

Report on the Action Plan determined at CVHC meeting Tues 28.1.20 regarding the state of Clachan Village Hall

Context

On Monday 23.12.19 an emergency meeting of the Trustees and Officers of the Committee was held at the Village Hall following a report from hall users that a section of the ceiling had collapsed in the kitchen. On inspection through the large void in the ceiling it was clear that the whole concrete asbestos roof was leaking like a sponge and the roof beams were sodden. There were signs of water ingress in close proximity to the electrical circuit boards and so a decision was taken to switch off all circuits, the main power switch, and the solar panel generator circuit. A decision was taken to close the hall in the interest of public safety and the electrician company APE Solutions was requested to make an inspection and appraise the situation.

The report from APE Solutions advised that there was evidence of significant water ingress into the Hall electrical systems and that they had to isolate the supply from the mains in the interest of health and safety. The report also indicated that the electrical system could not be rendered safe without substantive repair of the building to make it water tight.

In 2018 the Committee had commissioned a structural survey report and a report from a concrete repair specialist company to assess the state of the hall. After due consideration the Committee decided that pursuing substantive renovation of the existing hall was not a viable option and to pursue a new build. This was in line with the preferred option expressed at the public meeting held at the Hall Tuesday 3rd February 2015.

In view of the events outlined Trustee Malcolm Ward contacted the Hall's insurance broker Circle Club (underwritten by the Zurich insurance company) to inform them of the decision by the Trustees and Officers of the Committee to close the hall in the interest of public safety. In response the insurance company representative provided the following information/advice to Malcolm by phone:

- that as the damage was a result of wear and tear any claim would be invalid
- our insurance policy in its entirety is no longer valid
- we cannot insure any part of the building unless we are able to render the whole hall watertight and fit for occupation i.e. substantive renovation
- meanwhile the insurance for actions of Committee Members and Trustees and public liability is also terminated
- the company will investigate whether we can get a stand-alone policy to give some protection for the administration of the organisation rather than a buildings related package (different department)
- if substantive renovation is not considered viable then we have been advised to initiate demolition of the building with appropriate removal and disposal of the asbestos concrete roof as soon as possible

The 3 Trustees met on Thursday 23.1.20 and produced a set of proposals that were circulated to the Committee members ahead of the Committee meeting. The proposals as detailed in a separate document were debated in turn and the following motions were agreed to put to a committee vote.

Motions debated and voted upon:

1. That the Committee should seek tenders for the hall demolition and instruct Bowman Stewart to manage the tendering and demolition process subject to cost and confirmation that Public Liability would be covered by either their insurance or the contractor's for the duration.
Votes **for** the motion: all present, **against**: None
2. That appropriate measures be adopted with immediate effect to protect the public i.e. appropriate warning signs and notices and any other measures to safeguard the public as advised by Bowman Stewart.
Votes **for**: all present, **against**: None
3. That the committee agree a 3 week deadline for the supervised removal of all possessions and artefacts that are at present in the hall and not owned by the committee.
Votes **for**: all present, **against**: None
4. That a working party be convened ASAP to appraise the contents of the shed and arrange for the disposal of unwanted items and for those not owned by the committee to be collected by the owners so that the shed can be used to store the chairs, tables and other assets currently stored in the hall, and that the security of the shed be made compliant to insurance standard in order to seek a shed based policy.
Votes **for**: all present, **against**: None
5. If the shed cannot be cost effectively rendered suitable for insurance purposes then the Committee should seek to hire or buy a lockable storage container for the purpose of storing the Committees assets i.e. tables, chairs, marquees etc.
Votes **for**: all present, **against**: None
6. Given that the hall demolition was always going to form part of the building project costs, the committee should use Development Fund money to fund the demolition process and that we should apply for a WKCCWFT grant toward these costs.
Voting **for**: all present, **against**: None

7. That in order to limit the personal liability of the Committee and its Trustees the Committee should commence proceedings toward transition to become a Scottish Charitable Incorporated organisation (SCIO) as soon as possible and that the General Fund should be used for this purpose and to be supplemented by dedicated fund raising as necessary and any grants if available.

Votes **for**: all present, **against**: None

8. That the committee should investigate the option to become a non-profit making incorporated company (limited by guarantee) registered with Company House whilst retaining Charity status as an alternative to SCIO.

Votes **for**: None, **against**: all present,

The Committee took the view that being subject to the administration of two regulatory bodies would be too bureaucratic for the purposes of a village hall committee.

A discussion followed about the prospect of the Committee looking to purchase the village Old Free Church which is understood to be coming on the market, raising the option to renovate it, and adapt it for use as a Village Hall. The general consensus of the Committee was that this would not be a viable option for a number of reasons including: the fact that it is a listed building with potential high renovation costs for of change use, high maintenance costs due to its age and structure, not being suited to the current day needs of the community, the risk of causing objections from village residents due to its close proximity for village functions such as Ceilidhs etc, inadequate space for car parking for big community events, and that a new hall on the 2-3 acre plot already owned was preferable and in keeping with previous decisions.