The Lighthouse on Grey Point (B2 · English B2)

Tekst / Transcript

The lighthouse on Grey Point had stopped working eleven years earlier, and everyone in the village assumed it would eventually fall into the sea. Its windows were broken, its door hung loose, and seabirds nested in the lamp room. Then a letter arrived at the parish hall announcing that a developer intended to buy the land. Within a week, a small group of neighbours had decided to fight the plan and preserve the building for the community. They called themselves the Friends of Grey Point, and their first meeting attracted forty people.

Maeve, a retired teacher, agreed to lead the campaign. She warned everyone from the beginning that she could not guarantee success, since the developer had far more money and far better lawyers. What she could promise was patience. She spent whole afternoons in the county archive, and eventually she found a document showing that the lighthouse had been granted legal protection as a historic monument in 1974. Nobody in the village had known this. The discovery changed the atmosphere completely.

The next step was practical. A local builder inspected the tower and reported that the stonework was still secure, although the roof needed urgent repair. To raise money, the group organised concerts, a summer fair and a sponsored swim in the harbour. Donations arrived from former residents living abroad. The money was enough to equip the volunteers with scaffolding, safety helmets and proper tools, so the repairs could begin before the autumn storms. Maeve made a list of tasks and pinned it to the door of the village shop.

Not everyone was pleased. The developer's representative came to a public meeting and, in a sharp voice, began to accuse the Friends of dishonesty, claiming they had used donated money for their own expenses. The room went quiet. Maeve simply handed him a folder containing every receipt from the previous eight months. She had made a habit of writing each payment into a notebook the same day it was made, and she asked the accountant to register the group formally as a charity so that the accounts would always be public. The accusation collapsed, and the representative left early.

By the following spring, the roof was watertight and the lamp room had been cleaned. Grants from the heritage board and careful planning would enable the Friends to reopen the tower as a small museum. Maeve insisted on one final detail: a proper handrail on the spiral staircase, to ensure that visitors of every age could climb safely to the top. On the morning of the opening, more than two hundred people queued along the cliff path. Standing at the door with her notebook still under her arm, Maeve said only that the village had kept something it very nearly lost.

Woordenlijst

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