



Dear All

FEASIBILITY STUDY – PROGRESS UPDATE

We would like to provide you with a progress update with regards to our ongoing feasibility study. Before we do that, we wanted to advise you of our company rebrand - the company name has changed from Kelly Morris Consulting Ltd to **Bidworks Ltd**. All communication will now feature the new company name and logo as above.

Feasibility Study

To date, we have undertaken a fairly extensive public consultation exercise - comprising door step questionnaires, street surveys, telephone surveys, a stakeholder workshop, a community information event and an objective setting meeting.

Following identification of the issues and problems, we worked as group to develop FIVE OBJECTIVES. These objectives will provide a focus for the study - enabling us to quickly distinguish *priorities and needs* from wants and opportunities. The five objectives and a brief overview of progress can be found on pages 2 – 5.

Current Status

A recurring theme from our public consultation, was the desire to protect and improve existing village amenities. As you may be aware, a separate feasibility study was instructed by Barr Community Stores, to assess options for the future sustainability of the village shop. This study commenced prior to our own, and it was important that awaited the outcome to ensure we did not duplicate efforts or make any recommendations to the detriment of the Barr Community Stores Group.

On 16th November 2015 we received a copy of the study and attended a presentation at the village hall. We noted that a number of options were assessed with the recommended option being the purchase and development of the shop and residential property. The Directors of Barr Community Stores have committed to providing all residents of the parish with copies of the study. They have encouraged feedback no later than 26th November 2015. We are preparing our feedback/response to the study. We hope to discuss our feedback with the Directors and seek to find a way of working collaboratively, towards a solution that meets the needs of the wider community.

In addition to the above, we are continuing our talks with the Forestry Commission regarding Dinmurchie. It is important to note that Dinmurchie remains an option for consideration. However, if we are to proceed with Dinmurchie as a medium or long term solution, we must do so knowing all of the benefits and risks, as well as considering all alternatives. As well as a host of benefits and opportunities, we cannot overlook the substantial costs, risks and liabilities associated with such a project. We will therefore prepare an application to FCS for an extension (to the purchase timescales). We are also using this time to develop alternative, lower cost options - such as working in partnership with FCS to jointly improve the Dinmurchie area, purchase of alternative land/buildings and smaller scale attractions.

Feasibility Study Objectives - developed following public consultation re issues/needs

Objective	Comments	Progress
<p><i>Identify, minimise and control, accessibility and communication barriers between Barr and neighbouring towns/villages using environmentally friendly means over a three year period.</i></p>	<p>Public Consultation has identified the lack of suitable/frequent public transport as a barrier to residents leaving / accessing neighbouring towns/villages and amenities. Likewise, the lack of suitable public transport is a deterrent to many considering visiting Barr. The road conditions themselves are considered a barrier to those that can drive with many raising safety concerns.</p> <p>Youths in particular feel disadvantaged by the lack of suitable public transportation to access neighbouring towns and villages to participate in out-of-school clubs and events. Teenagers in particular could be disadvantaged in accessing part time work to build social skills and competencies prior to moving onto further education or employment.</p> <p>The lack of mobile phone signal is considered a barrier to youths growing up in a digital age. The lack of mobile phone signal is also considered a safety risk to those residents/visitors that walk the various trails Barr has to offer.</p> <p>It is important to note that whilst current road conditions and the lack of mobile signal in particular are considered barriers to Barr, these features could equally be marketed as unique selling points. Many cyclists are drawn to Barr because of the 'Screws', and in an increasingly digital age where social media and communication overload is rife, many are attracted to the benefits of not being contactable at all times. Therefore, a fine balance is to be had. In developing and assessing options to meet this objective, the term environmentally friendly will include respecting the current rural landscape, beauty and character of Barr.</p>	<p><i>BPDC is meeting with SPT to discuss transportation issues and concerns week commencing 27th November. Bidworks Ltd is preparing a note of key issues, risks, opportunities and suggestions for BPDC to discuss with SPT.</i></p> <p><i>As part of our option development process, we are considering various means of minimising communication barriers in Barr. Options will be assessed in the final phase of our study, preferred options recommended and if the members are happy to process, we will apply for relevant funding to further develop and implement same.</i></p>

Objective	Comments	Progress
<p><i>Support the development, maintenance and continuous improvement of existing village amenities to improve the quality of the resident and visitor experience in Barr over a three year period.</i></p>	<p>Public Consultation identifies the closure of the village pub and the future sustainability of the village shop as risks to Barr Village. The majority of feedback suggests a shop, café, pub, restaurant of sorts is essential to Barr from a resident and visitor perspective.</p> <p>There is also evidence from all perspectives to suggest that personal and group opinions/conflicts can substantially affect the success of such amenities, therefore demand, supply, communication and collaboration will be critical to future success.</p> <p>Note that youths are grossly under-represented therefore a youth club will require to be established, with youths being encouraged to proactively participate in the leadership and management of same.</p>	<p><i>During the public consultation, we collated a broad range of suggestions as to how the existing village amenities could be improved. We have partially developed some of these options, however we required to await the outcome of the Barr Community Stores feasibility study to ensure we were not duplicating efforts or adversely affecting the outcome of their study which commenced prior to our own.</i></p> <p><i>Now that the study has been published, it is understood that the recommended option would be purchase and development of the shop and residential property. Members have been asked to provide feedback by 27th November 2015. Members have asked that all parish residents receive a copy of the study and have an opportunity to feedback.</i></p> <p><i>We will of course be preparing our own feedback based on our understanding of the current situation and the options assessed.</i></p> <p><i>We hope to have an opportunity to discuss this feedback in person with the Barr Community Stores Directors. We seek to work collaboratively with the Directors to reach a mutually agreeable outcome for the wider benefit of the parish.</i></p>

Objectives	Comments	Progress
<p><i>Work collaboratively with current and future village groups, committees and clubs to develop, implement and continuously improve a successful communication strategy within 12 months.</i></p>	<p>Public consultation identified several small groups/committees/organisations and volunteers working towards the betterment of Barr, often at cross purposes due to lack of communication in a consistent, timely manner.</p> <p>It is considered that this approach is adversely affecting the development of Barr such that a number of small/micro projects are progressing in silos, often at a slower pace, versus the opportunity to progress a number of key projects (prioritised) in a more effective/efficient manner, in a one team approach.</p> <p>It is important that the people of Barr are informed in a consistent and timely manner, that their views and opinions are respected and valued and diversity/innovation is encouraged. Communication must be shared in a variety of forms to suit the varied audience of Barr.</p>	<p><i>As part of our option development process, we are working on a range of options to improve communication across Barr Parish generally. These options will be assessed, discussed with all relevant parties and recommendations for preferred options made. Once agreed, funding will be sourced to complete development and implement.</i></p>
<p><i>Work collaboratively with current and future village groups and committees to identify suitable development opportunities to further enhance the village of Barr and safeguard the future sustainability of the village 3, 5 and 10 years from now.</i></p>	<p>Public consultation acknowledges the social needs and wants of residents/tourists/visitors are ever-changing. There is a need to continue to identify and develop opportunities for further enhancement of the village to retain residents, attract new residents and visitors/tourists.</p> <p>Public Consultation identified the minimum requirements of a shop/cafe/pub, with many suggesting the need for additional initiatives or attractions in order to give people a reason to visit Barr, stay and spend in Barr. Barr is not a passing through village (other than cyclists generally). Barr is a destination point with most people visiting to see family/friends. To future-proof the village, some sort of tourist attraction(s) is required, but any will require to be balanced carefully with the demand, sustainability, and risks associated with the development of the attraction(s) including ownership, maintenance/cost/liability issues and the risk of overpopulating Barr with tourists.</p>	<p><i>During the consultation, we received many suggestions for attracting people to the village. We have collated these and categorised them into <u>short term quick wins</u> (no or low cost), <u>medium term options</u> (requiring further development and funding) and <u>long term options</u> (including capital costs and significant funding).</i></p> <p><i>These options range from guided walks and annual cycle-fest events, through to purchase and development of Dinmurchie. We are exploring <u>all</u> of these options and more. All will be assessed, recommendations agreed with members and funding sought for implementation of preferred options.</i></p>

<i>Objective</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Progress</i>
<p><i>Identify and increase key target market visitors by 20% over a 3 year period.</i></p>	<p>Public consultation identified a high desire for increased footfall in the village in order to sustain and improve public amenities for residents and in turn visitors.</p> <p>The view of many is that if amenities are not secured and improved, and if footfall does not increase, this could result in falling house prices, residents leaving the village, and worst case scenario - result in the eventual demise of Barr. Local children in particular expressed a high desire to see an increase in visitors on a regular basis, providing opportunities to meet new people, learn new things and make new friends.</p> <p>Whilst increased footfall is an essential requirement, it is important that this is not the detriment of the current safety, peace, quiet and tranquillity enjoyed by so many Barr residents. Careful consideration is therefore required in terms of targeting and controlling visitor influx.</p>	<p><i>As with the above statements, we are considering the best approach to increasing footfall whilst retaining the peace and tranquillity – therefore an annual programme of events, with tourists and visitors carefully targeted, managed and controlled is considered the best approach.</i></p> <p><i>We are considering the range of options for this. Options will be assessed, recommendations will be discussed and preferred options agreed prior to funding being secured.</i></p>

End of note

KM/BWLTD 22 Nov 2015