

**Torry Development Trust**  
**(A Company Limited by Guarantee, and a Registered Charity in Scotland)**

To date we have developed small scale local projects funded from various sources that includes the introduction of Christmas Lights in Torry, environmental improvements and the funding of the recently published Torry Heritage Book

**Victoria Road School Sites – progress report**

On Friday 1<sup>st</sup> December, the Finance Committee of the City Council signalled their willingness for the TDT to identify and report back on development initiatives linked to the retention and restoration of the existing granite buildings on the sites

The Trustees have formally committed the TDT to engage with private, public and third sector organisations to enable solutions to be outlined to demonstrate that new uses will

- 1 Meet local needs
- 2 Have strategic fit
- 3 Demonstrate social value and sustainability

TDT has been fortunate to have been able to tap into business and professional advice and expertise from many willing sources (individuals and organisations) who share common goals and aspirations. This input, guidance and direction has been provided on a no commitment goodwill basis to help us to move forward and develop ideas at this early stage.

Some of these are referred to here but in due course, when a formal proposal comes forward, this help will be fully acknowledged and attributed formally. The Trustees recognise that the Trust is the catalyst which can bind the other partners (RSL, NHS, ACC or charities, etc) and enables the beneficial reaction.

To date, we have achieved support and commitment from local and national organisations, and

- 1 Through membership of the Scotland Towns Partnership, we have access to expertise and project management skills of their associates
- 2 Through membership of the Development Trust Association (Scotland), advice, information and support is available through a network of Development Trusts and professional staff
- 3 Have received pro-bono advice from building and property professionals, sharing architectural, structure engineering, quantity surveying and property management skills
- 4 Have received a letter of formal support from Grampian Housing Association to secure housing and community focused solutions on the site and to assist projects adopted for development by the TDT
- 5 Have met with three potential development partnerships to explore people focused solutions where the buildings through adaption can accommodate new user needs, and have received formal expressions of interest to help to advance working with the TDT and the Council to achieve the architectural and community regeneration of the granite heritage of Torry linked to meeting desired community outcomes. Outline uses identified and under active consideration to date are affordable housing, co-housing and supportive care, sports and community uses,

embracing a mix of traditional uses as well as innovative models of care that address population demographics

- 6 Have made a request to the City Council for temporary the use of an empty shop in the vicinity of Victoria Road in February for the purposes of presenting schemes for public comment
- 7 Have initiated a request through Grampian Housing Association to meet the Health and Social Care Partnership and the City Council to discuss cross-tenure, community focussed solutions for housing for older people using the restored buildings on the site
- 8 Have requested a meeting before the end of January with the four local councillors to appraise them of the initiatives identified to date, and separately we also await a reply about the Locality Planning Board

### **Delivery**

We recognise that TDT's aspirations must be based on identified legitimate needs and must be deliverable. We have ensured that the focus of our attention is to find an appropriate and viable use or combination of uses for the Victoria Road School buildings and site but we are alert to the wider considerations of how this will link to the surrounding area and to future developments of adjacent land.

### **The Intangible Value of Place**

With regard to the retention of the existing school buildings, we fully appreciate that this is a significant challenge in a number of respects but recognise that the buildings are fundamentally sound and capable of being adapted to a number of uses.

These buildings have a distinctive and social value to the Torry community and to visitors to the area which goes way beyond any monetary price tag and they provide a strong historical link that creates the sense of place and community identity.

For this reason, our process of considering options will be to firstly explore each potential use or combination of uses to determine if they meet established needs. Secondly, we will explore whether these uses provide a good fit by conversion and repurposing of the existing structures. We will then seek to establish the financial and technical viability of each option.

To achieve this, we envisage a three-stage process comprising information gathering; development and exploration of options; options appraisal and identification of preferred option; feasibility appraisal and formal proposal to ACC.

### **Next Step**

A period of some six months from the original decision of the Finance Committee on 1<sup>st</sup> December is requested to allow time for all assessment stages that have started to be completed so help secure the desired outcome of people-focussed community regeneration that utilises assets of the past to meet the needs of the community for future years