

TENTERDEN TOWN COUNCIL – INTERNAL COMMITTEE

TOWN HALL FOCUS GROUP

MINUTES OF A MEETING ON 13th September 2017

Members Present: Cllrs Dr Lovelidge & Mrs Smith. John Crawford, Brian Fagg, Giovanna Gandolfo & Mike Pearson.

Non-members Present: Cllrs Carter, Mrs Ferguson & Knowles,
The Town Clerk, Phil Burgess took notes.

1. **Apologies for Absence.** Jo Vos (Community Warden).
2. **Election of Chair.** John Crawford was elected chair in John Scudder's absence
3. **Minutes.** Minutes of the last meeting were agreed.
4. **Cinema Focus Group.** Cllr Mrs Ferguson reported that the cinema group had had one meeting and had been considering the following venues:
 - At the back of the Town hall (on land currently owned by Enterprise Inns)
 - The HSBC building
 - Pebbles
 - Tenterden Club. In this venue the roof would have to be raised. If the church had no use of the hall following re-ordering of the church, the hall could be brought into the scheme. The church currently has a lease on the ground floor of the church hall.
 - Glebe Hall area.

At the next meeting members will be split into groups to look at individual premises in detail and methods of funding would be considered. Mike Pearson asked if there is a cinema company ready to take this on. Cllr Dr. Lovelidge suggested the group should talk to Folkestone Town Council (their cinema was with Silver Screen) and she understood there had been financial difficulties. Cllr Knowles pointed out that the premises need to be flexible so that they could be used for different functions.

Cllr Mrs Ferguson felt that the Town Hall Focus Group should not make a decision on the Town Hall prior to hearing the plans Cllr Carter suggested for the area to the rear of the Town Hall. Cllr Carter illustrated proposals for building to the rear, stretching from land occupied by the Woolpack Barn, across the gravel and grassed areas adjoining the vicarage land and returning to rejoin the Town Hall at the rear (at the councillors' room). An underpass would be required to preserve access rights to number 22 or a break in the building line. This would effectively create a "U" shape joining the Town Hall and the Woolpack. Cllr Knowles agreed that a co-funding model with Enterprise Inns could work.

John Crawford pointed out that this project, should it go ahead, could be treated separately from the Town Hall work.

Action: The Town Clerk would contact Richard Menagh of Enterprise Inns to gauge their response.

Cllrs Carter and Mrs Ferguson left the meeting.

5. **Matters arising.** Details of the visit from Sarah Dee (conservation officer at ABC) were discussed, the main requirements of opening up the foyer and removing/repositioning of partition walls were not an issue with the conservation officer who was also keen to retain the assembly room and stairs in their present state.

6. **Options on the Town Hall**

Selling the Town Hall and relocating

This option was rejected as the Town Hall would be difficult to sell and alternative premises difficult to find. A building on the recreation ground was not practical or desirable.

All members agreed the sale option should be dropped.

Re-order and Repair versus Extend

It was accepted that all administrative and community offices are a drain on funds although there was potential revenue from ABC, KCC and other organisations. The need was again highlighted for confidential areas for interviews. Cllr Knowles advised that the ABC presence was likely to remain as the footfall had not diminished as expected since the move from the Gateway. The demand for local ABC services in Tenterden remained.

Cllr Knowles would check the likelihood of funding for accommodation for community services etc. with other portfolio holders at ABC.

There should be plenty of multi-use “hot-rooms” to serve various organisations and attain the full letting potential for these.

All were agreed that the foyer needed to be opened up and more welcoming perhaps with local produce/TIC offering.

Better disabled access is crucial.

Cllr Knowles suggested when work commences the Town Hall administrative staff should move out the building.

Giovanna Gandolfo felt that we should look beyond the administrative and community services and cater for the increased town size and other functions.

The group were reminded of the public consultation response that TTC should not spend too much on the Town Hall and that it should be geared towards community services.

A vote was taken on the way forward. Cllr Knowles did not vote as he is not a member of the group. All but 1 of the members voted to repair and re-order rather than extend. Reasons given (in addition to those mentioned above) included:

- The wishes of the consultation
- The expense involved in an extension which may not be sustainable from additional income
- Business may be taken away from other local facilities.
- More use could be made of the building without an extension.

A vote was also taken regarding the linking of the Town Hall and potential cinema projects. The result was unanimously in favour of treating the projects separately.

The group also agreed that an architect should be engaged to draw up plans for the re-ordering.

7. **Recommendations to council.** A summary of recommendations follows:

- a) The Town Hall should be re-ordered and repaired and not extended
- b) The Town Hall project should be treated separately from any potential development to the rear of both the Woolpack and the Town Hall
- c) An architect should be engaged to put forward designs for the project.

8. **AOB.** Cllr Mrs Smith advised the committee that Highbury Hall had now lost the income of the pre-school club which had folded.
9. **Next Meeting.** Wednesday 11th October.