,provide a bridge etc. The other Members also indicated that they were delighted with the opportunity to meet with the Scattery Group. It was suggested that the initiative needed to come from the Scattery Group & the West Clare MD would provide assistance where it could.

D. Whelan introduced the Group outlined how they would brief the West Clare MD on Scattery Island. He added that he would go through the Conservation Plan. He added that M. Nolan

would speak on the initial acquisition of the island & the formal handover & E. Brennan would speak on plans for Scattery Island Village conservation.

D. Whelan outlined that the Scattery Island group were in place almost 4 years. He indicated that they recognized that briars & overgrowth on the island were getting progressively worse & were choking the island & the local flora & fauna and causing damage to the buildings. He also said it was an objective of theirs to increase visitor numbers to the island. He added that visitor numbers greatly increased the year of the Gathering once they raised awareness of the island. He added that their next priority was to clear some of the overgrowth. He indicated that with the assistance of Congella Maguire, Heritage Officer, Clare Co Council they applied for & received permission from the OPW carry out clearing of overgrowth from the Battery. He added that they recd some funding to prepare a Conservation Plan which they forwarded to OPW & they received permission to bring animals on to the island on a pilot basis to graze around the Battery & to help reduce the overgrowth. He added that it was proposed to bring donkeys in there in September & that the local group would cover the cost of fencing, providing water for animals etc. He added that access to the Battery Point was a problem & he added that L & M Keating suggested putting in gabions & provide a bridge across them which would provide access to the Battery Point which would open up the island & would cost approx €4k ie €2k materials & €2k machinery. He added that this proposed work should not require an EIS etc. He added that the locals would cover the cost of the machinery & they were looking for a contribution towards the cost of the materials. He concluded by saying that there was tremendous potential for the island from the point of view of bird watching, botany, dolphin watching etc which was presently being curtailed by access at this point.

M. Nolan went through the history of the acquisition of the Scattery Island. He added that there was a Community Dev Group in Kilrush in the 1980s & they went to Brussels in 1989 to buy Scattery Island. On the 24/5/1989 they met with the OPW & terms were agreed re funding & it was agreed that there would be a lease back to the local community of the non monument areas & they would need to prepare a Management Plan for the island. He added that the funding was raised as follows: £10k from the Local Community, £25k from Shannon Development & £10k from Clare Co Council with the balance made up by the OPW. He added that a Working Group was set up & the purchase was completed in 1989. He said the OPW have the interest of the island at heart. He said that the OPW would have a no of valuable surveys carried out on Scattery Island over the years which would provide a lot of invaluable information. He suggested that the Council would revive the Working Group . He emphasized that it was very important that there was a legal connection between Council, the local Community & the OPW.

E. Brennan circulated proposals regarding improvements which could be carried out to the village area in particular to the roofs of the buildings. She mentioned that a balance needed to be made between the tourism & spiritual potential of the island.

Cllr. Lynch indicated that there was tremendous potential with Scattery Island & he suggested that funding was a big issue. He suggested that the island could rival Bunratty Castle & folk park in terms of a folk park tourist attraction. He indicated that Clare Co Council were tied into a lease as highlighted by M. Nolan. He indicated that the Working Group including Clare Co

Council would be crucial. He suggested that perhaps Kilrush Amenity Trust could get involved from the point of view of labour, insurance etc.

Cllr. Keating indicated that if you had a shovel ready project that you would be able to utilize funding.

Anne Haugh had a few observations. She said it was everyone's objective to halt the decline of the island by removing the overgrowth etc. She said that she was not aware of the historic background to the island & she found that very informative. She indicated that funding would be crucial for the development of the island & suggested that some of the solutions mentioned today could be moved forward with very modest funding amounts. She also suggested that it would be important for a multiagency approach to the proposed improvement of the island. She mentioned that Clare Co Council would be committed to the improvement of the island but from a financial point of view that they would be constrained. She also mentioned that there may be the possibility for the Local Authority to provide Gateway workers who could assist with some of the works to be carried out on the island.

D. Whelan mentioned that there would be access to EU funding if a Co-op was formed. Cllr. Nagle indicated that it would be important that Fáilte Ireland would be part of any Working Group formed.

C. Feeney suggested that a 5-10 year Plan & a Programme of Works needed to be prepared which looked at all areas of the proposed improvement & redevelopment of the island which would be required in order to draw down funding etc. He indicated that there would be environmental challenges as the Shannon estuary was a Special Area of Conservation.

C. Curtin thanked everyone for attending. He indicated that obstacles had been outlined & a legal lease had been identified. He said the setting up of the Working Group would be crucial & that this would be further discussed by the West Clare MD.

The meeting then concluded

Signed :

Cllr. C. Curtin
Cathaoirleach

Signed :

J. Corry
Meetings Administrator

Dated this the 15th day of September 2015.