

**MINUTES OF THE FOSSIL GROVE TRUST MEETING  
HELD ON MONDAY 21<sup>ST</sup> AUGUST 2017 AT 11 AM  
IN THE CITY CHAMBERS**

*Present:* Walter Semple (Chair); Councillor Maggie McTernan; Glasgow City Council; Michael Herrigan; David Webster; Campbell Forrest; Neil Robertson.

*In Attendance:* Fiona McKinnon, Land and Environmental Services; Kara Wilson, Financial Services, Glasgow City Council (for the first part of the meeting); Andy McGregor, Scottish Natural Heritage.

**1. Apologies:**

Elizabeth Brown, Feargal Dalton and Ade Aibinu.

**2. New Trustees**

The trustees warmly welcomed Campbell Forrest to his first meeting as trustee.

**3. Approval to minutes of 12<sup>th</sup> June 2017**

The trustees approved the minute of the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> June.

**4. Additional Documents.**

The chairman referred to two additional documents circulated: letter from Roger Curtis of Historic Environment Scotland dated 15 August 2017 and the email from Elizabeth Brown dated 5 August 2017. The trustees might wish to refer to these documents in the course of today's discussions.

**5. Financial Update 2016-17.**

There was submitted and noted a financial update for the period from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 to 4<sup>th</sup> August 2017 advising that the balance in the account was £375,316. The decrease in investment value since 01.04.2017 had been £4649. There had been expenditure of £1273 on Fossil Grove. This was the expenditure by David Webster on environmental monitoring equipment and poster displays referred to at item 5 of the agenda. The trustees thanked Kara for the efficacy of her financial operations. She also tabled a report from Ruffer on the investments. The Chairman asked if in future this could be sent to the trustees in advance so that it could be considered at the meeting for which it was relevant and not the following meeting. The Chairman undertook to reply to her email of 19 July asking for a statement of trust achievements during the year.

**6. Report by Land and Environmental Services**

Fiona McKinnon gave an oral report on two matters.

A review of the drainage and a map of the drainage had been instructed from Access LLP. There had been a delay in producing this because of the workload of Access LLP and the failure to prioritise this work. The trustees expressed their strong regret at the continued delay. Operational drainage was critical before the winter. The rainwater goods needed to be renewed. The chairman pointed out that in the commercial world delays of this kind would result in the appointment of another contractor to do the work. Fiona said that this was excluded by council procedures. The trustees expressed their concern about the situation and agreed to consider further what action might be taken.

With reference to lighting there were two issues. One was failed light bulbs. Fiona said that instructions had been given to City Building to replace the light bulbs. The second was the allegation by SNH following the visit on 19th July that the gantry support was in bad condition and dangerous. Fiona said that she had received an assurance from City Building that the gantry was not dangerous and that they would replace the defective support as soon as possible. She said that City Building had been asked to produce a Method statement about how the repairs were to be carried out

David Webster said that the replacement of the light bulbs was urgent. He said that only 2 of the 20 bulbs worked. The result was that visitors had difficulty in seeing the fossils. This should not be postponed. It was proposed to open Fossil Grove for the Scottish Geological Heritage Festival on 8<sup>th</sup> October and the Doors Open Day on 16th October. Every effort should be made to have the lighting remedied as soon as possible.

David Webster referred to the recent results of the environmental monitoring. Water ingress was becoming even more serious. The moisture in the building was now near saturation point. This showed a complete failure of the arrangements made so far. It will be necessary to ensure that the fossils are protected during the winter. David also raised the damage to the rear access door resulting in denial of access through it. This was important as regards the maintenance of the building and sampling. It needed to be repaired. He also referred to the accumulation of litter in their area near the rear access door.

Fiona asked for confirmation that the request made at the previous meeting for use of the Fossil Grove for an event requiring access to the Fossil floor was not acceptable to the trustees. This was confirmed.

## **7. Report of the Advisory Group and of Working Party meeting on 19th July including SNH reports.**

Andy McGregor spoke to his two emails of 19th July. The first referred to the poor state of the building. It emphasised again the urgency of resolving basic building and drainage management issues. It raised the need for a clear plan for short-term action. The second confirmed that the condition of the site is considered unfavourable and declining. This was not in doubt. There was no prospect of withdrawing the SSSI status. This email also

explained questions relating to enforcement of positive management of the SSSI. The conclusion was that before any enforcement steps were taken SNH must engage with the owner in establishing and maintaining an appropriate scheme of management to carry out the owner's obligations in the existing Management Agreement. The chairman asked what arrangements were made to have this dialogue take place. Andy replied that no direct arrangements had been made with the City Council because of the involvement and role of the Fossil Grove trust. The chairman then explained the legal position of the trust. The trust did not own Fossil Grove although that was the stated intention in the trust deed. The trust had no power except as a lobby group with privileged access to the city authorities. Any discussion of the type indicated by SNH must take place directly between SNH and the City Council.

The chairman said that he had raised this question in 2016 with Elaine Galletly the Head in-house solicitor employed by the City Council. Her response was that the city was working with SNH to resolve the issues. This did not seem consistent with the position as explained by Andy. The chairman undertook to circulate the relevant exchange of emails between him and Elaine Galletly.

#### **8. Report from David Webster on internal work and environmental monitoring**

David Webster spoke to the circulated reports. The trustees noted these and thanked him warmly for all the work he had been doing to improve the presentation of Fossil Grove.

#### **9. Paper from Jordanhill Community Council.**

This was noted. In principle, the trustees were sympathetic to the views expressed although it may be that some aspects of the Lennon report might be useful. The chairman agreed to send an appropriate response.

#### **10. Future options**

The chairman referred to the great amount of investigation work which had been done with a view to finding a solution to long-term conservation of the fossils and satisfactory public exhibition. He referred to the work of the Advisory Group, Scottish Natural Heritage, Historic Environment Scotland and the work of the trustees.

At the heart of this was the condition of the building. He compared the report from Roger Curtis of HES with the Access report. The Access report was designed to remedy the defects in the existing building and its equipment. Roger Curtis on the other hand suggested a restoration of the building in such a way as to ensure long-term conservation of the fossils designed so as to minimise water ingress and maximise ventilation. This would reduce but not eliminate the need for air handling and heating equipment.

Discussions were taking place between LES and Friends of Victoria Park about how the garden area surrounding the building could be restored.

The statutory obligation of conservation of the fossils rested upon Glasgow City Council and upon no other person or body. The responsibility for the continuing unacceptable situation lay with Glasgow City Council.

The City Council had placed responsibility for carrying out its obligations on LES. Fossil conservation was not within the skill resources of LES. Nor was LES provided with a budget which was designed to carry out the statutory obligations of the City Council.

Glasgow Life on the other hand had the necessary skills as curators and conservators of museums. Management by Glasgow Life was the only realistic solution to resolving the present situation. Glasgow Life had made it clear that they had no budget for this. It was therefore necessary for the City Council to provide the necessary funding.

The work which had been done showed that the financial resources required could be much less than had previously been discussed. A sensitive restoration of the building designed to conserve the fossils would be a far less expensive project than the one put to Heritage Lottery Fund or discussed by the Lennon report. The task of funding such a project would be much less than what had previously been proposed. Such a solution would appear to be more acceptable to users of the park than what had previously been suggested.

The continuing revenue cost would be primarily maintenance of the building and surrounds, and staff cost relating to opening the building to the public. It should be possible that costs of a keeping a well maintained restored building kept as suggested by HES should be modest. Staff costs for opening times could be reduced by using volunteers particularly amongst geology students as had been explored with them.

In addition, there was the possibility of creating a café and possibly retail facility in a part of the park which would attract custom and enhance the park. This could include a geology exhibition and meeting space. One possibility was an expansion of the existing sports pavilion. This type of solution had been successfully achieved in other parks and in particular Newlands Park. Any trading surplus could contribute to maintenance costs of Fossil Grove.

A solution of this kind should meet the two objections made by Heritage Lottery Fund when they were approached about a previous project. The first was that the project needed to be financially sustainable. The second was that the project would need to respond to the wishes of other users of the park.

Campbell Forrest spoke to the paper which he had produced. He emphasised the importance of dealing with Glasgow City Council as owners to provide the necessary funding. However it was necessary that Glasgow Life assumed management responsibility for Fossil Grove and conservation of the fossils with the financial burden remaining with the Council as owners and subject the responsibilities of the SSSI.

Fiona McKinnon said that the respective responsibilities of the City Council and Glasgow Life had been very fully discussed in the past. The outcome had led to the present situation. She suggested that the trustees produce a position paper setting out their proposals and said that this would be welcome. It was agreed to do this as soon as possible.

### **11. Press and public relations**

It was agreed that at the appropriate time it may be very helpful to have good access to the press. However, the discussions over the Fossil Grove were at very sensitive stage. This was not the time for the trustees to seek publicity.

### **12. Dissemination of documents and confidentiality of documents**

The trustees had followed a policy of openness and transparency in the conduct of their business. For this reason they had agreed that their minutes should be published on the City Council website. However where it matters were under discussion and were potentially sensitive, badly timed publication of information could frustrate these discussions. It was agreed to continue the policy of publication of minutes subject to the reservation that where confidentiality was required for any reason, the reports or discussions of such matters could be kept confidential until the time came for their being made public. Where the trustees were working along with other interested groups it would be necessary to share information with them and if possible to raise with them the extent to which confidentiality was required and could be maintained

### **13. Fundraising**

Neil Robertson suggested that the previous discussions regarding fundraising should be considered. It was agreed that this should be discussed at the next working party meeting.

### **14. New guide on being a charity in Scotland issued by OSCR**

Noted.

### **15. Fossil Grove leaflet and Excursion guide written by David Webster**

David Webster said that he had produced a short leaflet to explain Fossil Grove to visitors and also a longer more detailed geological guide. He needed guidance on how these were to be made available and at what cost if any. This would be considered at the next working party meeting.

### **16. Next Trust meetings**

Proposed that in future meetings should take place on Tuesdays at 10 AM and not 11 AM. The suggested dates are as follows:

Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> October 2017 (AGM)

Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> January 2018

Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2018

Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> August 2018

Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> October 2018 (AGM).

These are for approval by trustees.

**17. Next working party meeting**

Wednesday 13 September 2017 in the Whiteinch Centre at 16:00 hours