

## **LISMORE CHURCH, WEE MANSE AND GLEBE: OUTLINE BUSINESS CASE**

### **Summary**

The community has indicated support for community ownership of the three assets, to be managed as a multi-use space, in keeping with the site's history and spiritual and cultural connections. Continued use as a place for worship is agreed but this should be non-denominational – available to people of all faiths and none.

Initial proposals for uses of the Church – interpretation / education/ awareness of St Moluag and Lismore's archaeology and history; organised life events (weddings etc); spiritual retreats/pilgrimages and use as a performance space (also potentially, solar arrays) will all require development and time to secure budgets but funds could be secured at an early stage to provide some initial interpretation. Development of a Garden of Remembrance / facilities for scattering ashes could be in place relatively quickly with modest resource requirements. Similarly, the Wee Manse can be prepared for let for a 3-5 year period to bring income and allow time for business planning and fundraising; part of the building could be retained for church use.

Funds will be required for acquisitions (transfer, legal costs etc.); repair costs are estimated at £500k - £1M - both will require grants, donations and general fundraising. Although daunting, this is achievable, especially if done in phases, based on the experiences of other similar types of organisations and projects.

Other potential uses can be developed over time, in a phased approach.

Once the basic repairs have been completed, annual costs for maintaining the assets and continued weekly worship, with minimal input, would be about £20-25,000, based on experiences on Lismore and elsewhere (see Business Case and Appendices). Funds for this would be raised by donations, grants, fundraising, farming rent for the Glebe and letting the Wee Manse. This is also achievable, based on the experiences of other communities and organisations.

A Business Plan should be funded and commissioned at an early stage, the first phase being a feasibility study, followed by detailed business planning for the suite of uses as proposed.

### **Recommendations**

1. Engage with CoS on the conditions of a disposal – seeking transfer of all three assets at minimal cost
2. Depending on progress made in discussions with CoS, secure funds for initial transfer/ purchase, Business Plan and Project Officer costs
3. Commission Business Plan to be delivered in phases: Feasibility study – Confirmation of initial package of multi-space uses – Development of detailed Business Plan
4. If the transfer of assets progresses satisfactorily, then:
  - a. Seek donations, grants and fundraising for required repairs and initial refurbishment

- b. Develop Garden of Remembrance and initial interpretation in Church and offer Wee Manse for let for 3 – 5 years (securing grant to help make it happen). Retain part of building for ongoing Church use
- c. Work with partner organisations and local businesses to develop package of activities and facilities associated with the preferred uses

### Proposed Timeline

