

Elsenham Parish Council

New Community Hall Working Group Meeting

Friday 22 January 2021

at 10.30am via Zoom

Present:

Dr. G Mott (Chairman GM), Mr. P Clear (PEC), Mr. P Johnson (PJ)
and Mrs. L Johnson (Parish Clerk LJ).

1. **Apologies for absence.** None.
2. **Declaration of Interests.** None.
3. **Approval of minutes.**
The minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2020 were approved as a true record.

4. **To discuss the two quotes for costings of the new community hall**
EPC had now received both sets of costings from Whitworth and Wilby & Burnett.
EPC had given both companies a list of rooms and asked them to design a community hall fit for purpose. Wilby & Burnett had constructed a single storey building while Whitworth had constructed a two-storey building with a hall that has a doubled height ceiling, suitable for badminton, a hall of this size would not necessarily be required by EPC.

An architect from both companies has come up with a definitive design for the hall. So, the two designs submitted by Whitworth and Wilby & Burnett are what could be achieved but not necessarily what EPC want to achieve. The point of arranging the costings was to challenge UDC's costings of £900,000 from Founded Studios.

Whitworth total is £1,589,520 excluding VAT.
Wilby & Burnett is £2,659,600 excluding VAT.

Professional fees for Whitworth are 11% of the total amount, £146,000.
Professional fees for Wilby & Burnett are 17% of the total amount, £386,000.

Wilby and Burnett had not provided an illustrated construction of the outside of the building only a floor plan.

The Whitworth costings were discussed, there were some items that could be changed or discarded.
Ed Thuell said he would be happy to attend a zoom meeting with members of the council to discuss any issues.

EPC will need to bridge the shortfall in funding required for this project. The work on the Bovis Homes development has not started and the Section 106 has not yet been signed. However, confirmation had been received from UDC confirming the section 106 agreement will state.

50% of the community facilities contribution to be paid prior to first occupation and for the second half of the contribution to be paid prior to occupation of 50% of the market dwellings.

If UDC observed these terms, the Bovis payment could be within the time scales of this project. If, however the payments were late, they could pay off a lump sum of any potential Loan.

The payment from Bovis is approximately £300,000 bringing the total with the payments from Crest Nicholson and David Wilson Homes to approximately £1,020,000.

The costings from Whitworth and Wilby & Burnett indicate that the project is going to cost in the region of more than £1.5 million. EPC are therefore between £500,000 and £800,000 short in funds.

EPC could take out a Publics Work Loan, but to pay back the loan the precept would have to be significantly increased, maybe as much as 40-60 percent. To raise the precept by that amount would require EPC to hold a referendum.

A business plan would be required, which included the capital cost and also the projected running costs of the hall for the next five years.

PJ is to circulate some business plans that he has found on the internet.

EPC has still not received any Section 106's monies from UDC. Until EPC had some certainty on finance from UDC there were limitations on moving forward with the project.

PJ is to research Public Works Loans to see how much the repayments would be on a loan between £500,000 to £1,000,000 in £100,000 amounts, and the impact this would have on the precept. These figures can then be circulated at the Parish Council meeting.

The new community hall was due to be discussed at the Annual Parish meeting in April 2020, but due to the pandemic the meeting was cancelled. It was agreed that now all the necessary legislations were in place EPC would hold an Annual Parish Meeting on Thursday 22 April 2021 via zoom. At this meeting EPC would report to the residents about the potential new community hall. The public would be informed of the challenges that EPC face and that a Works Loan may be required and that this would increase the precept. This would supply EPC with resident's feedback.

The community hall could be constructed in stages, either the changing rooms deferred or the main hall. It would be more expensive to do in stages but would be a better option than abandoning the project completely through lack of funding.

It was agreed that members would look at the Whitworth costings and compile some questions. By Friday 29 January 2021, the questions will be consolidated, and LJ would arrange a zoom meeting with Whitworth.

5. The composition of the working group

It was agreed to wait until the Annual Parish Meeting before co-opting any members of the public onto the working group. Any individuals that have the necessary expertise of working on this kind of project would be invited to contact LJ with a view to joining the working group to assist with the project.

The meeting closed at 12.25pm.