

## **The Cinema Project Advances to the Next Stage in 2020**

We are moving forward! In September, the Council issued a competitive public call for tender for the full feasibility study of the 'Pebbles' building on the High Street. An expert panel evaluated the five bids, and decided that the award-winning architects Burrell Foley Fischer had the best answers.

The Council has now approved the decision and the study will begin early in 2020, based on Burrell Foley Fischer's favoured revised outline proposal, which uses the historic building for front-of-house, café and ancillaries, placing the two auditoriums in a new, partly sunken building on the site of the former stable block. Our survey of Millennium Garden use in July suggested that this plan would increase the use of the garden and improve its amenity.

Burrell Foley Fischer, and their team of consultants, will produce a digital survey, engineering studies of the building and site, more detailed design proposals, initial costings and business plans based on consultations with potential operators and the Focus Group. The feasibility study will also include the site archaeological study and pre-application to Kent Highways.

While the study is in progress, the Focus Group will be making plans for the next stage which, all being well, will include a detailed planning application and fund-raising toward the cost of the construction of the new auditoriums.

Tom Evans

Chair, Cinema Focus Group, 17 December 2019