

Lesmahagow Development Trust

Project Report - Jubilee Hall

Sponsor(s): Liz

Status: Closed.

Following the announcement of closure in 2010 Lesmahagow Community Council arranged an open meeting with users of the hall to discuss the option of saving the hall as a community facility. At the meeting a group called Friends of the Jubilee (FOJ) were formed to take this proposal forward. Lesmahagow Development Trust (LDT) offered support to this group in their attempt to save the hall.

In late 2010 LDT were approached by someone looking to establish a not for profit amateur boxing club in the village and set about trying to identify suitable premises for the club.

When it became evident that saving the Jubilee as a village hall would be commercially and logistically unviable one member of FOJ suggested that perhaps it would be a suitable location for the boxing club.

At the end of April 2011, LDT submitted an interest to South Lanarkshire Council (SLC) in obtaining the hall as a boxing club. We held our first meeting with SLC in early July to establish what information SLC would require to allow LDT to proceed with a community asset transfer of the hall.

The following were the requirements of the council

1. Property

- a. Evidence that the Trust understands the property obligations – an outline building management plan/identification of Trust members that will lead on property management or who would be employed to provide this.
- b. Evidence that the Trust has assessed the building condition and repairs – a builder or surveyor report
- c. As the Trust do not intent to occupy the property themselves evidence as to how the relationship with the occupier is to be managed.

2. Project

- a. Identification of the overall objectives of the project and how these link to Council and Trust objectives
- b. An time line for the project showing short term and medium term targets
- c. A business plan for the boxing club
- d. Evidence of community engagement over the proposal
- e. Evidence that the revenue from the boxing club will be adequate to cover the business costs i.e. that the project is sustainable
- f. Initial consideration of funding options

Most of this has been provided in some form to SLC however the finance side of things has not as we have been unable to obtain running costs and other necessary information from SLC in spite of frequent requests.

A further meeting was held with SLC in August to show progress on the information to be provided. As we felt they would decline the proposal to transfer ownership of the hall we raised the possibility of a year long lease deal to allow us time to raise any necessary finance and show that the boxing club could generate the necessary funding to make the project sustainable.

In early October we met with Councillor Mcinnes to discuss the project which was due to come to committee the following week. When we received the agenda for the Executive Committee it was recommended by council officers that the project be declined for both ownership and on a year long lease.

Rather than accept this decision and lose the chance of not only saving the hall but also the opportunity of providing a facility to the village which would help to get kids off the street, we chose to try and have the decision reversed for the lease only option at the moment.

Notes were sent to all members of the executive committee about the project and an appeal not to decline the lease option. This was followed up by phone calls to the committee members to discuss the project and ask for their support. Prior to the committee meeting we had the guaranteed support of 8 members (all SNP) ,

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1 would not be attending (independent) , 1 never returned any calls (lib dem), 4 were undecided (conservative) and the other 10 members gave no indication on how they would vote (labour).

Prior to the meeting we also contacted our MSP Aileen Campbell for her support and she sent SLC a letter asking for the reconsideration of their decision.

At the meeting councillor McInnes asked for a continuation to allow more time to consider the options. This was granted and the next meeting of the executive committee takes place in mid November.

Since the meeting we have been in touch with SLC about the information we need to proceed but as yet have not received it.

The Boxing Club proposal has been rejected by SLC so it looks like the Jubilee hall will soon be demolished and likely replaced by flats.

On a Positive note, we have not dropped the fight to bring the boxing club to fruition. Discussions are still ongoing to find a possible home for it.