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Dear Paul,

### **Campsie High Kirk – East Dunbartonshire Strategic Alignment July 2024**

Further to Friends of Campsie High Kirk's application via the Ownerless Property Transfer Scheme (OPTS) please find herein East Dunbartonshire Council's position on the case.

#### **Background**

Friends of Campsie High Kirk (FoCHK) is a newly-established charity which aims to secure ownership of the ruinous A listed Campsie High Kirk, preserve and restore it so it can be available for community use. The church has lain empty following fire damage over 30 years ago and in its current roofless and neglected state is on the Building At Risk register. East Dunbartonshire Council is supportive of this community led initiative to preserve the building as an important heritage and cultural icon of Lennoxton and to introduce new uses and fabric repairs which are sympathetic to the Grade A listed building and to the wider environment.

EDC is supporting FoCHK to achieve this ambition and to ensure the project contributes to a comprehensive approach to regenerate Lennoxton. EDC support is in-kind of support, including advice on Planning and Building Standards and advice on possible external funding sources. The Council is unable to provide financial resources to the project at this time.

#### **Strategic Context**

As a grade A listed building Campsie High Kirk is of significant historical and architectural importance and a prominent feature of Lennoxton town centre. The projects fits with several East Dunbartonshire Council Policies:

#### **The Place Based-Approach: Locality Plans**

The East Dunbartonshire Community Planning Partnership (CPP) is committed to reducing inequality and focusing on areas that need help the most. Lennoxton is one of the 4 priority localities in East Dunbartonshire where a place-based approach is taken, working collaboratively with residents, organisations, and partners to address community need and reduce inequality.

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One of the key priorities is to use a community learning development approach to support organic community development. This enables grassroots initiative to set out strategies to improve the physical fabric of the town and to introduce new facilities and opportunities to address disadvantage.

The work of FoCHK contributes to this objective as a locally led initiative to engage with the community and stakeholders to engage with a local heritage in bringing new life to the disused High Kirk.

### **East Dunbartonshire Local Development Plan 2 (2022)**

The Local Development Plan 2 sets out a long-term plan for development across East Dunbartonshire, over the next 10 years to 2032. Actions include the delivery of high-quality places to live, town centre regeneration, and the protection of the historic and natural environment.

The priorities set out in the Lennoxton Place Plan 2018-23 are encapsulated within the LDP2. The most recent Place Plan has prioritised action to scope out restoration possibilities for Campsie High Kirk and for interventions in the town centre to create a place which residents and tourists wish to visit which will be achieved through this community led initiative.

The LDP2 reinforces the Campsie High Kirk proposal as vital to safeguarding the historical fabric of communities and preserving unique heritage and features which add to the quality of settlements.

Policy 5.HE. Development should preserve and enhance the character, cultural significance and setting of the historic environment in Lennoxton, Milton of Campsie, Haughhead and Clachan of Campsie. The area includes historic environment designations including Campsie High Kirk.

5.HE1 Campsie High Kirk is identified as being in ruinous condition and at risk and sits within the open space of a graveyard and green belt. The building's fabric should continue to be maintained.

The Local Development Plan outlines the need to strengthen the tourism potential of East Dunbartonshire with the Campsie High Kirk being an attraction of benefit to East Dunbartonshire and the wider West central Scotland region.

Policy 5.T. New tourism or visitor economy development will be encouraged in Lennoxton, Milton of Campsie and Clachan of Campsie, in line with Policy 16 – Tourism. The Council will support proposals which aim to create, protect, and enhance destination clusters around East Dunbartonshire's key tourism assets.

### **East Dunbartonshire Local Outcome Improvement Plan**

EDC Community Planning Partnership Local Outcomes Improvement Plan 2017 - 27 EDC Community Planning Partnership engaged with stakeholders to set out its strategic approach to achieve regeneration outcomes in line with Single Outcome Agreement goals. Key priorities:

- Town and Village Centres
- Tourism
- Business Growth
- Sustainable Development

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Campsie High Kirk restoration of a key heritage asset at the heart of the Lennoxton community fits with the following LOIP 1 outcome:

Local Outcome 1: East Dunbartonshire has a sustainable and resilient economy with busy town and village centres, a growing business base and is an attractive place in which to visit and invest.

### **East Dunbartonshire Economic Recovery Plan**

The Economic Recovery Plan sets out a strategic approach to support the Post COVID-19 pandemic recovery of the East Dunbartonshire economy across four priority areas:

1. Business: actions relating to financial support and recovery of business activity.
2. People: actions focused on employment and socio-economic equality.
3. Community: actions for regeneration and local investment.
4. Environment: actions promoting environmental sustainability alongside economic resilience.

Campsie High Kirk fits with this strategy by enabling local led action to improve the built and heritage environment of Lennoxton. This will contribute to village centre regeneration to increase the appeal of the village to visit and invest in as the gateway to the Campsies. A key component of the Recovery Plan is to enable Community Wealth Building to keep more wealth in the local economy through community ownership, social enterprise and prioritising communities in decision-making. All of which will be achieved through this project to restore the High Kirk.

Yours sincerely



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