

KIRKBY LONSDALE TOWN COUNCIL 9 JUNE, 2021

Agenda item 17

Saving Church Brow and Ruskin's View

This report updates on a number of items re Church Brow/Ruskin's View and asks the Town Council to agree a number of actions.

1. At the last Town Council on 5 May it was agreed that because of poor performance the Council should terminate its agreement with RG Parkins and agree terms with Fairhurst's to carry out an initial study at a cost of £5,500 plus VAT. The Town Clerk has actioned both matters and the results of the initial investigations by Fairhurst's are awaited.
2. When RG Parkins were first appointed the Council agreed a budget of £20,000 to be spent on investigation works, scheme design, the development of a business case, identification of sources of funding and the use of consultants to raise the necessary funding.
3. In the recommendations at the end of this note it is recommended that similar provisions be put in place to ensure that progress can be made on this matter and that the Town Clerk can take the necessary actions.
4. In parallel to the investigation works, the Town Council submitted an Expression of Interest to the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) to try to secure a significant amount of funding for the project. In agreement with the Big Vision/St Mary's Church the Town Council's bid included works to allow public access to the Glebe Field and The Motte.
5. A parallel bid was submitted by St Mary's for essential works to repair and remodel the Grade 1 listed church. Unfortunately, both Expressions of Interest were not approved by the NLHF, largely on the grounds that both bids included a large percentage of capital works. It is understood that St Mary's may submit a revised bid in three months time, the minimum period allowed between bids. The St Mary's revised bid is likely to include proposals for the Glebe Field and The Motte, these being key church lands which can lend weight to their bid.
6. In the case of Church Brow/Ruskin's View a revised bid is more problematic in that most of the costs in retaining The Brow involve essentially capital works. However, the councillors involved in this issue will keep the possibility of NLHF funding under review and the submission of a further Expression of Interest is a possibility.
7. However, it is likely that the costs of stabilising Church Brow/Ruskin's View (which will be in the order of £800,000) will have to be raised through local charities, by local fund raising and possibly by prudential borrowing or significant increases to the

precept. In order to raise this level of funding a professional fund raiser may have to be used and the recommendations which follow cover this possibility.

8. Raising this level of funding will be a big ask, as will be the managing of a major civil engineering project. Contact will be made with South Lakeland District Council, Cumbria County Council and the Yorkshire Dales National Park to see how these organisations might be able to assist the Council and it is suggested that this issue be the main focus of discussion when the Council is first able to meet again in public.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Town Council is asked to:

- re-affirm its initial budget for Saving The Brow/Ruskin's View at £20,000;
- to delegate to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chair, Deputy Chair and Councillor Marczynski, expenditure within this limit;
- expenditure to cover a range of matters including further investigations, the commissioning of design work, the obtaining of estimates for construction, the obtaining of consents/permits and, if necessary, appointing consultants to fund raise on behalf of the Council;
- to agree terms for the further appointment of Fairhurst's, if their initial investigations are deemed satisfactory;
- agree that contact be made with South Lakeland District Council, Cumbria County Council and the Yorkshire Dales National Park to see how they might assist the Town Council;
- and make a discussion about funding the Saving of Church Brow and Ruskin's View the main topic of discussion at the first face to face meeting the Council are able to have.