

To All Residents of Church Lawford and Kings Newnham.

The Old School Land and the Reading Room: Progress Report and Way Forward

Everything comes to those who wait, so it is said. In this case it seems that our patience and persistence has at last been rewarded by some real progress!

An agreement has been reached with the County Council and the Diocese, the trustees of the school land, on a set of proposals.

Under these proposals the Diocese will 'sell' the old school site to the County Council for £1. This is on condition that the Council will immediately lease the part of the site that we want (essentially the old playground) to the new Village Hall Trustees on a long lease (99 years plus) at a peppercorn rent. The lease will specify that the land can be used only for purposes in connection with the Village Hall and should it ever not be needed for those purposes then it would revert to the County Council who would be free to sell it. If they did sell it then a proportion of the proceeds, which would be specified in the sale agreement between the County Council and the Diocese, would go back to the Diocesan Trustees.

This all sounds complicated, and it is! But the net effect is to give everybody what they want.

- The village gets control of the land it wants to provide car parking and hard play area behind the Reading Room, and to provide access through to the Recreation Ground, which will soon be in the ownership of the Parish Council (the contract for the sale is now ready for signing).
- The County Council is free to sell the rest of the old school site and thus they get the cash they want.
- The Diocesan Trustees discharge their duty to ensure that the village continues to benefit from the terms of the original trust, with the long term guarantee that in the event that we no longer want the land it can be converted into cash which can then be used for the purposes of the trust.

All in all a very satisfactory outcome!

Of course it is not yet done and dusted. The whole arrangement has yet to be approved by the Charity Commission and the legal documents have to be drawn up to make the whole thing happen. As we have already found with the sale of the Recreation Ground to the Parish Council the legal processes alone can take a long time. But the County Council has already written to the Charity Commission and is starting to draft conveyances with the Diocese, so they are trying to move things along.

We also have to get our application for a new Village Hall Trust approved by the Charity Commission. That has all been on hold while the wrangle with the County Council was going on. Now the new agreement has been reached things can start to move again.

We can also start to think about the next phase of our plans, which is to extend and improve the present Reading Room to give us the facilities that the village needs. This is where you come in!

Attached to this sheet is a questionnaire. This is your opportunity to say what facilities you would like to see in a new Village Hall. Please fill in the questionnaire and return it to the address shown as soon as possible.

Clearly the work on the Reading Room will cost money. We are hopeful that we will get substantial grant funding for much of the work but even so we are bound to have to meet a proportion of the costs ourselves. This could be in cash, or it could be in kind. If we can carry out some of the work ourselves rather than paying for it to be done professionally then the value of that work would count towards our share of the costs.

Also included in the questionnaire are some questions about whether you would be able to assist with fund raising or in the actual building work. You don't have to be a skilled builder, many jobs will just require willing volunteers. If you would be willing to assist in any way, even if only with a couple of hours of your time, please say so on the questionnaire. You will not be committing yourself to anything at this stage but an indication of who would be willing to help and with what would be very helpful to us.

Many thanks; we will put out further news sheets to keep you informed of developments.

Howard Parvin. Chairman of the new Trustees.

QUESTIONNAIRE
The New Church Lawford Village Hall

This questionnaire has been issued by the Village Hall Trustees. We need your help to draw up plans for expanding and improving the facilities of the present Reading Room into a new Village Hall. This will be a facility for everyone in Church Lawford and Kings Newnham to use and so we want to cater in our planning for as many interests as possible. Please take a little time to complete this questionnaire and return it to one of the addresses shown in the attached newsletter on or before 31st August.

We will try to include as many of your views as possible into the draft plans for the new Village Hall. Once these have been prepared we will give everyone in the community an opportunity to see and comment upon them before they are finalised.

Name.
Address.

Telephone No.

Have you used the current Reading Room?
If yes, for what sort of activities? If no, why not?

Yes/No

What improvements would you like to see made to the present Reading Room facilities?

What activities would you like to be able to undertake in a Village Hall, which are not possible in the present Reading Room?

What additional accommodation/facilities would these need?

If such accommodation/facilities could be provided would you be willing to assist in organising these activities in the Village Hall? Yes/No

Would you be willing to serve on the Management Committee of the Village Hall when one is set up? Yes/No

Would you be willing to assist in the planning/building of the new Village Hall? Yes/No

Please list any particular skills/experience/contacts that you have which could be useful

Would you be willing to assist in fund raising for the new Village Hall? Yes/No

Would you be willing to make an interest free loan towards the cost of a new Village Hall? Yes/No

Would you be willing to assist in any other way? Please say what.

Do you like the title 'Village Hall'? Yes/No

If not, can you suggest an alternative?

Please add here any other comments you would like to make. (Continue on a separate sheet if necessary).