**Clair Hall Consultation - Shaping the Future of Clair Hall**

**Response from Haywards Heath Town Council.**

**Policy Context;** as a starting It is worth outlining the Town Council’s current policy and adopted position on the future provision of Clair Hall.

**Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan,**

* **HHNP – Policy L1 –** **Clair Hall and Dolphin Leisure Centre**

***Objective 10A: Ensure the Haywards Heath Leisure, Recreational and Community Buildings meets the needs of local people. This includes the retention and improvement of Clair Hall and the Dolphin Leisure Centre services.***

*The town has a very active community life, representing many different groups and organisations. HHTC has carried out an assessment of existing community facilities which confirmed the perception identified at public consultation that most of the existing community facilities are of small to medium capacity, and that Clair Hall is an essential facility that is in need of substantial improvement. This facility has the opportunity to enhance and support Arts and Culture within the Town****.***

*In accordance with the MSDC Infrastructure Delivery Plan, developer contributions will be sought from new development towards the funding of improvements to Clair Hall.*

*HHTC identifies that the land at Clair Hall has the potential to accommodate the improvements required. Clair Hall is the primary community facility in the Town and should be improved on its existing site or relocated to another sustainable location within the Town. Any relocation must be suitable, have planning permission in place, all necessary legal agreements in place and funding in place. Continuity of the venue would be required.*

*The MSDC Infrastructure Delivery Plan identifies that there is a need for 2 new community facilities over the Plan period as well as improvements to the existing Clair Hall.*

*HHTC will work with the appropriate bodies and local people to secure the delivery of an improved Clair Hall community facility.*

***Policy L1: Development resulting in the loss of Clair Hall whilst the facility remains needed and valued by the local community will be resisted unless there is re-provision of an equivalent or better facility within the Town prior to the loss of the existing facilities.***

**Stated Town Council Policy**

* **Resolution of Full Council 21/08/21 under minute/resolution 52.**

*Note the possible permanent closure and demolition of Clair Hall and to welcome the Town Council’s inclusion in re-establishing modern community facilities.*

* **Resolution of Planning Committee 15/12/20** under minute/resolution 88 and ratified by Full Council 25/01/21 under resolution 73(i).

‘*In line with HHTC adopted policy in the HHNP and DHH any successor to Clair Hall should be built on the existing site, providing a modern multipurpose flexible facility. Furthermore, MSDC should be left to come up with a design in consultation with HHTC to ensure that resident’s needs and requirements are catered for by providing a viable multifunctional space’.*

**Destination Haywards Heath (HHTC visioning document)**

* Phase 2 priorities list and directly relating Leisure and Recreation priorities**.**

Consultation Response

**Generally**

Clair Hall must be a state of the art cultural and community facility for the residents of Haywards Heath and Mid Sussex. Any facilities must provide at least the provision currently available, but the Town Council believes it must cater for other uses so to ensure that the building is financially viable and sustainable in the long term.

**In relation to the ‘Future of Clair Hall’ consultation.**

What sort of uses are needed in the future?

The uses to be supported by Clair Hall should be primarily based on a multi-functional building set up which provides space and the ability to provide;

* Theatre and cinema. An ever-growing Town must have a space for residents to visit and enjoy these cultural activities.
* The provision of a studio and rehearsal space for the performing arts, music and dance. Local organisations and touring companies/performers need this space to rehearse, teach and develop the arts.
* Exhibition space to provide for local artists to display their work and to enable the display of historical information of the Town.
* Meeting and conferencing facilities for business and community groups. The building cannot lay dormant during the week 9am – 5pm so the offer of meeting and conferencing facilities will not only offer such to local organisations/businesses, but to those from further afield.
* The appropriate facilities within the new building to provide for youth/teenage activities being cognisance of the facilities/services offered by the Redwood Centre.
* The aforementioned must be supported by a food and drink offer. The provision of a bar and café in the building and a restaurant for those who would just wish to visit to eat.

All of the above should be provided in a new state of the art building that has the most up to date technology and must be built in a sustainable and environmentally friendly manner (carbon neutral).

Should the existing building be redeveloped or refurbished?

Haywards Heath Town Council strongly supports the reprovision of Clair Hall to provide a modern entertainment and community centre for Haywards Heath and Mid Sussex.

The Town Council clarifies its position that Clair Hall should be reprovisioned in the form of a new, aspirational fit for purpose future-proofed, sustainable building, however we need to be absolutely certain that the existing facilities at Clair Hall are safeguarded by a clear, binding commitment by MSDC of how, where and when they will replace it. When this is provided, Clair Hall can be demolished and the building we need for our Town can be rebuilt. Meanwhile it should be retained with minimum functionality and minimum expenditure.

Are there any services that we could help address through the Clair Hall site?

To make, what would be a valued, community space to be successful in the long term and underpin the business plan, there must be consideration of services to complement the night-time and weekend offer. These could include,

* Shared office space.
* Small gym pods and specialised gym.
* The moving of civic service to the site such as the Town Council and Library.
* Moving of the Cricket Club facilities into the building.

What do you like about the site and what could be improved?

What is liked about the site?

* Location of the site as a gateway to the Town. The station quarter area is one of the main gateways to the Town and gives a first impression of Haywards Heath to visitors. There is, in normal times, a great passing trade from commuters. The current Clair Hall does not capture any of this, but there is an opportunity to capture trade in the future whether it is a food offer, meeting use, or the primary cultural facility.
* Sustainable Transport links – station/bus interchange. The location offers the ability for residents and people out of the Town to easily access the site by sustainable forms of transport.
* Linkage and proximity to Clair Park. Clair Park is a wonderful back drop to the site as one the Town’s main open spaces and green lung.
* Neighbouring Premier Inn, which could provide accommodation for visitors to meetings and conferences.

What Could be improved

* The landscaping and entrance to the site is unappealing and unwelcoming. The entrance should be improved/re-landscaped to make it a more aesthetically pleasing, make more of a statement ‘that the building is there, and what it offers’. There is also the opportunity to rationalise the area to provide a small enhancement on parking spaces. It is also felt that car parking should be provided below ground to support the rise in usage that the Town Council’s representation is promoting.
* The linkage and association of the current building to Clair Park is a huge missed opportunity. There is scope to open up and make the building a place to overlook and enjoy one of the Town’s green lungs. This could work in conjunction with the Cricket Club facilities/needs and offer the provision of a view from a bar/restaurant and café. Obviously, any break into the park would have to be undertaken sensitively.