

5th May 2024

Dear Country Fair Organiser

The Parish Council is writing to you as it was the wish of the Annual Village Meeting on 25th April that the meeting's views be conveyed to you. An important part of that view was paying tribute to the amazing work you have done, some of you for very many years, in raising tens of thousands of pounds of funds by organising events and enriching the life of the village. It was acknowledged that apart from the country fair you also organise the catering for the village bonfire and the VMCC Concours.

However, it was also the view of the Village Meeting that, in spite of your pivotal role, you should consult more widely before coming to a decision about the timing and application of the unspent funds you have raised for the new village hall project now on hold.

In particular people felt that deferring a decision about the application of the unspent funds and putting them on deposit for a number of years is a mistake. The parish council is of the same view because, even if a new team of energetic fund raisers were to emerge, they would face the same challenges as those that have been articulated, namely that we already have a village hall and that most substantial successful fund raising relies on some capital development gain. Furthermore, any loan would be from the Public Works Loan Board who would require that a referendum be held. Richard White told the parish council that he does not see any prospect of gaining the support necessary in the village for the substantial borrowing likely to be necessary.

Therefore, the Parish Council feels that it is right for a number of reasons to ask you to consult beyond your group. The Council itself has put well over £5,000 of public money into the project, parishioners attending events have put money into it and many parishioners who were not advocates of the new hall nevertheless helped with events simply to help the village at large. On that basis the Council feels that it is entirely reasonable for parishioners to have some say on what happens next.

The Parish Council, therefore, asks you to reconsider your view about deferring the deployment of unspent funds. If you come to the decision in principle not to defer for a period of years, the Parish Council would like to facilitate some more consultation about the best use of funds while recognising that there is no pressure at all to spend it on the current village hall. On the contrary, given that it was raised for enhanced facilities located at the sports field, it could be argued that this location is the one which most closely matches the original purpose.

Yours sincerely,



Brian Holdstock
Clerk to the Council

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