|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Meeting of Kenmore and District Community Council****Via Teams****30th June 2022 7pm****Minutes** |
|  |  |

**Present**

Peter Ely, Ian Connolly (DLC), Carol May, Olive Munro, Colin Morton, Alex Low, Shirley Shearer, Jenny Rees, Andrew Girvan and approximately 3 members of the local community.

**Apologies**

Liz Stott

**Declarations of Interest**

None

1. **Taymouth Castle Update**

Peter Ely confirmed that a statement had been issued by Kenmore and District CC giving an update on the situation at Taymouth Castle on 26th June. This is available for all on the KDCC website. This update is based on the regular meetings that KDCC has been having with the team at Taymouth Castle (Ian Connolly, Peter Allen and Chris Camppbell).

Ian Connolly (VP Structure and Development) from Discovery Land Company (DLC) joined the meeting to give an update on developments at the Castle. Ian has been with DLC for 6 months and is responsible for delivering the Taymouth Castle project.

The development is based on the 2011 consented plan to convert the Tower and West Wing of the Castle into 11 apartments (2 for the owner and 9 for paying guests). Some updates are required to bring work undertaken previously up to the standard required for current building regs, SEPA requirements etc. All changes are being made in conjunction with PKC and Historic Scotland and full listed building consent has been obtained.

The Taymouth Castle project is large and will be addressed in several phases some of which will run in parallel:

* Phase 1 Tower and West Wing (65 weeks from 11 July)
* Phase 2 Golf Course (will run into next year)
* Phase 3 East Wing
* Phase 4 North Wing
* Phase 5 Residential properties in grounds

DLC is working with MacKenzie Strickland architects who worked on the 2011 consented plan and previous plans also.

A main contractor Thomas Johnson (offices in Perth, Edinburgh and Glasgow) has been appointed and they will commence work on 11 July. Phase 1 of the project (Tower and West Wing) is expected to take 65 weeks from 11 July. On completion of Phase 1, 9 apartments, bars and a restaurant will be up and running for paying guests.

Work has already been undertaken to address some of the damage caused by Storm Arwen. Trees on the Gallops brought down in the storm have been cleared and there are plans to make the paths more accessible. Improvements have also been made to the Kenmore beach area.

DLC recognizes the challenge of getting a local workforce and would rather employ people locally. The Kenmore Hotel was purchased to help address this issue and will be used initially for staff accommodation. DLC has already undertaken remedial works to bring the hotel up to the required standard for staff. For Phase 1 of the project DLC expects to employ 50 or 60 staff which will need to be housed locally. Some but not all of the cottages in Kenmore have been purchased for this purpose also. Ian is living in one of the cottages purchased.

Ian opened the floor for questions:

Jenny Rees asked about the Kenmore Hotel – Ian explained that the current plan is to restore the Kenmore Hotel to a boutique 4\* hotel. Current plans are to add a spa/gym facility and possibly a swimming pool. These plans will all be subject to approval by PKC and Historic Scotland as there are some historical items within the Kenmore Hotel that will need to be preserved.

Ian indicated that DLC has also purchased Taymouth Trading with one option being to establish a commercial bakery to bake bread for the Castle but also to run as a cafe and retail outlet and possibly offering light dining in the evening. It is expected that discussions will be had with the local baker in the Kenmore area around this proposal.

In terms of the 160 residential properties on the site it is planned to make some improvements to the original designs. It is planned to change roofing to slate to be more in local character and to improve the finish of the walls. As these will all need to go through planning and full risk assessment surveys need to be done for each property, it is proposed to divide the houses into 20 property lots. This will make the process more manageable for everyone. It is expected that the process of applying for planning permission will start in 2 to 3 weeks’ time. Once outline planning permission is received DLC will start marketing the properties for sale. If all goes according to plan DLC expects to have houses available in the grounds in approx. 18 months’ time. However unforeseen events may impact the schedule. For example, delays have already been encountered with repairing the East Gate because PKC has now requested a bat survey be undertaken. As a result, all timescales are best estimates at this point.

Andrew Girvan raised concerns over the way the future of Kenmore Primary school was portrayed in the update as he felt it suggested the school may potentially close. Peter explained this was not the intention at all and the figures quoted were taken from published attendance stats. The intention was to indicate that with staff of DLC/Taymouth Castle moving to the area the number of children attending the school would potentially increase. Ian confirmed that Dale (one of the DLC team) has already been in touch with the school regarding several initiatives.

Alex asked about the Golf Course plans - in terms of the Golf Course development a Golf Club designer, who has previously worked on a course at St Andrews, has been employed. Soil surveys are due to commence in July to determine the best grass for each location and an additional area has been fenced off for this work. It is planned that the 18-hole course will be over 7000 yards long. Work is expected to commence at the end of 2022. Large pieces of machinery will be needed for this work which may involve changes to the fenced off areas. Agreement will be sought for any changes.

Olive asked about the external wall – Ian explained the intention is to replace with like for like. DLC had not expected that planning would be required for this (as it is like for like) but PKC are insisting on a full planning submission. This has caused delays to this work commencing in earnest as planning is expected to take approx. 12 weeks. Once planning permission is received the 2.5-mile-long wall from Kenmore will be repaired in sections with traffic light controls. In the meantime, DLC is looking for skilled stone masons. Peter Ely asked if DLC would consider apprenticeships to train people in the required skills. Ian indicated that DLC would be very supportive of apprenticeships for both hospitality and development/construction careers. Peter advised that the Crannog runs a successful apprenticeship scheme and agreed to provide contact details to Ian. Ian re-iterated that they would really like to employ local people if possible.

Ian confirmed before he left the call that he is happy to answer any questions and discuss any concerns.

Shirley mentioned that all interactions with the Castle team so far have been very positive and the team is extremely helpful. This is leading to feeling optimistic for the future. Colin agreed and mentioned they have been very receptive to any suggestions/concerns raised by KDCC and have been extremely responsive.

**2. Kenmore Shop/PO - Progress Update**

The possibility of a community buy out is being pursued via the Breadalbane Development Trust. There has been a slight delay as there appears to be an issue with the Articles of Association of BDT that needs to be addressed. It is expected that it will take 5 to 6 weeks to re-do the Articles.

Colin is working on the application form for the community buyout through BDT and has circulated for feedback/comment.

Signatures are being collected from the local area in support of the community buyout. Cindy and Michael Buchanan are covering Fortingal, Olive for Ardtalnaig, Carol for Acharn, Colin for Mains of Taymouth, Peter for Kenmore and Balnaskaig, Sue and Elaine Melrose for Fearnan.

In terms of the Post Office several options are being considered including a mobile post office or using the reading rooms as a base. Peter, Shirley and Colin are due to meet Robert Sharp, Network Provision Lead for the Post Office on 11th July at 7pm to review what options might be available.

Other potential purchasers have also come forward and it is thought that DLC would still be interested in buying and running as a shop. However, at the moment the current owner of the shop is still reluctant to sell, but it is hoped this may change in the future.

1. Date of Next Meeting

Next meeting will be held on Thurs 28th July.

Alex Low

Minute Secretary