



**CONFIDENTIAL**

**DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING of the Community Centre Advisory Committee  
Held in Hadlow Down Village Hall, Hadlow Down  
at 7pm on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2024**

The following was discussed in a closed confidential session of the Advisory Committee.

**38. Receive presentation from Mr Mike Barber, Project Architect for the new Community Centre, on the discharge pre-commencement planning for condition 6 – surface water drainage.**

ML updated that the paperwork had not been received and therefore could not be discussed today. BL reported that he has been constantly chasing Monsons for the paperwork. BL and Rob Prall have discussed and if the paperwork is not received this week, an emergency meeting shall be called between MJB and Monsons. It is not known at this time what options are available if the paperwork is not received. SR asked about the timeline. BL stated that the latest the works could commence are beginning of June so working backwards, it is getting very tight. It was agreed that the Parish Council would arrange an emergency meeting when the paperwork is received.

**39. To review and discuss the Community Centre Business Plan**

Mandy Chapman (MC) and Sarah Prall (SP) gave a presentation on the draft finance section of the business plan. They explained there were lots of moving parts and the business plan will constantly be evolving and will be subject to version control. Following the AGM meeting being held on Friday evening, the draft business plan in full will be published on the HDCC website. To follow will be a more detailed capital plan, fundraising strategy, management structure of the CIO and a marketing plan.

17 people in the survey raised that they did not feel that this project was financially viable. This is likely to be a common factor, so it has been ensured that finances are looking into in depth. The Community Centre should not make a profit, it does however need to cover costs. MC and SP have produced the figures based on the existing Village Hall and 5 control sites of a similar size.

PW asked if he could see the income and expenditure of the other halls, MC confirmed that this is shown as an appendix in the full business plan.

MC explained that in phase 1, the Playing Field Committee will be their own entity and access issues will need to be discussed and agreed. After phase 1 there is a potential to merge PFC and HDCC. It is the intention of HDCC to claim back the VAT after the build, which will go towards phase 2 but also create a reserves pot.

Meeting room hire costs were discussed. ML asked a question about wedding hire. This has not been looked at in great detail as yet, but it would be a premium rate and has been referred to in the higher costs section. BM made a comment that the proposed costs are for now, but it is likely that the build will not be ready until 2026 so £15ph may be deemed too low by then. MC and SP both agree and stated they are writing the business plan based no figures now, but the plan will continually be tweaked over the next few years.

BM asked how the pre-opening costs/expenses will be covered i.e. electricity and water as no income will be coming in, but bills will be received. SP and MC made a note of this to look into further.

A café was mentioned. ML raised a possible issue with a covenant on the St Mark's Trust charge, think they mention no commercial but might possibly be a shop and not a café.

Following the presentation ML expressed his thanks to MC and SP on all their hard work pulling the business plan together and the presentation this evening.

Each member was asked to make comments and make any observations.

SR stated a huge well done, there has been a tremendous amount of work done on it. SR's main interest is the fundraising part which is not yet in the plan. MC explained that there is not anyone on HDCC who has that sort of skill set so they will need to employ a professional fundraiser for this to help put a strategy together. SR also stated that it is worth thinking about the space in the hall and whether a permanent stage is needed or whether you hire a stage in. BL noted this comment but stated that under the stage is also used as storage space.

BM stated it was very impressive and clearly a lot of work. He had 2 observations, firstly there needs to be wording in the marketing plan that this is a community activity but will only be viable if more commercial, however he noted the wording would need to be considered as commercial could concern residents. Secondly, he asked if the whole plan would be proof read in due course, SP confirmed they have someone in place to do this.

PW stated a huge well done. He confirmed that the Parish Council can't endorse a document that changes but would propose to support the document. His one observation was the general assumption is that everything would be operating in a stable environment, what about an unstable environment i.e. another Covid. SP took note of this.

DW stated it was a brilliant plan and he learnt a lot from the presentation. He agreed with B< but stated that word 'commercial' will frighten a lot of people in the village. He asked what happens if HDCC do make a significant profit as a charity? It might be a good idea to put that in the plan to show that if there is a profit this will be put back into the community. MC took note of this and stated it would be in the Terms of Reference for the management committee.

FS asked the Committee, do you feel from what you have seen to date, are you confident that if everything goes forward with the extant permission, are you confident that this project can be moved forward? SR stated that this can't be answered until the fundraising strategy is seen as that is critical.

BL expressed his thanks to MC and SP again for doing a fantastic job. He reiterated that they would need to employ a professional fundraisers but HDCC will need to finance that role.

ML stated he found the presentation very enlightening and congratulated every on the Committee who has been involved. 2 observations were there should be a risk management matrix/analysis relating to the whole business plan drawn up, this was noted by SP. He also commented that the fundraising section should come out of the document prior to be published. SP confirmed this was the plan to do so as fundraising will not be looked into in great depth until after extant permission is obtained.

SR reported that in 2016 it was discussed that a housing development may purchase the land with the caveat it would be rented for some time to wait for the new hall to be built and they money from the land would be given to HDCC towards the build, however what to do with the existing village hall would need to be agreed by a public referendum. Is HDCC going to have a conversation with the Parish Council about contributing? BL stated they planned to but not until nearer completion. SR stated it may need to be done earlier to show on a grant application there is community support.

It was agreed by all that that the focus should be on obtaining extant permission. Once this done, a pathway will be drawn up with next steps and discussions can be held.

The Committee agreed to support the draft finance section of the business plan.