

Hall of Clestrain Project Manager

Summary

The John Rae Society is a trust which was set up initially in 2013 to recognise the achievements of Arctic Explorer John Rae, and with the aim of purchasing and securing the future of the Hall of Clestrain (hereinafter called The Hall), John Rae's Birthplace.

The Hall was purchased by the Trust in 2016 from the farmer who owned it at that time, with funds raised by the Trustees through various means. The initial payment made to secure the building for the Trust and the Final payment to complete the sale was made in September 2018 following very successful fund-raising initiatives undertaken by the Trustees and volunteers who support the Society.

The project has received publicity and acclaim from the local newspapers and radio station, and a number of successful open days have been held at the Hall where members of the community have been able to come and see the property. JRS have letters and emails of support and these are still being received, often with additional donations.

With a project of this magnitude the Trustees feel sure that the logical next steps are the generation of a Feasibility Study together with the appointment of a Project Manager who would bring expertise to the development of the project as well as bringing new insights and ideas to enhance the whole scheme and the achievement of the stated aims.

A Project Manager would move the whole development forward during the term of the LEADER project, as well as assisting in obtaining grants to achieve these aims, work on ideas out-with those indicated above as they are proposed, advising and assisting the Trustees as appropriate but mainly ensuring that the whole project stays on track and becomes a reality. They would also need to work within the community as a whole to ensure their continued support and, where appropriate, involvement in the project. Marketing of the future use of the Hall would also be a key part of the task undertaken as would publicity for the project as it is ongoing, including contact with local and national newspapers, TV and Radio as well as through Social Media.

By the end of the LEADER project the Trustees would expect that the overall strategy to be fully documented and in place, with a part of the work well under way. Grants should be in place for the different stages of the whole project which would ensure that it could proceed smoothly thus leaving the Trustees with clear options to enable its continuation and ultimate success.

With the project completed the Hall of Clestrain will provide a major events and a visitor centre in the Orphir area, not just for visitors to the island but a community resource for a variety of events, wedding receptions, exhibitions, music performances, reading evenings, historic cooking and domestic history events, other demonstrations, outdoor events, educational visits from schools giving youngsters a valuable insight into the history of Arctic exploration and subsequent development. For island visitors it will provide a welcoming café, an interesting venue to visit and experience.

When finished, The Hall of Clestrain will be a world class visitor attraction and place of study. It will cater for all levels of interest. From aspects of Arctic Exploration to Local History, botany, self-sufficiency, renewable resources, art, music, food, past farming methods, culture. It will be a centre for the entire Arctic, representing its peoples, cultures, fauna and flora and Climate Change. With changing exhibitions and events, The Hall will be a magnetic Northern resource.

Aims

The Hall of Clestrain is a beautiful building, and it is extremely sad to see it in its current run-down condition.

It is hoped that the legacy from the feasibility study and the appointment of a Project Manager/Development Officer will lead to successful grant applications and thus the renovation and development of the building and gardens.

To have it renovated and restored, with its magnificent entrance stairway and eventually with restored garden areas around it will give a great impression of how such projects can be achieved and will provide for a much-needed visitor attraction on this part of the Island.

The benefits to the local community and tourists will be felt by the provision of an excellent facility, delivering a rounded attraction ranging from a small café through to a ground floor space in which events (weddings, music, demonstrations, lectures etc) can be enjoyed.

Areas on the upper floors will provide for an educational facility, where archivists can take advantage of data relating to Arctic Exploration, or where youngsters from local schools can discover more about how the life of John Rae, is so important to the history of Orkney. Genealogy can be explored giving information about those who left Orkney and emigrated to Canada. It will provide small meeting rooms for local organisations.

The Society feels strongly that the future of the building is bound very closely with the local community who should be involved at all stages of the project and to which employment will be offered as and when personnel are needed.

The project includes the following elements:

Financial Information	£	%
Total project costs	£40,123.46	
Total eligible costs	£36,223.46	100%
LEADER funding	£18,111.73	50%
OIC Community Development Fund	£2,500.00	6.9%
Own Funding	£15,611.73	43.1%