

ANGUS COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

23rd June 1998

Arbroath Old Kirk - Proposed use as a centre for the Arbroath Pageant

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF PROPERTY SERVICES

ABSTRACT

This report outlines a request received by the Council for the use of the Old Kirk in Arbroath as a centre for the organisation and promotion of the Arbroath Pageant in the period leading up to and during the celebrations of the Arbroath quatercentenary and perhaps also in the Millennium.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is recommended to

1. note the contents of this report
2. agree in principle to the request by the Arbroath Abbey Pageant Society
3. instruct the Director of Property Services in consultation with the Chief Executive, Director of Finance and Director of Cultural Services to conclude the lease on terms to be agreed and as outlined in this report.

BACKGROUND

The Old Kirk in Arbroath was purchased by Angus District Council in 1991 from Common Good funds but to date, no suitable use has been found for the property. A number of feasibility studies have been undertaken, but the estimated expenditure required together with the limited resources available to the Council precludes any use of the building at least for the foreseeable future.

A request has been received from Mr Bill Shaw representing the Arbroath Abbey Pageant Society for the use of the Old Kirk as a Pageant Centre.

The intention would be to use the building as a venue for committee meetings during 1998/99 in preparation for the celebrations of the Arbroath Quatercentenary and possibly the Millennium celebrations as well. The building would also serve as a focus for the Pageant itself and include in due course, the making, storing and exhibition of pageant costumes and material. The building is ideally located in relation to the Abbey for this purpose.

The Society has stated that they would not in any way interfere with the fabric of the building and would agree to any reasonable conditions imposed by the Council.

PROPOSALS

If the Council were to agree in principle to this request, it is suggested that the following conditions would apply:

1. the property would be leased for the period up to and including the quatercentenary celebrations at a commercial rent level on a yearly basis
2. the Arbroath Abbey Pageant Society would be invited to apply for an annual voluntary sector grant from the Council equivalent to their annual rent
3. the use would be restricted to the Arbroath Abbey Pageant Society only and the general public would not be allowed into the building without the prior consent of Angus Council
4. the specific uses of the building by the Society during the lease would be subject to the approval of the Council
5. the Council would reserve the right to have access to the property at any time
6. the Council would be responsible for the general maintenance of the property but only to the same degree as at present
7. the Council would not be liable for any expenditure incurred as a result of the property being made available to the Arbroath Abbey Pageant Society
8. the Society would be responsible for
 - 8.1. meeting the costs of electricity and gas supplies and rates (if applicable)
 - 8.2. third party insurance liability to the value of £2m
 - 8.3. obtaining any necessary statutory approvals to enable them to use the property as requested - planning permission, building warrant
 - 8.4. reinstating the property to a condition no worse than at the beginning of their lease

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications as a result of this report.

CONCLUSION

The use of this property as outlined above would in the short term bring a prominent town centre building into community use for a purpose which will be of major interest to the town. It may also be the stimulus for re-establishing the Pageant as a major local and tourist attraction. The property would otherwise lie vacant and so long as no costs would fall on the Council it is an ideal opportunity to make use of this facility and at the same time respond to a community initiative.

CONSULTATION

The Chief Executive, Director Finance, Director of Law & Administration, Director of Cultural Services and the Director of Planning & Transport have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

M G Lunny
Director of Property Services

NOTE: No background papers, as defined by section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.