



DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING of the Community Centre Advisory Committee
held in Hadlow Down Village Hall, Hadlow Down
Tuesday 26th November 2024 at 19:00

Present: Cllr Michael Lunn (ML) Chair, Cllr Damon Wellman (DW), Cllr Peter Weston (PW), Brian Mills (BM), Bob Lake (BL), Fiona Shafer (FS), and Sandra Richards (SR).

In attendance: Vicki Rutt (Clerk) and one member of the public.

The Chair asked BL to propose members of the Hadlow Down Community Centre Committee (HDCC) to join the meeting this evening in order to present information. This was seconded by SR. All Committee members agreed. Sarah Prall (SP) and Mandy Chapman (MC) joined the meeting.

57. Public Questions

A resident reported that the Village Hall Committee are keen to have the tri-party meeting with the PC and HDCC as they would like to be kept informed and updated. *This is being arranged for early February 2025.* The resident also reported that he has been looking into the role of a custodian trustee and he states it means that they hold the deeds of the property to ensure the land is secure in case anything happens, and the land reverts back to PC. His opinion is that the PC should be a custodian trustee of HDCC. BL explained that there is no risk of the project failing and reverting back to the PC as no building work will commence until all money is raised. BL stated that there is no financial risk to the PC. ML thanked the resident for his comments, and they were duly noted.

58. Apologies

There were no apologies.

59. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

60. Approve the minutes of meeting held on the 24th September 2024 and review action log

The minutes were approved as a true and accurate record. The action log was reviewed.

At the last meeting, an action was recorded that the final internal design and building control was ready and could be shared with the PC. BL explained this is incorrect and the final building control design will not be ready until year 4. SP explained that there is a need to get technical drawings done and this is planning to commence early 2025.

61. Receive an update on the Business Plan

MC provided a bundle of paperwork for each member and took them through each document. *Discussions jumped around the agenda as many of the items are interlinked so the below minutes are not necessarily in order nor verbatim.*

The business plan was discussed, and members were reminded that there is a detailed list of costings in the business plan that shows figures they are currently working on. The 5 year plan did show that there was going to be a full project cost plan by the end of this year and a detailed plan beginning of 2025 but this is now unlikely. MC confirmed that the 5-year plan is a live document which will be changing all the time. It was agreed it would be shared with members for each meeting, so they have the updated version.

Action 1. SP confirmed that both the business plan and 5 year plan documents will be version controlled and all members of the Advisory Committee will get an update in advance of the next meeting

MC explained that HDCC have been looking at the governance and lease options, also liaising with Charity Commission (CC) and Action in Rural Sussex (AiRS) for advice. There are a lot of complexities and there seems to be 4 options available. MC talked through each option and the one favoured was option 4 which would result in the current lease with Hadlow Down Playing Field Committee (HDPF) being amended and a new lease being drawn up for HDCC. Discussions were held on the legal costs and how this would be budgeted. Option 4 is the quickest option and has been recommended by AiRS. SR raised two issues; the PC will need to receive parochial approval, which can be time consuming, due to the St Mark's trust land and great care needs to be taken when looking at the Sport England charge. ML intervened and said yes

this matter needs to be carefully considered but does not believe we need any permissions, but to ensure Sports England Charge and any covenants are duly reflected into the lease. FS explained that she will be liaising with members of the Playing Field Committee to see if they would like an amendment to their current lease to just change the parcel of land their lease is for or whether they would like an entirely new lease. FS will come back to the PC when she has had this meeting. SP asked if she could meet with the Clerk to go through the leases, this was agreed and will be arranged. **Action 2.**

ML asked members if they agree with proceeding with option 4 out of the ones available.

It was agreed this is the best fit and would be a recommendation to the Parish Council. Rec 1.

SP explained that with proceeding with option 4, this would take away the need for a management committee which was discussed in the September 2024 meeting and AiRS have confirmed that the HDCC constitution is good and fit for purpose. SP confirmed that HDCC would not need to seek permission with Charity Commission to make the changes.

Standing Orders dropped.

A resident asked what happens when the Pavilion is completed, how does HDPF access the Pavilion? MC confirmed this is included in the lease.

Standing Orders reinstated.

SP went through the risk assessment document and stated that the highest risk obstacle is raising the £3 million. Item 5 covers the Parish Council risks, and SP stated that the likelihood has been classed as high. To mitigate this, communication needs to continue between HDPC and HDCC, HDCC would like to secure written support from the PC for key aspects of the project such as planning and funding applications. The cost of the project was raised again and BL confirmed that they are still going for the phased funding. They need £2 million for phase 1. They will then be able to claim a VAT return on the costings of phase 1 which would go towards commencing phase 2. BL said they have money ring fenced at present but if they spend it all now, they will not have any money to spend on a fundraising expert.

BM spoke about critical paths being needed to get to the end game, it was suggested that the path could be started with alerts set up along the way to ensure you don't overspend money or over commit. MC agreed that this is a good idea and that yes, they can but not something they are quite there with just yet but will be looked into. **Action 3.** BM asked a further question, the whole financial projection is looking at the next 5/7 years, have you got a plan for any high risk issues that may come up, which can be covered. MC confirmed that this is included in the business plan. SP stated that the Parish Council will be responsible for covering the cost of the play area being moved sites.

ML thanked SP for the risk assessment document and stated due to time, if members take away their copy and digest, if they have any comments sent to the Clerk who could liaise with HDCC. **Action 4.**

ML proposed that the risk assessment document should be shared with the PC, so MC will send this to the Clerk. All members of the Advisory Committee to review Risk Assessment and feedback any comments to the Clerk. This was agreed by all. Rec 2.

There is a newsletter going out in the December Parish Magazine providing an update on HDCC and explaining about working groups that are being set up to obtain volunteers from the community who would like to be involved and engage their help. The different working groups are Lease & Governance, Major Grants, Local Fundraising, Build and Marketing/Comms.

Following the last meeting, MC produced a Q&A document. MC stated that HDCC do not feel that the PC are supportive of the project and feel that they are always nit picking, questioning everything and wanting to know the finer details. SP explained that they have their own HDCC sub committees and meetings with the HDPF, and the Advisory Committee adds to this, where their band width is already stretched. It was explained that the Advisory Committee is a PC committee and therefore has to follow procedure and governance, but meetings are arranged when needed and the Clerk can work with HDCC to see when there is a need. MC agreed that they understand there needs to be scrutiny but what they feel they are missing is the support of the PC in other areas. MC stated again, that raising £3m is going to be a massive challenge, and the best shot to succeed is everyone pulling together.

SR suggested that a recommendation is agreed to ask the PC whether they support this project and what that support looks like. This was agreed by all. **Rec 3.**

BL updated that the community plan is expiring in 2026, and it needs to be updated and driven forward. He asked could this be reviewed by the PC. This was agreed by all and will be a recommendation. **The PC to look at whether they update the Community Plan. Rec 4.**

Following the comments from MC, DW explained that the thing the PC and residents will want to see, is how the money is going to be fundraised. You received 85% support on the recent survey but that is not even a third of residents responding. He explained he can understand that it would be disheartening to not feel supported by the PC, but the PC has to represent all residents and the first thing residents want to know is, will it affect my council tax bill. DW stated he understands governance is a pain, but this is the world we live in now. No one can take away the amount of time and effort that HDCC have put into this project so far, it is phenomenal but at the end of the day, the big question is, can you raise the money. BM stated that communication is key, he suggested perhaps both the PC and HDCC could put out updates in the Parish Magazine and on social media to keep the project live and give it a useful push. PW said the momentum for the project has changed after recent months and this will continue, having a space for the community to use is key, the current Village Hall is showing its age and he would just like to be assured that we are not affecting the finances of our residents and there will be no hiatus for residents being able to access a Village Hall/Community Centre. FS agreed that more needs to be done to explain to residents how important having a community is and the benefits.

62. Receive an update on the response from the Charity Commission on the proposals outlined by Hadlow Down Community Centre and the Playing Field Committee

This was updated in the above agenda item.

63. Receive an update on the detailed design and the building control, along with the timeline to delivery

This was updated in agenda item 61.

64. Receive an update on fundraising

This was briefly covered in the agenda item 61, however SP and MC confirmed that there are several volunteers ready to assist in writing grant applications but until the tick box on the forms can be ticked to say they have a lease, this is on hold, but they are ready to go.

65. Recommendations to Parish Council

- [Rec 1 - Recommendation for the Parish Council to agree to proceed with option 4 re leases.](#)
- [Rec 2 – Share the risk assessment document to the Parish Council for information and noting.](#)
- [Rec 3 – Gage Parish Council support of the project and what that support looks like.](#)
- [Rec 4 –The PC to look at the Community Plan process and whether they wish to update.](#)

The meeting closed at 20:52.

The next meeting date is Tuesday 28th January 2025 at 19:00