

## **Item 10: Jubilee Hall - Update from Working Group**

Work continues on the preparation of a draft business case.  
Key points of note are outlined below:

### **Meetings of the working group**

These have been difficult to arrange over recent months due to the availability of members. The last meeting took place 7<sup>th</sup> August but not all members attended.

### **Potential New Management Organisation**

Discussions have now been held with those who expressed an interest in joining a potential new management organisation. These discussions have identified the need to include provision in the draft business case for any new management organisation to employ a manager.

Advice was sought from Durham Community Action (DCA) in July regarding the most appropriate type of new organisation to manage the Hall, should Parish Council agree to purchase it. They agreed with the findings of the working group, that the most appropriate type of organisation would be a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) (where the only voting members are its charity trustees).

Advice was also sought on how and when this new charity could be set up. As previously agreed by Parish Council, the draft business case is being prepared on the basis that the Hall would be leased to a new organisation under a full repairing lease.

DCA advised the Charity Commission's (CC's) approval to the creation of a new CIO is likely to take a minimum of 6 months from the date of application. This being the case, Parish Council would need to either temporarily close the Hall or manage the building itself until such time as the new charity could be established and a lease agreement signed. The potential risks of either possibility will need further consideration by to inform the business case.

However the 6 months timescale was for straight forward applications. DCA advised the proposal we are considering is not straight forward. Where a transfer of a Charity's asset is involved, the CC's consideration of an application to set up a new charity may take considerably longer. The scenario the Parish Council is considering is further complicated as the charitable asset of the Community Association (CA) is not being transferred to another Charity. It's being transferred to the Parish Council. Reference was made to an application DCA were supporting involving the transfer of an asset which took 3 years for approval!

To try and minimise the risk of any delay in setting up a CIO, DCA agreed to make an approach to the Charity Commission to seek its views on our "scenario", without making any direct reference to the Parish Council or the CA. i.e they will try and establish if an application to set up a new CIO to manage a transferring charitable asset, under a full repairing lease, can be made prior to the date of transfer of that charitable asset from an existing charity to a non charitable body. Given the current response times of the Charity Commission to any enquiry, DCA advised this in itself may take several months.

## **Valuation/Building Survey**

After several months of trying, a response has now been received from Durham County Council Asset Management regarding support in commissioning the above. Regretfully, they have not provided any support on the development of a specification or recommended any Chartered Surveyors, as they first advised they would. They have provided a link to search for registered local firms who may be able to meet our requirements. No additional support from DCC Asset Management is now expected.

In order to ensure that we do not miss the AAP grant funding opportunity to cover the cost of the valuation/survey, a specification has been drafted using information available. This has been submitted to 7 firms of Chartered Surveyors but 3 have already advised that they are unable to offer any service due to current workload. 3 are needed to progress the grant application. It is hoped the grant application can be submitted in the next week or so.

## **Information still needed from the CA.**

There is still some key financial information awaited from the CA; the December 2018 Audited Accounts are not expected to be available until October. As the CA no longer have a treasurer, current year management accounts are not being prepared. Consequently it is difficult to assess the current financial position or make forecasts of future income and expenditure, to inform the 3-5 year business plan.

## **Summary**

Progress has been slow. It is unlikely the draft business case will be complete before January.

Cllr Wallage, Chair of Working Group  
Sept 2019