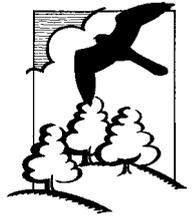


HAWKHURST PARISH COUNCIL

COMMUNITY CENTRE WORKING GROUP COMMITTEE MINUTES



4th March 2020

Present: Cllr P Whittle, (Chairman), Cllr B Fitzpatrick, Cllr R Cory, Cllr R Lusty, Cllr J Pyne and Mr David Lloyd-Owen

In attendance, non-voting: Cllr Escombe – Ex-officio, Ruth McChesney and Josh Brushfield from HCT 2018, Mark Hall Architect and Patrick Henshaw Project Manager

1. **ADJOURNMENT FOR PUBLIC SPEAKING:**
2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Cllr Weeden away.
3. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS:** *To receive notice of personal interests, whether of a prejudicial nature or otherwise, in respect of items on this agenda, in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct.*
4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:**
 - 4.1 Minutes from the meeting 5th February 2020 – proposed by Cllr Whittle and seconded by Cllr Lusty, agreed unanimously
5. **Updated Costings** – Mark Hall, the architect talked through the Elemental cost plan – which brought the cost at £2.77million pounds – There were a number of refinements that would be amended and confirmed for the next meeting.
6. **Consultation Feedback Report** – The clerk introduced the report.

Introduction

Council on the 11th November 2019 agreed to consult on the draft designs of the new Hawkhurst Community Centre. The consultation took place between 20th January 2020 and 1st March 2020.

This is the Consultation Feedback report March 2020.

Public Consultation programme 2020

The public consultation programme, "Have Your Say" aimed to fully engage the public in the design of the new community centre.

We linked the start of the public engagement programme to "National Village Halls Week", 20th January 2020. It lasted six weeks and the engagement programme included;

Thursday 24th January 2020 – 2pm - 4pm in KGV sports pavilion

Presentation 2:15 and 3:15pm plus question and answers

Thursday 24th January 2020 – 7pm - 9pm in KGV sports pavilion

Presentation 7:15 and 8:15pm plus question and answers

Saturday 26th January 2020 – 11am – 1pm in KGV sports pavilion

Presentation 11:15 and 12:15pm plus question and answers

Wednesday 19th February 2020 7pm – 8pm

Mid consultation discussion with HCT 2018

Thursday 20th January 2020 – 7:30pm in KGV sports pavilion

Meeting with existing and potential user groups

Tuesday 25th February 2020 – 7 – 9 pm Royal British Legion

Presentation 7:15 and 8:15pm plus question and answers

Through-out the six-week consultation period we had displays at Council offices, King George V Sports Pavilion, Copt Hall and Hawkhurst Library.

In addition, we made time for those that could not make the consultation events by arranging specific meetings; Friendship club, Early Years Group, U3A, Hawkhurst Football Club and Youth Club.

We also took the opportunity to consult with specialist organisations for their input at an early stage: Fields in Trust, Sport England, KCC Highways and a pre-application meeting with TWBC Planning Services.

The Parish Council staff were available to take questions throughout the six weeks' consultation period.

We feel we had a comprehensive engagement programme, an estimated 400 people attended the presentations and that the public had their opportunity to "Have their say"

Response

We had 89 consultation forms submitted either in hand, at the drop off points, by post or email. Some response answered every question, others did not. Some responses had a number of comments for a particular question.

This included a total of 326 comments, see file. A summary is set out below, note percentages are of responses to that question, are rounded up and a threshold of 5% is illustrated. (We received one response form on the 3rd March 2020 after the closing date which was generally against the size of the centre and cost)

1. What do you feel about the general design – 59 comments

Rank	Comment	No	%
1	Good design sympathetic to area	27	45%
2	Too big, too complex	22	37%
3	Concerns about Kent Design features	7	12%
4	Eco / Sustainability issues important	3	5%
5	Playground / landscaping important	3	5%

Comments included:

- Appears to be well designed to fit in with area
- In principle good but is it too big
- I feel personally the building is over ambitious
- I think the general design is attractive and would fit in with surrounding area
- Far too expensive and elaborate a building
- General design looks good

2. The main hall is a key element – have we got it right – 52 comments

Rank	Comment	No	%
1	Good flexibility the key	26	50%
2	Need more storage	9	17%
3	Stage / demountable stage / raked seating	8	15%
4	Too big	7	13%
5	Need more car parking for bigger events	3	5%

Comments included:

- I like flexibility of main hall
- About right
- Will miss not having a stage
- More storage needed
- 220? Really

3. Studio and dry changing – 38 comments

Rank	Comment	No	%
1	Do not need, a luxury	25	68%
2	Yes, may attract new users	10	26%
3	Do we need upstairs at all	2	5%

Comments included:

- Personally would never use it
- Most people would come changed
- I think this is a nice to have
- Definitely a must have

4. Café / Kitchen – 47 comments

Rank	Comment	No	%
1	Need to get kitchen right size – catering expertise	15	32%
2	30 seats about right	14	30%
3	No to a café, just tea / coffee servery or use by clubs	9	19%
4	Concerns about operation of cafe	6	13%
5	Extra seats outside	5	11%

Comments included:

- Do not know enough, take advice from catering experts
- Not sure about Café?
- Seating sounds okay, not sure about kitchen being big enough
- Only need to serve tea / coffee as currently do

5 Cost / Funding – 43 comments

Rank	Comment	No	%
1	Too expensive / no will not pay more	16	37%
2	Ok	14	33%
3	Yes, but concerned others may struggle to pay	7	16%
4	Prepared to pay more	3	7%

Comments included:

- Yes, prepared to pay small increase in Council Tax
- Quiet a high cost, maybe £5 per month but concerned some will not be able to afford that
- Not prepared to pay more per month
- Acceptable for our household but there will be some who cannot afford it

6 General comments – 87 comments

There was a wide range of comments

Rank	Comment	No	%
1	Too complex, expensive	7	8%
2	Playground design vital, and before main building works	6	7%
3	More storage needed	4	5%
4	Good site, links outdoor and indoor	4	5%

Comments included:

- Too costly, cut the cost and the idea may float
- Design too complex, one storey enough
- Playground important

7 Specific user group comments – 18 comments

There were some specific comments from the groups, the general comments were

Rank	Comment	No	%
1	More storage	9	50%
2	Café kitchen – servery for clubs	5	28%
3	Outside storage near building	3	17%
4	Path to MUGA	3	17%

Comments included: More storage, more storage and more storage. plus, outdoor storage near building and accessible

Community Centre Working Group Considerations

The Community Centre Working Group considered and discussed the Consultation Feedback Report and focussed on three areas.

- Call a halt to the project
- Refine the designs
- Revise the designs significantly

The overwhelming view of the working group was to continue with the project.

A number of comments were made;

Cllr Cory noted that the presentations were very well attended, and had a positive feel – the number of responses may reflect those that felt really strongly one way or the other. Maybe some of the 400 attendees were ok with the proposals.

Cllr Pyne felt that the environmental issues were important.

Cllr Lusty felt that the village needs a large hall, he would prefer a stage, but the worse mistake we could make would be to build the main hall too small.

Cllr Escombe felt that the stage / raked seating could be resolved as the project develops.

David Owen-Lloyd felt that the dry change needed refining but maybe provide the services to the area so dry changing could be added at a later date if required.

Cllr Pyne felt changing for children was important from a safeguarding point of view.

Cllr Escombe raised the point about smaller meeting rooms.

The general view was that the first need refinement.

Ruth McChesney felt that the kitchen design needed to focus on events / functions and that the word café may have been misleading.

Josh Brushfield felt it important that internal areas had quality design to match the external design rather than just walking into an interior with a “municipal feel”.

Funding and costs were discussed with key points being – people may say they are ok to pay but very few people vote for increased tax, also many people who do not use the current facilities or would not use new facilities may not have attended the presentations / responded but would vote against.

Those that attended the presentations were generally positive about the project and the paying an increase for improved facilities.

However, important to manage the costs where possible and launch a grant funding campaign to reduce the amount needed for a Loan.

Cllr Pyne felt that the landscaping and playground were important features of the site.

Cllr Escombe made the point that if we obtain planning permission it will enable us to seek developer contributions for the project, if the village has housing development.

Ruth McChesney felt that the operation points raised could be addressed, that the discounts for local or regular users was already included in the business plan and would be further worked up as the project progresses.

David Owen-Lloyd felt the user groups input was vital – storage, usage etc.

The debate concluded that the consultation had been an excellent worthwhile exercise, that the public had brought forward lots of points that can be incorporated or had not been considered before. In addition, it had not thrown up new concerns and if anything had help allay some concerns such as location.

The committee felt that we should refine the design rather significantly redesign the community centre, the key areas for refinement are:

General design

- Review “Kent Design” and “High Weald” guidance and the “High Weald AONB Management Plan” to consider issues such as weather boards, roof tiles
- Emphasis the environmental features such as solar panels, ground source heating, rainwater gathering, insulation etc.
- Use of re-enforced grass for car parking where possible

Main hall

- Retain size, flexibility is the key
- Review stage / demountable stage / raked seating
- Refine storage

Studio and dry change

- Review dry change
- Seek to create two smaller meetings rooms
- Refine kitchen / storage areas

Café kitchen

- Consult with professional caterers regarding kitchen
- Refine serveries into main hall and café area
- Refine storage

Cost funding

- Focus on managing costs
- Seek grants
- Launch legacy / fund raising / donations programme

General

- Operational discounts for local community groups, regular users

Recommendations

The Community Centre Working group recommended to council;

- a) To proceed by refining the designs
- b) Pre-application meetings with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and Kent County Council, and adjust accordingly
- c) Liaise with Fields in Trust regarding an appropriate Land exchange.
- d) Liaise with Sport England / Kent FA to finalise the junior playing surface drainage and changing room element of the project

- e) Propose to develop the new playground in an initial phase and engage HCT 2018 and young people in design of playground area and link in with landscaping
- f) As the design evolves focus on the environmental / sustainable design issues such as - solar panels, ground source heating, rainwater gathering, insulation etc.
- g) Refine the kitchen / servery design in consultation with professional caterers
- h) Refine the storage areas throughout
- i) Refine upstairs design
- j) Ensure that discounted rates for local groups and regular user groups are built into the operation business plan
- k) Launch fund raising campaign.

7. Update on project plan – Patrick Henshaw talked the group through the project plan and updated the group on consultants required to get planning permission

The group recommended to council that:

- Elysian Tax Consultants, are appointed at £2,150 plus VAT to review the Council’s tax position moving forward
- That the Project Manager obtains quotes and recommends appointments for
 - Preliminary Ecological Assessment
 - Heritage Statement
 - Tree survey – completed – Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Arboricultural Method Statement
 - Highways Report
 - Reference High Weald AONB Management Plan and High Weald Guidance

8. QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM COUNCILLORS:

It was agreed that due to workload for the Clerk that David Owen-Lloyd would work with the Project manager regarding the consultants

9. CONFIDENTIAL: *Pursuant to section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 it is resolved that, because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and the press leave the meeting during consideration of the following items:*

10. CLOSURE: 9:45pm

Chairman.....date.....