

ANSTON PARISH COUNCIL

THE MEETING OF ANSTON PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT THE PARISH HALL, 15A RYTON ROAD, NORTH ANSTON ON MONDAY 2ND OCTOBER 2023.

Present: Councillors- Shaun Concannon (Chair), Clive Jepson, Diane Graham, Alan Scholey, Jodie Brooks-MacDonald, Colin Tawn, Kay Wright, Marie Wilkinson.

Public: None

In attendance: Andrew Woodhead (Clerk)

105/1023-QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

None.

106/1024-APOLOGIES

RESOLVED:To receive and accept apologies for absence from Councillor Ben Bentley.

107/1023-DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY AND OTHER INTERESTS

(a) To receive disclosures by members of any disclosable pecuniary interests for the purposes of Section 31 of the Localism Act 2011 and any other relevant interests under the Members' Code of Conduct- None

(b) To receive and decide upon request for dispensations to councillors to take part in discussions and votes where they have declared disclosable pecuniary interests- None.

108/1024-ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED IN THE ABSENCE OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

To identify agenda items where resolutions may be moved to exclude the press and public.- None.

109/1025-MINUTES OF MEETINGS

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday the 18th September 2023 are a true and accurate record.

110/1026-MEETING REPORTS/UPDATES

To receive a CAP meeting update from the Chair/Clerk

The Clerk reported that he had updated the CAP meeting attendees regarding the moving of the Picnic Bench in Lockwood Park. Traffic Speeds were discussed and work is being undertaken to look at slowing traffic in some areas.

111/1023-PLANNING APPLICATIONS

a) To consider validated planning applications.

It was noted that the Parish Council had objected to the Planning application for the Nursery at Lindrick Dale RB2023/1132.

RB2023/1186 Tennis Court at Lindrick Dale, Noted.

b) To receive information on planning decisions. None

c) To receive information on any appeals. None

112/1023-THE OLD LIBRARY

To consider options and agree actions required for the Old Library; Appendix Item One.

RESOLVED: Option 1 That the Council; Apply for funding, accepting all the work required; on the understanding that if the application is successful the project will progress to completion using the structures and systems already agreed. This will ensure the external funding opportunity currently available is taken advantage of.

Recorded Vote: For: Shaun Concannon, Clive Jepson, Alan Scholey, Jodie Brooks-MacDonald, Colin Tawn, Kay Wright, Marie Wilkinson.

Abstain: Diane Graham

113/1023-PARISH MATTERS

a) Use of Anston Parish Council projects by Borough Council Ward Member- Item deferred.

b) To discuss councillor's attendance records and resolve to take any necessary action- It was noted that the Council has limited powers, however Cllr Wilkinson offered to put an attendance list together which would be put on the Councils website, the offer was accepted by the Council.

c) Anston Parish Council Bonfire Night – Friday 3rd November 2023 (Update) The Clerk stated that the Marshals, the Firework display and the Bonfire and cordon people had all been contacted. A comprehensive Emergency Plan has been found on file and would be updated and circulated for comment/information.

d) Sewage discharged into Anston Brook from the Water Treatment Works. Cllr Jepson presented an article from the Rotherham Advertiser stating that 470 hours of overflow discharge from Anston Sewage Treatment Works had entered Anston Brook (River Ryton). The Clerk was asked to write a letter of complaint on behalf of the Council. Councillors were encouraged to write their own letters of complaint.

114/1023-ITEMS FOR THE AGENDA OF THE NEXT MEETING

To agree on items to be included on the agenda of the next ordinary meeting of the Council, including from the Governance Review Schedule:

- a) Qtr 2 spend to budget & Level of reserves; & discretionary spend decisions.
- b) Allotment Review.
- c) Staff Review.
- d) Council Credit Card
- e) Communications

115/1023-MEETING DATE

The next Ordinary meeting of the Parish Council will take place at 7:00 pm in the Parish Hall on Monday the 16th October 2023.

CIRCULATION

Councillors: S Concannon, D Graham, M Wilkinson, B Bentley, P Bowers, J Ireland, C Jepson, D Tarmey, K Wright, C Tawn, A Scholey, J Brooks-MacDonald.

Wards Councillors: D Tarmey, T Wilson, T Baum-Dixon.

Staff: Andrew Woodhead, Michael Gazur.

A Woodhead

Clerk to Anston Parish Council

03/10/2023

APPENDIX ITEM ONE

AGENDA ITEM 7 -02/10/2023 Minute Item 112/1023

Anston Parish Council- Report to Council

Theme- Old Library- Major Project, Community Space (part Externally funded)

Background

The Old Library was built as a School, the exact date of construction is not known but we do have evidence of its existence back to the 1870's. Late last century the building was converted into the local library, from which the current name is derived. The building came into the ownership of Anston Parish Council in 1999. Since then, there have been several unsuccessful attempts to develop the building.

The Council has allocated and spent a budget with CS Surveying (Hereafter referred to as our contractor) to work up plans for the building. A long-standing commitment to remove a redundant chimney stack, and minor roof repair to make the building watertight have recently been completed.

Funding Opportunity

Central Government is offering a fund that enables buildings to be brought back into community use. The fund closes in March 2025 and pays for up to 80% of project costs. An Expression of interest was submitted for the Old Library; Following an initial assessment projects considered eligible for the funding will be invited to submit a grant funding application.

On the 21st September, Anston Parish Council received notification that the Expression of interest has been considered and we are invited to submit a funding application to the programme.

The application is 26 pages, requires supporting information extra to the application and needs to be submitted by 11th October 2023. If successful, the project has to be completed within 12 months.

Proposals

That using external funding for up to 80% of the project cost Anston Parish Council contracts the reconfiguration and renovation of the Old Library building with the following facilities; Large Community Space/Exhibition/Learning/Meeting, space, with a second small meeting room; archive room; and to ensure sustainability a Council Office- (ensuring the building has staffing for access Monday to Friday); Comfort room for the Councils Grounds Maintenance Staff to rest and change, and associated facilities- Toilets, Cleaning store and Kitchen area. To our contractors to oversee the project.

Items for consideration:

a)-This project will be better considered by the funders if the Community Space can be used for educational purposes by a local school, free of charge. Initial talks with Anston Brook Primary School are very positive. The Council need to consider this option.

b)-The Council agrees to fund up to 20% of the project cost using Council reserves, up to a maximum of £70,000

c)-and agrees to pay all running costs for the building, should the project be successful.

The current estimated project costs are £320,000
Estimated external funding requirement £256,000*
Estimated Council contribution to secure the fund £64,000

*The fund is structured with a threshold of £250,000; grants over this have to meet extra criteria, during the application process, the Clerk asks that if this project is accepted, the Council is willing to accept an application of £250,000 and fund any extra from Council reserves, if required; (and only if it is felt that the project does not readily meet the extra requirements).

Rational

The Council has aspired to undertake this project since the purchase of the building in 1999.

The current funding opportunity has fallen a little early in the cycle of this project. Funding of this type is unusual; Unfortunately, the Council has little choice if this project is going to come to fruition.

The July and August Questionnaire showed that 60% of those who expressed an opinion supported bringing the Old Library back in to community use.

The Building Floor Plan (see back page)

The proposed building layout has been developed to allocate most of the space to a large Community Space, this will house artwork on the walls from the Councils Archive, it will allow art from the local art group to be shown as well as art from any classes taken in the room from the Anston Brook School. We also intend having a small exhibition space as we have artifacts of local interest including a Bible presented to a pupil when the building was a school, dated 1876. There is Archive space off this main area for safe keeping of art, artifacts and the Council will store its archives here too. There is a second smaller room for meetings. There are male and female toilets, a small kitchen area, cleaning cupboard and two small rooms, one is proposed as the Clerk and Admin Office of the Council, where booking for all the Councils venues will be managed. This will ensure that the space is available Monday to Friday during office hours. A second small office will act as a comfort space for the Councils small Grounds Maintenance team, this will be the only non-public space in the building.

The design has been developed to ensure the community spaces are separate from the Offices whilst allowing the office to control the main entrance. The School (Anston Brook Primary School) would access the building via its own private access via a reopened gate from the School Grounds into the Old Library rear yard, entering the building through the rear entrance door, enabling Children to walk from School to the Old Library without the need to walk along the road.

Issues identified

There are several issues to be considered,

- This project will have no net gain for the Council other than a marginal uplift in the value of the building.
- The Building will be a constant drain of cash as it will not generate a sufficient income and the prospects of it generating any income are limited.
- Given the current state and timescales of Council ownership a need to accept that if we do not act now, and if our actions are not successful, serious consideration should be given to the way forward for this Building.
- A current central government funding stream is available until 2025. The Council must apply and be successful in gaining this funding if this project is to be delivered.

- Moving the Councils offices from the Parish Hall will have a negative financial impact on the Parish Hall.
- There is no financial benefit from this project.
- There will be an estimated £13,000 per annum, minimum running cost of this facility- Power, Heating, Water, Insurance, internet etc.
- No car Parking on site

Benefits

There are real benefits to this:

- Bringing a historic public building back in to Community use.
- Community Space can be promoted and usage developed.
- Learning space will benefit many of the area's children, the school is very positive, this is a major bonus and a really good use for the space.
- Place to offer extra community services like MP and Ward Councillors surgeries.
- Dedicated space to show Art and items of community interest.
- In the recent survey 60% of residents who express a preference supported bringing the library back in to community use.
- The Council has aspired to undertake this project for over 20 years.
- This will be a flexible community space.

Financial implications

Please be aware that the Council has no reserves allocated to refurbishing any Parish Buildings on this scale.

If successful the project externally funded up to 80% of the cost. A 20% contribution from Parish Councils funds is required, this represents significant leverage, but the 20% is a significant contribution from the Council for which there is no allocation within the budget. The advantage is that for every 20p the Council would need to find 80p would come from external funds a significant uplift.

If successful there will be increased building running costs which the Council will need to budget for and fund; there will be a reduction in income at the Parish Hall reducing its sustainability in the short/medium term, which will not be easily addressed, and which the Council may need to cover.

The Old Library will only ever be a financial liability to the Council; Business plans proving otherwise are most welcome. The current estimate for running the Old Library is £13,000 per year.

Please see appendix item A (copied from the first paper) at the end of this report for more detail on finance.

Options for consideration

Option 1 Apply for funding, accepting all the work required; on the understanding that if the application is successful the project will progress to completion using the structures and systems already agreed to the values as stated within this paper; with the expected-on cost thereafter and accepting the free use for educational purposes and minimal revenue generating potential of this project.

Option 2 Progress with the project using Council funds and possible borrowing with external funds from other organisations to top the project funds up, working on timescales set by the Council not the funder.

Option 3 To do nothing.

Option 4 Sell the building and use the funds to help refurbish the Parish Hall.

Options considered.

Option 1 Applying for funds specifically to bring the Old library back in to public use, saves the Council a significant amount of money and also makes this project feasible, despite the potential downsides. The project is sufficiently progressed although much work will be required to make this happen. There is support in the community consulted and initial talks with the School are positive. The funds used for this project can not be used for any other Anston Parish Council project. The Old Library is the only building that fits the funding criteria.

Option 2 The Old Library is a major project, and the Parish Council hasn't the necessary funding to undertake this without seeking other means. The building is degrading over time and the longer the wait the more expensive the solution.

Option 3 To do nothing, this is the easiest option, however not insignificant funds have been spent to date on the Old Library, and more money will be required unless the building is sold.

Option 4 Sell the Old Library on the open market. Resolves all issues and gives a return to the Council to invest in other projects.

Recommended Option

Option 1 is recommended to the Council; Apply for funding, accepting all the work required; on the understanding that if the application is successful the project will progress to completion using the structures and systems already agreed. This will ensure the external funding opportunity currently available is taken advantage of.

Please be aware that being asked to apply is no guarantee of success. If the application is turned down that Council will need to consider what the next step should be. The application is also quite complex and requires lots of work to get it into order, which takes time.

End of report

Should you have any questions regarding this report please feel free to contact me, Monday to Friday during normal office hours (I tend to leave at 4:30 pm) Or simply call into the Office, call first just to make sure I'm free.

Andrew Woodhead

Clerk to the Council

27/07/2023

Appendix item A - Finance

1 [Estimated] Ongoing costs:

| Cost | 23/24 | 24/25 | 25/26 |
|----------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Business Rates | £ 2,565 | £ 2,821 | £ 2,963 |
| Electricity | £ 3,200 | £ 3,520 | £ 3,696 |
| Gas | £ 3,000 | £ 3,300 | £ 3,465 |
| Water | £ 500 | £ 700 | £ 770 |
| Totals | £ 9,265 | £10,341 | £10,894 |

2 There would be 'new' other costs e.g. telephone, cleaning, would we need a municipal bin or can rubbish be taken over to the parish hall bin? (we would probably use the parish hall bin).

3 In terms of the budget are you meaning what can the PC contribute towards match funding? If so, then this is quite open to how APC would want to treat the reserves –

4 Reserves we could possibly use by delaying other projects: Car park resurfacing £16,839; Water pipe at Rackford Meadow £20,000

5 Reserves we could possibly dip into: General repairs stands at £36,116 so take half of that e.g. £18,000?

6 The 'biggie' would be the Burial Ground extension reserves – this stands at £170,094. We could do with getting Rackford Meadow tested for suitability as a cemetery. If it is not suitable then we put our energy into 'plan A' but if it is suitable then carry out public consultation and apply for planning permission. Not having to buy land to provide additional burial capacity would save a lot of money (£40,000?) which could be diverted to the library.

7 If all the above were acceptable then we could potentially contribute £94,839. Having said that we may have to pay for phase one (making the building safe and weatherproof) out of that fund and then apply for grant funding for the conversion cost (phase two). That would dramatically reduce our match funding pot – unless we apply for a Public Works loan.

[Note: if the project costs £250,000 the Parish Council will need to find £50,000]