

Charlton Village Hall Committee Meeting – 9 Aug 23 @730pm @ 43 Tower Close

Present:

Ian Carr
Mark Bruton
Steve Bushell
Clive Ward
Phil Wylde

Welcome and Introduction. IC opened by welcoming Committee members. The Committee hadn't met for some time and it was necessary to recap and review the current position before deciding the next steps.

Brief review of where things have got to with planning - any uncertainty created by the pre-app. The PreApp exposed a number of concerns from the Local Planning Authority (TVBC). The Committee thought the response was overly negative and meeting was held with Head Planning, Cllr Linda Lashbrook and Cllr Phil North to discuss. It was a good meeting that highlighted TVBC concerns and concluded that as long as all these concerns were addressed there was no reason why a Planning Application could not succeed. Following this meeting a Leaflet was dropped to each Charlton household.

Feedback from leaflet drop. The Leaflet seemed to be well received and was used as the basis for the session held as part of the Charlton Annual Parish meeting held on 20 Jun 23. Attendance was disappointing but nevertheless useful. It was concluded that there was a need to confirm unequivocal support for a village hall. The Neighbourhood Plan used evidence from a village survey that concluded more than 80% of those surveyed supported Charlton having a village hall. However, this conclusion was not informed by likely costs; planning, building and ongoing running costs. Before proceeding further, a Door Step survey would need to be carried out.

Door Step Survey. The purpose of a village hall is to act as a hub for the community. To bring people together, to share information, to celebrate, to enhance community spirit and a sense of belonging. It should be for all age groups in the community and be inclusive and accessible. It should be a home for, and encourage, local clubs and societies. Other local village halls are run along these lines and also offer facilities for hire in order to offset running costs.

Street Points of Contact would need to be identified and approached to carry out the survey over weeks/months in the autumn. The survey would focus on the need/requirement. Where possible, questions would be answered using pre-worked up FAQs. Eg

Possible questions to pose.

- What is it that you would like to do but can't due to the limited hall facility within St Thomas' church?
- What would see the Hall being used for? Eg yoga, pilates, keep fit, dancing, coffee mornings, flower arranging, photography, local history.

Possible questions from residents and answers

Can we afford a village hall?

Costs. The village hall planning application will not go forward unless there is an outline plan of how the project will be paid for.

Estimates of about £1.7M. How will Charlton raise this sort of money?

- Community Infrastructure Levy. The housing project for 50 homes at the top of Peake Way will attract a levy calculated by the Local Planning Authority. Charlton Village is entitled to 25% of this amount.
- Precept. The current precept is set at £33k per year or about £35 per household per year or 67p per week. Raising the precept with residents' agreement would be an option. How much would you be prepared to have the precept raised to for this specific purpose?

- Grants. There are a number of opportunities for grants and once we have a clear way forward, we will be approaching grant providers.
- Shares. This arrangement has been used very successfully by Long Parish when the community bought their local pub. The Plunkett organisation may prove helpful <https://plunkett.co.uk/>
- Loans. Parish Councils can borrow money over long periods (50 years?). A sound business plan is key. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/2010-to-2015-government-policy-local-government-spending/2010-to-2015-government-policy-local-government-spending#appendix-2-parish-and-town-council-borrowing-approval>
- Local Fundraising. Quizzes, bring and buy, garage sales. Not big money but brings a sense of purpose and maintains buy-in from the community.

Proposed Site

Site preparation and tree management was a major concern raised by TVBC. The Committee discussed how this should be approached and concluded that it would be necessary to obtain quotes for the necessary work regarding Tree Protection Plans, Felling licence etc. CW highlighted the Tree Protection Plan and Impact Assessment [Arboricultural Impact Assessment](#) produced for re-siting the Jubilee Beacon and suggested that ROAVR <https://www.roavr-environmental.co.uk/> were approached for a 'view' about the site and the approach that would be needed. This was a separate activity and could be done in parallel with the Door Step Survey. It was accepted that the Parish Council would need to decide to commit funding for this work even if subsequently the project was postponed/cancelled.

Achieving a desired design for the building.

SB reminded the committee that the desired design of the building needed to be addressed as this affected so many other aspects of the plan. He submitted rough costs for consultant fees based on his knowledge/experience working in this field. The Parish Council should be made aware of the order of magnitude ie ~£40k. Not all of this money would need to be committed up front so a spend profile should be prepared to be briefed to the PC in Sep or Oct.

Approaching a planning application.

Any planning application would need to wait for the Door Step Survey and the Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA). The Door Step Survey would need to support unequivocally the need for a Charlton Village Hall. The AIA would need to show the site was viable – expect a number of caveats but hopefully all achievable. If the site is too challenging this does not invalidate the work of the Door Step survey but would mean a new site would have to be contemplated and if no suitable site was available the project would have to be shelved.

Clive Ward

Clive Ward

Charlton Village/Community Hall Committee

25 Aug 23