

**THE PAST THE PRESENT THE FUTURE**

**Our Objective**

To ensure the Village Hall is a safe, warm, friendly environment which is fit for the purpose for the Parish and surrounding community.

**Update**

Although it may seem that nothing has happened for some months, even years, on the proposal to update and refurbish the Village Hall, I can assure you that the Village Hall Committee Trustees have been very busy taking things forward as quickly as we can. But we have come across several stumbling blocks along the way!

**Asbestos Survey and Removal**

As part of the refurbishment plan we had an asbestos survey undertaken. Asbestos was used extensively in the 1970s sonot unsurprisingly the survey noted a couple of areas where asbestos was damaged and needed to be removed quickly (in a corner of the understairs cupboard and at the back of the boiler cupboard)and a few small areas where exposed asbestos needed to be encapsulated (professionally covered); these were some joists joints under the stage, in the back fire escape and above the bar cellar.

This work was undertaken in June and any remaining asbestos material will be removed as part of the refurbishment. The work cost £2628 and did not form part of the refurbishment grant so had to be met from the Hall’s general funds. We are extremely grateful to the Parish Council, OPRA and Harbour View Bar who each contributed £500 each towards those costs.

**Consultation Meeting to Change Status of Village Hall Governance**

A public meeting was held 14th September 2019 to consult with Otterhampton residents about the Village Hall Committee decision to apply for Charitable Incorporation Organisation (CIO) status. Residents were invited to the meeting via public notices at the village shop, the Hall and in Otter Tales; the meeting was held at the same time as the village market.

The CIO status became available to charities in England and Wales on 4th March 2013; it is a new form of legal entity designed for non-profit making organisations like the village halls.

The Committee unanimously agreed to seek the CIO status because at the moment the Hall is an ‘unincorporated trust’ and with the redevelopment of the hall there is a genuine concern that if something goes wrong during the refurbishment then the Trustees could end up being financially liable. In addition, many grant making organisations would now expect us to have CIO status.

The contents of the CIO will be similar to our existing governance rules and the roles and responsibilities for the running of the Hall will continue; the CIO is supported and approved by the Community Council for Somerset and the Charity Commission.

Some 34 people attended the consultation and agreed the Committees’ proposal to apply for CIO status with additional support from 4 residents via email and letter. The Community Council for Somerset is in the process of making our application to the Charity Commission.

**Registration of the Land**

We have also had to formally register the land on which the Village Hall is sited with the Land Registry. This was not a requirement back in the 1940s when the Hall was given to the Parish, but again it is now an expectation that the land is registered in order to apply for any grants. An application is with the Land Registry and cost £400 from our general funds.

**Project Update**

As part of the Hinkley Point Community Fund grant of £15032 some £3k was included for us to pay for professional assistance from the Community Council for Somerset. They are assisting the Committee with the Business Plan and CIO application and will also help us to apply for grants not just from the Hinkley Community Fund but other organisations.

The Village Hall Business Plan is complete with the exception of details about the Hall finances as this needs to wait until we have firm figures for the refurbishment project. The Plan will then be used to accompany our requests for grants.

We are still in preliminary discussions with Somerset County Council Highways Department about installing an accessibility ramp to the Hall. Hopefully the Council will be sympathetic to our request and we will then be in a position to formally apply to Sedgemoor District Council for building approval for the ramp. Thanks to the organisations and individuals who have written in support of this request.

The Committee finalised the refurbishment plans in August and they were displayed at the CIO consultation in September. A copy of the external and internal plans are at the end of this Update. The Village Hall retains the main features eg the main hall, bowls room, skittle alley and Harbour View Bar but we are adding some new features. There will be a new entrance with an impressive glass atrium. A new lift will provide access to everyone to both the bowls room and the first floor with access to the skittle alley and to a new lounge area with views overlooking the Pill. On the ground floor a store area for tables and chairs will be provided in the area currently used by the kitchen and the existing kitchen will move closer to the Bar area. There will be large partition doors linking the Hall to both the new kitchen and to the Bar area. The Bar area will remodelled. There will be new electrical, heating and plumbing systems throughout to replace the existing facilities. New double glazing and insulation throughout the building should reduce noise and increase warmth. Solar panels are to be installed which will increase sustainable energy efficiency. We will have new lighting, new furniture, a hearing loop system and new audio-visual equipment installed so the Hall will be well equipped for all types of events.

The Committee instructed Shattock Associates to seek tenders for the work and three companies responded. In September and October Committee members considered each bid and unanimously agreed a preferred tender at our October meeting. Further discussions are needed but we will soon be in a position to submit formal applications for grant to both the HPC Community Fund and to other organisations with the intention that the rebuilding work will start late Spring 2020.

**Need for Volunteers**

So this is an exciting time for everyone in the Parish as the plans to update the Hall finally begin. Committee members will be very busy with the grant applications, day to day maintenance and upkeep of the Hall so we would very much like people in the Parish to be involved with this *once in a lifetime opportunity* to make the Hall a modern, exciting and vibrant facility in the heart of Otterhampton Parish.

**So please, if you would like to join the team, or have any expertise that could help towards this project – we would very much like to hear from you!! You don’t need to become a Trustee (although we would love to have a few more) but could be on a group making decisions about new furniture, audio visual equipment, flooring and internal decoration.**

**Please talk to any Committee member; write to us at the Hall, email Sue Barton on** [**bartonbs@btinternet.com**](mailto:bartonbs@btinternet.com) **or call her on 01278 653531**

***Committee members are:***

***Amber Austin Sue Barton Pete Cashin Marcus Ford***

***Helen Jowett Lindsey Parsons Audrey Rowley and Laura Valentine-Slack***

*External Plans of the New Building* ****

*Internal Plans Showing the Ground Floor and First Floors*