

Sanday Development Trust
enhancing quality of life



Report of Public Meeting on the potential uses and purchase of Hawthorne Villa and Kirkfjold – “The Bungalows”

Date: 14 June, at 7.30 pm in the Sanday Community Room

Present: A Best, G Best, G Brown, N Brown, S Clackson, D Connor, B Davies, M Dearness, T Ellis, M Flett, T Lee, J Maclachlan, J Rae, S Scott, R Seagrief, W Sichel, R Thorne, S Thorne, L Wilson, V Wilson, M Young

Preamble: This public meeting was convened by the Youth sub-group of the Sanday Development Trust with the full support of the Sanday Community Association, the Sanday Community Council, and the Sanday School Board. It was announced in the Sanday Sound and posters were put up around the island. Groups represented at the meeting were the Sanday Development Trust, the Sanday Community Council, the Sanday Community Association, the Sanday School Board, the Senior Youth Club, farmers and parents. Both the Youth Development Worker and the Local Development Officer were in attendance. Orkney Islands Council was represented by the councillor for North Ronaldsay, Sanday and Stronsay.

Notes of the meeting

Introduction

Rose Seagrief (LDO) explained that Orkney Island Council Estates Dept wishes to rent or sell the Bungalows. OIC is prepared to offer them to the Sanday Community for rent or purchase at market rates as determined by the district valuer (provided the community can show that it has a sustainable purpose for them and that the process does not take too long). The Bungalows were going to be put on sale on the open market, but thanks to our councillor, Sinclair Scott, a hold has been put on this to allow the community the time to come up with a viable plan. No figure for the market value is available, but the estimated costs of bringing the building up to a usable standard, based on an OIC site inspection done in August 2004 is £23,500.

Ms Seagrief emphasised that any plans for the Bungalows needs to be seen in the context of other developments on the island, particularly the Sanday Community School Sports Learning and Youth Facility (previously known as the Sports Hall) and the Sanday Hub (previously known as the Lady Hall Project), to ensure that clear and distinct purposes are put forward.

Presentation by Maggie Dearness (Youth Development Worker and chair of the Youth sub-group) and members of the Sanday Senior Youth Club

Maggie Dearness proposed that the Bungalows be used for a Youth Drop-In Centre. She explained that young people had been requesting such a facility since January 2002, when a survey carried

out among young people indicated a clear desire for it. Finding a suitable site has been the main barrier to attempts so far to create the facility.

There had been strong indication (99% of respondents) in the Sports Hall Survey carried out as part of the Skills Survey in February 2005 that a Youth Drop-In Centre should be situated within the Sports Hall complex. Since this building is unlikely to be built within the next 5 years, the Bungalows have been identified as a temporary home for a Youth Drop-in Centre.

Previously, too, finding money to cover running costs had been problematic, but now there are a number of funds that would provide revenue funding for a youth facility (the Big Lottery, BBC Children in Need, and the Prince's Trust were mentioned).

Sinclair Scott (OIC councillor for North Ronaldsay, Sanday and Stronsay), pointed out that the income secured by the Sanday Community Council from Scottish & Southern Electricity might be a useful source of finance (he also commended the Sanday Community Council for their determination and success in securing this source of income for the community). Stephen Clackson (Chair of the Sanday Community Council) indicated that the amount in question would be of the order £24,000 per annum and that this would be administered by the Scottish Community Foundation who would be holding public meetings in Sanday at the end of June when submissions could be made for grants from the fund.

Members of the Sanday Senior Youth Club then explained why they wanted a Youth-Drop in centre, what it would contain and how it would be run.

Bethan Davies commented that young people needed somewhere to meet up with their friends and that there was nowhere available at present. The bike shelter, where they were forced to hang around at the moment was rather cold and drafty. Also, they would like somewhere that they could access at any time and be able to collect the key whenever they wanted it.

Jenny Rae and Tom Ellis outlined the facilities they would like to have in the Youth Drop-In Centre. These included a kitchen area for tea and coffee, a computer room with broadband access (to which the public could have access at certain times for a fee, which would support the running costs), a quiet room with bean bags for relaxing, watching TV or DVDs, or listening to CDs, other rooms for noisier activities, like playing PS2s and Singstar and for table football, air hockey, pool, and darts, and finally a room set up with a drum kit and guitars.

Miles Young concluded by explaining that young people would take responsibility for running the drop-in centre. A group of them will be participating in Involvement Training in July, where they will learn the skills they need to set up and run a youth centre. He added that they would help to raise funds to set up and run the proposed centre.

Ms Davies added at a later stage that the tidying and cleaning of the Bungalows could be done by the young people who used it (including the public side, as a quid pro quo for the contribution the public would be making to the ongoing running costs).

Other developments on the island – the context in which the Bungalows sit

Daniel Connor (Head Teacher of Sanday Junior High School and director of SDT) outlined the scope of the proposed Sanday School Sports, Youth and Learning facility. The facility is envisaged as having an indoor sports arena, equipment storage space, toilets, changing rooms, reception, medical room and cleaning storage area, as advised in the Sport Scotland guidelines, and a flexible learning space that can be used to support community activities such as youth projects, giving an overall size of 42m x 26m. It is intended that it will ultimately house the Youth Drop-In Centre.

The limited space at the school site, with the recent addition of two classrooms, make the placing of the new facility quite tricky, and would probably entail encroaching on the area around the bungalows, whether for parking or for the building itself. Ensuring that the bungalows and the adjacent land is owned by the community would therefore facilitate the development considerably. Concern over any occupancy of buildings so close to the school is also a primary factor in endeavouring to bring them within the control of the community.

Asked whether the siting of a Youth Drop-In Centre at the Bungalows would present parking problems, Mr Connor responded that he thought there would be a few occasions when a lot of events were taking place all at once, when parking probably would be tricky, but by and large, he didn't envisage major difficulties.

The LDO outlined what is envisaged for the Sanday Hub. The plan is to house an interpretation/heritage centre, a café, tourist information, bureau (with fax, photocopier, and internet access), public toilets and office/craft units within a single building on the site of the old community hall. This configuration has come about through public consultation over a number of years. The focus here is economic and social, rather than the educational and recreational focus around the school.

Proposals for the Bungalows in the short- and long-term

In three groups, ideas were discussed for usage of the Bungalows for:

- First 5 years
- After 5 years

The suggestions were as follows.

- First 5 years
 - Youth Drop-In Centre (all groups fully endorsed this)
 - Public room open at all times, with access to coffee/tea
 - Launderette
 - Broadband access/hotspot
 - Recording/community radio studio
 - Exchange library – not to compete with Orkney Library Service or Towrie-Cutt library in School, just used paperbacks (swap or minimal charge of 10p/20p)
 - Public toilets
 - Bureau facilities/photocopier, until sited in Sanday Hub

- Life long learning space at specified times when not used by young people

It was agreed that with skillful planning and a degree of flexibility all these uses could be accommodated within the existing buildings. The public/youth areas would need to be able to be shut off from each other.

- After 5 years
 - Continuation of launderette, exchange library, recording/community radio studio, public toilets and life long learning facilities
 - Perhaps expand life long learning capacity to include further study areas, away from the hubbub of the sports facilities.
 - One building could revert to accommodation, for visiting teachers, for example
 - Video conferencing facilities (although these exist in the school, access to these and the Towrie-Cutt library during the holidays can be problematic)
 - Redevelopment to link in with the Sports, Youth and Learning facility

A suggestion for dormitory facilities for senior pupils from other islands was firmly quashed by Councillor Scott.

It was recognized that much could change over a period of 5 years, and that needs might change, necessitating different long term usage of the Bungalows from those suggested above.

Next steps

The consensus of the meeting was that the Trust should go ahead and work towards purchasing the buildings, initially for primary use as a Youth Drop-In Centre. The project be led by the Youth sub-group, comprising young people, but with Mrs Dearness in the chair, and supported by the LDO and other advisers as and when required.

The next steps are as follows:

- Compile a brief and seek funding for a feasibility study
- Commission a feasibility study and depending on the recommendations,
- Work up a detailed brief and timetable for all the refurbishments, fixtures and fitments, bringing in expert input where needed, cost it and seek funding.
- Raise a local contribution to the costs in cash and in-kind commitments

The meeting closed at 9.00 pm and was followed by coffee, tea and cream scones, courtesy of Mrs Dearness and the Senior Youth Club.