

LVH Working Group report for full Parish Council Meeting 15th November 2022

The group has now met twice, this report is therefore an updated report which amalgamates the two meetings. We were tasked with looking at the options for the future of Littlethorpe Village Hall (LVH). The Group looked at what we saw were the 5 possible outcomes. These are detailed below.

Option 1 – Do nothing

The group feels that LVH is currently an underutilized asset and that the current state of the building contributes to this. We feel that by doing nothing we would in the future be forced to do maintenance works to stop the building falling into disrepair and works to ensure it met basic Health and Safety and disability access requirements measures. The state of the building reflects the lack of care and maintenance over the years.

Option 2 – Refresh /Partial Refurbishment

The group felt that this basic facility needs updating. We feel that in its current state it is unattractive to many possible new hirers and needs updating to make it a much more viable option to attract more interest or even the possibility that another group may consider taking over the management. The group believe there is an untapped potential for LVH as a budget venue for those who don't want to pay the higher rental cost at the Parish Centre.

Option 3 – Complete rebuild/Major Refurbishment

We did not feel this was a viable option especially in the current economic climate. We have the new Parish Centre which caters for bigger groups and a wider range of hirers. We do not feel LVH should be in direct competition and the cost would be prohibitive for any future anticipated return.

Option 4 – Transfer ownership or lease to other bodies.

Under the original terms for the building if we wanted to relinquish LVH it would have to be offered back to Blaby DC first though we believe they wouldn't be interested given that Blaby's current strategy is to divest itself of assets which aren't central to its core purpose. The Hall has to be retained for community use so there are a limited number of other bodies that might be interested and we suspect that they would not want to agree to take the building in its current state and would want the Council to do some sort of refurbishment works first.

Option 5 - Demolition

As detailed above, this would only be possible if there was no other interest and LVH would need to be replaced with a facility for the community. Given that demolition would incur a significant cost as would the creation of a new community facility, even something as simple as a community garden, we don't see this as an attractive option.

After careful consideration, the Working Group is making the following two recommendations which we feel are both sensible, reasonable and least costly when taking a longer term view

Recommendation 1

The recommendation of the group is for option 2 to refresh and refurbish the building. We feel this will give us the best value for money option. It retains an asset which has value and the potential for higher return and is the less costly option in the long run. It also does not rule out transfer of LVH to another body in due course if there is interest.

The works we are considering are

- to improve storage at one end for chairs etc from stud walling. We did consider moving the current divide but this was not a viable option and it was felt should be removed altogether.
- changing the entrance into the building itself to offer improved disabled access with the two existing doors being made into one wider door.
- reconfiguring the toilet area to incorporate at least one disabled toilet with a baby changing facility.
- replacing the flooring, new blinds and redecorate inside and out.

We anticipate this work would be in the region of £40-£50k and would look to see if any grants were available to help with the cost as 106 monies would not be available.

Recommendation 2

Should the Council agree with Recommendation 1 we further recommend that:-

The Clerk be authorised to spend up to £500 getting proper plans drawn up, mainly for the toilet area but to incorporate the doors and storage area. This would allow us to get some more accurate quotes to take the works forward either on a one off basis or a staged basis.

Cllr Alison Clark
Lead Member LVHWG

07.11.22