

Save the Old School
15 June 2011

Present:

Carol Corn (Chair)
Anne Eastman
John Eastman
Jane Custance

1. Welcome

Carol welcomed the group. It was a shame turnout was so low. There was a virtual group of 42, so hopefully low numbers were a result of lack availability rather than lack of interest.

2. A Name for Supporters Group

Several potential names for the group were discussed:

- Ivinghoe Team for Community Hub
- Ivinghoe Folk
- Find A Future
- Fight for the Village Centre

In the end Anne came up with the brilliant suggestion of Save the Old School, or SOS.

3. Background

The Parish Council have handed the keys back to BCC as they were unable to agree terms for a new lease. Carol has asked to see the lease but it has not been forthcoming from either IPC or BCC. There is concern that the lease contains a requirement for significant structural works to the building (underpinning).

Tricia Smith has styled a business plan to use the building to teach home economics to school children. This was submitted to the Parish Council in March. They didn't agree that this was viable.

There is folklore that the building has to be used for educational purposes. This needs to be checked out.

4. Feedback from Community Impact meeting.

John and Anne had attended the meeting. The feedback wasn't positive. Taking on a project like this seems daunting and shouldn't be done lightly.

Andrew Long, Sustainability Advisor for BCC, gave some advice on funding. There are 4 types of funding:

- Donations
- Grants
- Contracts
- Trading

The possibility of grant funding is limited.

Donations are the best form of funding as they are generally unrestricted. The group questioned whether anyone would be prepared to make a significant donation.

Best way to get donations is to publicise the campaign. Andrew can help to create a website. If we do succeed a booking system via the website can reduce costs and make things simpler for customers.

There is potential for asking those who "damage" the village, e.g. Camiers, to give a donation and put something back.

Andrew can allocate a business expert to help with the business plans and give other useful contacts.

Local Authorities are trying to outsource services and this may provide us with an opportunity.

There would be legal obligations associated with taking this venture on. We would have to appoint holding trustees. Anything with income more than £10k has to be registered as a charity. A venture with income below that doesn't have to be registered but has to abide by the same rules.

5. Way Forward

We need to contact Lisa (PC Clerk) to find out what the running costs of the building are. A comparison with the Town Hall would be useful. Terry Jennings should be able to help with this.

We need to identify why the Village Centre is different from the Town Hall. We don't want to compete with the TH. There seems to be capacity for 2 venues.

6. Funding options

Carol had done a lot of research on this.

Jane agreed to collate this into a table and do some more research. This will be available as a separate document shortly.

7. Ideas

Following Carol's initial leaflet villagers has submitted a number of ideas about potential uses for the Village Centre.

Jane agreed to collate these into a table. See separate document.

Uses were either commercial or community based. Carol felt it was important that the building was used as a community facility and not just as a business venue.

There could be some interplay between a commercial and community use so that one could subsidise the other.

There seems to be a consensus that we need a replacement for the tea rooms – although may be to a lower standard.

Carol has been in contact with Tricia Smith. Her idea about a cookery school can be added to the list of options. This didn't appear to be particularly viable, but may be her plans were tailored to fit with the idea that the hall has to be used for educational purposes. She might be prepared to vary the offer.

Everyone thought that a cafe could be viable, particularly if it was complimentary to uses taking place on The Lawn, or times when people were collecting pensions etc.

If the building is used for a community use a caretaker/key holder would be required.

8. The Fete

Saturday's fete seems like an ideal opportunity to try to get more people involved and find out which of the options suggested were favoured by residents.

Carol is trying to get hold of a space for a table.

John and Anne are happy to man the table and run a ping pong ball game to draw people in.

Carol has drawn up a poster and can list the options on a chart for "voting."