

**MINUTES OF THE FOSSIL GROVE TRUST MEETING  
HELD ON MONDAY 6<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2017  
IN THE CITY CHAMBERS**

*Present:* Walter Semple (Chair), Bailie Philip Braat, Councillor Gilbert Davidson and Councillor Kenny McLean, Glasgow City Council, Elizabeth Brown, Michael Herrigan, Neil Robertson and David Webster.

*In Attendance:* Kimberley Kime (Clerk); Fiona McKinnon, Land and Environmental Services; and Kara Wilson, Financial Services, Glasgow City Council.

*Observing:* Councillor Dr Bartos and Alan Faulds.

**1 Approval to minutes of 31<sup>st</sup> October 2016.**

The minutes of the meeting held on 31<sup>st</sup> October were submitted. The trustees approved the minutes.

With regard to item 2, no response to Richard East's letter had been made.

**2 Financial Monitoring Report 2016-17.**

There was submitted and noted a financial monitoring report for the period from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 to 20<sup>th</sup> January 2017 advising that the balance in the account was £390,538. The increase in value since 01.04.2017 had been £43,067.

**3 Investment Fund update.**

Duncan McInnes of Ruffer LLP, gave a presentation,

He tabled a paper which showed that in 2016, there had been 12.9% growth in the value of the trusts managed for the City Council. It was described as a robust performance.

The Chairman asked Mr McInnes about the risks reported on by Mr Ruffer in his Investment Review. For example, "We remain more strongly alert to the possibility of a sharp downward move in asset prices than ever" in the last paragraph. Mr McInnes said that protections were built into the portfolio. He agreed that if the trust funds were likely to be needed to meet liabilities it was prudent to hold some of the fund in cash and that some trusts followed this practice. Some trusts wished to keep between 10% and 20% in cash depending on their circumstances.

The Trustees thanked Mr McInnes for his presentation.

#### **4 Status of Repairs.**

Fiona McKinnon provided an update report to the Trustees regarding ongoing repairs as follows:

##### **i. Drainage Survey**

Trustees received a copy of all the information supplied to LES. Additional information on what work has been carried out has been requested from Access.

##### **ii. Gutters**

Clearing has been carried out three times during the autumn. It is now programmed for work on an annual basis. One further clean has been requested this year. Progress on the repairs has been requested from Access.

##### **iii Application of bituminous paint.**

This work has been instructed.

##### **iv Frost thermometer**

This has been installed

##### **v. Environmental monitoring**

The temporary monitoring equipment was on site for five weeks. A report is awaited from Scientific Services. The information will be circulated to Trustees as soon as it is available.

##### **vi. Heating/air conditioning system**

As previously discussed, any system design and therefore costing will depend on information being available about the optimum conditions to be achieved in relation to the existing conditions. None of this information is currently available.

David Webster expressed concern that the drainage work had not solved the drainage issues at the west end of the building.

#### **5 Conservation and Displays.**

There was submitted a report by David Webster advising of the current conservation issues affecting the fossil trees, and for the current display material to be reviewed. This is attached. The trustees accepted the recommendations on page 3 of the Report.

## **6 Progress of Business Case Feasibility Study.**

The trustees had received the second draft of the Business Case Feasibility Study by Professor Lennon dated 3<sup>rd</sup> February. This had followed a trustees' working party meeting where the first draft had been discussed with Professor Lennon, They needed time to consider it and consult on it.

A meeting would be fixed between Fiona McKinnon, David Webster and the Chairman.

## **Victoria Park Place Making.**

7 The placemaking engagement had been taking place between November and February. Elizabeth Brown and Michael Herrigan had taken part. There would be a continuation of a representative group to take forward a development plan for the Park and Trustees were asked to formally endorse the participation of the Trust in this process. This was agreed.

## **8 Opening Times.**

Opening times at weekends from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2017 were discussed, and it was noted that these would remain the same as last year.

## **9 AOCB.**

Michael Herrigan advised the trustees of the Scottish Civic Trust "My Place" awards. The trustees were not in a position to apply at this stage,

Fiona McKinnon asked if the trust wished to provide a stall at the Dundee Flower and Food Festival this year, following a request from Dundee City Council. The trustees indicated that it was more important to focus on Doors Open Day, and that this proposal should not be pursued.

**ATTACHMENT ON NEXT PAGE.**

**Trustees Meeting: 6<sup>th</sup> February 2017**

**Report by: David Webster, Trustee**

## Conservation and Displays

### **Purpose of Report:**

To summarise the current conservation issues affecting the fossil trees within the Fossil Grove building and to review the current display material

### **1. Background**

The Advisory Group – through the leadership of SNH - have been engaged with a number of professional stone conservation bodies and individuals in order to gain a better understanding of the mineralogy and chemistry – and their relationships with the environment within the building with the aims of producing a recommended treatment regime to remove salt encrustations, and to produce temperature and humidity range recommendations in order to prevent further deterioration.

The displays and lighting are in poor condition and some expenditure is required urgently before the building can be opened to the public.

### **2. Conservation Activities**

The original intent was to tender for a rock-decay study with SNH offering to pay for the work. Four contractors were requested to tender but only two could undertake the work and none in the required timeframe.

The work was in the process of being re-tendered when Historic Environment Scotland (HES) offered to undertake a laser-scan of the premises and initiate some rock mineralogy studies with their own resources – an offer which was gratefully accepted. Further work (with cost implications) may be required after this phase.

The scan took place on the 19<sup>th</sup> January and the results are expected soon and will be circulated. These should prove invaluable in all sorts of ways. HES scanned the exterior as well as the interior of the building, and took colour photographs which will be overlaid onto the 3D scan. Some further information is expected from HES on mineral and salt samples that they collected, and this should help understand what is going on.

Ewan Hyslop from HES attended the scan and has been invited to join the Advisory Group. He noted that with conditions drier in the interior, it is easier to see salt efflorescence on the surface of the fossils and adjacent surfaces. He suggested that there would be value in simply sweeping these salts up with a soft brush and removing them from the site, to prevent them being reabsorbed if dampness returns. That would require a fair bit of care, and it is something SNH would do with help from HES or vice versa.

During the survey the team from HES and SNH noted that despite the remaining drainage issues still requiring attention, the general dampness of the interior appears improved since a year ago, and this is noticeable in the atmosphere in the building. This is largely down to the progress made on fixing drains, clearing gutters, etc., which is excellent.

They also noted that it will be important to maintain this level of upkeep; the gutters are still full of leaves and the channel along the outside of the south wall has filled up with leaf & soil debris again (see photo). None of that is unexpected given the time of year, although it is surprising how quickly the wall channel has filled up. It looks as though when it was cleared a narrow channel 20-30cm wide clear from the wall was created, but it would be more effective and longer lasting if this were fully cleared as far as the adjacent rock shelf/wall.



View along south wall of Fossil Grove building showing leaf build up and previously excavated channels

In addition although with the improved maintenance regime the interior appears to be drier, the fabric of the building remains in unsustainably poor condition generally – the render is cracked and no longer weatherproof, and a possibly bituminous cement layer around the bottom of the building is also cracked and probably serves more to lock dampness in than keep it out.

Dr Hyslop also commented that it's probably important that the interior hasn't dried out completely (no chance of that!) or too quickly, as rapid drying would worsen the problem of salts damaging rock surfaces. So the way it has worked out seems quite optimal, happily.

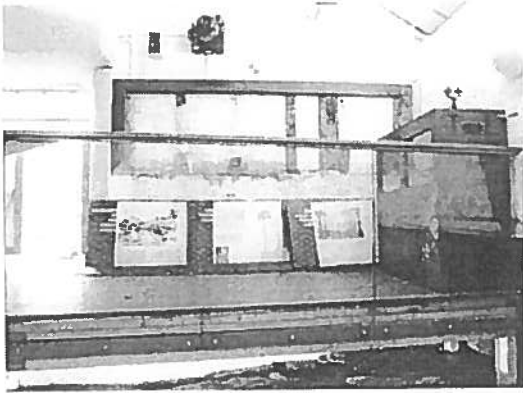
It is important that environmental monitoring is maintained in the longer term – working towards establishing a fairly basic and automatic heating/dehumidifier set-up that will maintain stable and moderate conditions of temperature and humidity.

The fluorescent lighting should be upgraded to LED lighting to improve visibility, reduce running costs and would greatly improve the visitor experience. Glasgow Museums should be consulted to ensure that any new lighting regime does not encourage algal growth.

### 3. Display Material

The main display area on the eastern balcony is in very poor condition – with some display panels having fallen off the walls due to rot (see photo). It is considered inappropriate to open the building to the public with the displays in this condition.

Consideration should be given to engaging an appropriate organisation or individual to (a) remove the wall displays and obsolete cabinets, (b) undertake remedial painting/sealing of the walls of the balcony and (c) re-instate new/cleaned versions of the display panels.



Displays on the east balcony. The wooden frames have rotted away and the panels have fallen.

#### 4. Resource Implications

The cost of future rock conservation studies is currently uncertain and a further report will be drawn up when these become clearer.

A report on lighting repair options has been requested from LES/Access but nothing has yet been received so costs are not known at this stage.

A report on options and costs for repairing/renewing the displays could be initiated by the Advisory Group.

#### 5. Recommendations

1. That consideration be given to the principle of expenditure of Trust funds on future rock-decay studies should that be considered appropriate.
2. That the current drainage issues be completed by LES and their contractors as soon as possible.
3. That environmental monitoring be continued indefinitely and not just for a pilot period
4. That LES re-instruct Access to prepare a quotation for replacing the lighting system with a modern LED system
5. That the Trustees agree the principle of part-funding the new lighting system
6. That the Trustees agree an appropriate sum for repairing/reinstate the displays and delegate the Advisory Group to proceed immediately so that work is completed before Easter.