

Mr. Loyal W. Wooldridge
Chair, Regional District of Central Okanagan



Dear Mr. Wooldridge:

I am writing to you to request that financial support for the Friends of Fintry Provincial Park Society be added as an agenda item to the forthcoming RDCO Board Meeting on October 13.

As many of your Board Members will know, it was through the combined efforts and financial contributions of the Provincial Government (BC Parks - \$5 million) and RDCO (\$2 million) that the Fintry Estate was bought in 1995, to ensure that the estate be preserved for the enjoyment of the public. It was quickly recognized at the time that together with its natural beauty and potential for camping, Fintry had a significant heritage component.

However, it also became apparent that the partners had neither the mandate nor the expertise to develop the Manor House and heritage Barns to highlight their heritage significance. To help with this, they created the Friends of Fintry Provincial Park Society (FOF) that was formed and incorporated as a not-for-profit Society under the Society Act on June 8, 2000. In early 2001, a small information-gathering-heritage tour was formed. It delivered its report in November 2001. This comprehensive report foresaw a staffing arrangement that included: P/T Curator (Collect, Manage, Operations and displays), and a Business Manager (Heritage Operations).

Recognizing the need for a Curator, RDCO invited an application for a grant-in-aid for the FOF, and awarded \$40,000. With this, the FOF recruited Dan Bruce, who has acted as Executive Curator of FOF for the past 21 years. During the past 20 years, he has transformed an entirely empty house into the Manor House that we see today, furnished in the Edwardian style of a country house of the Dun Waters' Era in the early 1900's. About 5000 people visit the Manor House annually from the campground, Kelowna, Vernon, other parts of BC, Canada and overseas.

As your Board will know, the RDCO funding for the FOF Curator has been withdrawn. Despite major effort, the FOF Board has not been able to attract equivalent funding. However, with the help of a part-time business manager skilled in grant-writing we have been able to secure project funding sufficient to present 3 Fairs, 2 musical evenings and 1 art exhibition during this past summer

season. This, of course, has been very welcome, but it has been project funding tied to specific events, and has not helped to replace the funding for a curator.

Now that the RDCO funding has ended, we will no longer have the services of a curator, and funding for a part-time business manager has also ended. Project funding, even when secured will not help, as it is always tied to specific outcomes, and not to ongoing operations.

For the reasons that I have given, the FOF Board asks you and your Board to consider the possibility of providing a grant sufficient for FOF to recruit a half-time Curator and a half-time business manager (\$40,000). We believe that this would secure the future of Fintry into the future. We also suggest that this would be significantly less expensive than having one of your staff undertake the duties of either or both Curator and Business Manager.

Finally, I note that the close relationship that we used to enjoy with RDCO is now much diminished. We would welcome, once again, the presence of one of your staff to our monthly Board meetings. As these meetings are now often by Zoom, the implied time commitment may be more manageable than as in the past.

In the absence of our President, Kathy Drew, who is in Scotland visiting her 96 year-old mother, we would be pleased to develop the above more fully in a presentation on October 13.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Berry

Vice-President, Friends of Fintry

Dan Bruce

Curator, Friends of Fintry