
MEETING	MICKLEGATE WARD COMMITTEE
DATE	2 APRIL 2025
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS J BURTON, CRAWSHAW AND KILBANE
APOLOGIES	COUNCILLORS

1. **MEETING TO DISCUSS THE FUTURE OF CLEMENTHORPE COMMUNITY CENTRE**

1. **MAIN MEETING – WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS (19:30)**

The meeting was chaired by Councillor Crawshaw who welcomed everyone and set out the housekeeping rules and reminded residents that the meeting was non-political.

2. **Clementhorpe Community Centre**

Councillor Crawshaw shared information on the history of the building provided by the Local History Group.

- The building was part of the school which opened in 1872 and then expanded in 1890's.
- The car park used to be the school's playground.
- The building was also used as an evening school for working men, a Sunday school and offered a lending library service.
- 913 pupils attended the school at its peak in 1910.
- By 1950's the number of pupils dropped, and the school was closed in 1960's.
- Following that the building was used as a warehouse and a health centre before being taken over by the City of York Council (CYC) and leased to the York Centre for Voluntary Services (CVS).
- Some years later CVS withdrew from running of the building, and the asset was then leased to the Clementhorpe Community Association (CCA). The lease agreement then evolved to the current Tenancy at Will.

Councillor Crawshaw further outlined that over past four years conversations have been held about future of the building, including various constraints as to how it could be used, or leased.

A condition survey undertaken in 2022 highlighted the need for a significant capital investment of approximately £100k to upgrade the building.

At this moment the building is not very accessible, toilets and kitchen require refurbishment to make them fit for purpose.

How can we get to the place we want to be with the building and what is it that the community wants from the building?

Councillor Crawshaw thanked all volunteers involved with the building over the years for their commitment and stated that Councillors endeavour to protect community assets such as the Clementhorpe Community Centre.

At this point Councillor Crawshaw introduced Lisa from the CCA who briefly spoke about the group and their work. The current committee operates since October 2024. Over the years volunteers learnt that running of the building is not a small undertaking and Lisa thanked everyone willing to contribute and take part in taking things forward.

Andy Laslett spoke about his approach to support voluntary groups that manage community centres in the city. Tang Hall Community Centre was referred to as an example of a successful business case and a long-term sustainable model. The intention is to support volunteers to succeed, and a lot of work was done with the previous CCA committee which resulted in a business case. Only capital investment for refurbishment was required at the time. Income streams such as grant funding need to be explored and hire charges refreshed, as the current £8 p/h is very modest. The existing team needs more volunteers to come forward to work on the vision and business case for the building. A business model that identifies funding streams to cover repairs and generate income to sustain the building is required.

Councillor Crawshaw outlined the current position of the building, that it currently sits within the CYC Housing Revenue Account portfolio meaning that CYC is liable for any repairs. Any potential repair costs would come out from the HRA account and consequently there would be less funding towards CYC housing repairs. There is an option for an internal transfer of the building to the CYC general fund at a market value, but it would place liability on the general fund and there is no resource, or desire for that transfer at this moment. The community asset transfer option has to be explored, otherwise CYC will at some point look at disposing of the asset through sale as the building is continuing to deteriorate. Perhaps someone will want to purchase the building, invest in repairs and retain it as a community space? Spaces like this could also be turned into residential/ R B&B accommodation.

Residents were then invited to make comments and ask questions.

A resident asked what are the running costs per year and market value of the building? We need to demonstrate that there is a need and demand for a community facility. An exercise to assess feasibility of the building use as a community centre would need to be undertaken. The building will have a value to the community, and this will need to be quantified.

Is there a timescale on the community asset transfer?

The existing tenancy at will is in place longer than initially intended. There is no immediate pressure to sell the building, however liabilities on CYC increase with time as the building depreciates. It could take around 18 months to formulate the business model.

Are there any short-term repairs that could make the building more attractive?

There are a few things that require repairs i.e. the toilets. It would cost several thousands of pounds to complete most urgent repairs, and a specific figure would need to be worked out. Should there be interest from volunteers to take things forward CYC will make efforts before the building is handed over, so that volunteers have best chance to succeed.

The existing level of income generated from venue hire is between £2,500 and £4,500 per annum. Most recently a leaking radiator and emergency lights had to be repaired. Outgoings would increase with urgent jobs like that.

At this point the Manager of Clements Hall, a nearby community centre, outlined their community asset transfer arrangements and pointed out difficulties associated with increasing energy costs. A lot of work is required to bring Clementhorpe Community Centre to a good standard; however the running costs figure don't seem excessive and the project sounds doable.

A residents asked asked about existing venue hire fees. The hire cost of Clementhorpe Community Centre stands at £8 p/h which is believed to be reasonable for the space of this size at this location.

Cllr Crawshaw commented that increasing venue hire fee would generate additional income which would help to address some of the issues. A robust business model would be required to make the venture viable. The business case previously worked on would need to be updated. This is a unique community centre; however we are aware of other community spaces in the area. Tonight, we would like to find out what demand there is for this type of community space, what would people like to see happen next and who would like to be involved?

A comment was made by a resident who lives in the area for 20 years that she hasn't heard of the community centre before and that a marketing strategy is needed.

clementhorpeca@gmail.co.uk email address was provided for anyone interested with future running of the building to contact.

A resident asked members of the Community Association how they feel about the project and if it feels unsurmountable? It is a big challenge, but we are passionate about the facility and would like to see it continuing as a community facility. We really need more people to get involved with day to day running of the building, bookings, putting together the business model, making grant applications etc.

An offer of help was made by a resident whose mum has experience in managing a village hall in North Yorkshire. A diverse offer of activities makes that venture successful and attractive.

Should the community transfer go ahead it will be at a peppercorn lease, however raising the estimated £100k towards capital repairs is a big challenge. Obtaining even half of that amount feels like a very big task. Evidence of demand for this type of facility would be required to be presented to potential funders. User surveys and drop-ins would be useful to gather info that potential funders would be looking for. That should form first part of the process before applying for any grants. Is there an appetite amongst the audience to help with that? **Few people raised their hand expressing interest in being involved.**

Cllr Kilbane spoke about his involvement with the Golden Ball Pub project, that it required a committed group of people with a vision and robust business plan to make it a success. Formulating a vision for the community centre by a group of committed people would be a first step. Who would like to be involved with that? It will be really rewarding when you achieve your goal.

Cllr Crawshaw suggested as a next step for people who are interested to get together to brainstorm ideas, formulate the vision, start raising awareness of the space and market research.

A question was asked about financing the estimated £100k needed towards repairs. Usually before long term lease is signed the asset is brought up to a good standard, then following the transfer any ongoing upkeep would be a responsibility of volunteer trustees. We have no existing budget towards that in the capital transfer pot.

There are other variations of relationship between the Local Authority and the Leaseholder, i.e. Haxby Library where the Council invested funding? Andy Laslett commented that Oaken Grove was on 99 years lease and fundraised over the years then created a library which York Explore is now responsible for. Another example - Tang Hall Community Centre was funded £7k over three years as seed funding. The current condition of Clementhorpe Community Centre requires a significant work and £100k is just an indicative figure.

The Manager of Clements Hall added that the cost of renovating Clements Hall totalled approximately 1m over 15 years, however there was a pot of funding available at the time and another stream of funding from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation towards the building Manager wage.

A comment was made that more detail is required on the condition of the building and any potential funding streams.

Cllr Crawshaw added that ward councillors explored plausible capital funding options within the CYC, however the finances are under pressure. There are other potential options that haven't been discussed i.e. private ownership with retaining some form of community use i.e. hot desking during the day as part of the business plan to generate income and community use in the evenings. How can those options be explored without putting the building on the market?

Cllr Kilbane added that what matters at this point is willingness within the community to make it work. Issues can be resolved when there are committed people with a vision behind a project.

Perhaps there is a way for Clements Hall and the CCA to cooperate? There is a demand for community space and Clements Hall often turns enquirers away due to being at capacity. A joint venture model would be worth exploring.

The existing CCA resources will allow the community centre to continue as presently for another 18 months. This allows time for people willing to be involved to have further conversations and plan. CYC is willing to offer support, however majority of the project work will fall on volunteers.

At this point Cllr Crawshaw mentioned about wider role of the CCA and that the focus on maintaining the building has taken bulk of the committee time.

Councillors and members of the CCA thanked everyone for their contributions and closed the meeting at 20:46. Members of the audience willing to be involved in further discussions provided their email addresses.

, Chair

[The meeting started at Time Not Specified and finished at Time Not Specified].