

TUNSTEAD VILLAGE HALL AND RECREATION GROUND CHARITY

As you know due to the resignation of the previous trustees of this charity the Parish Council had no option other than to take on the role of “Sole Trustees” if the charity was to continue. We have spent a lot of time on the handover process, some of which is still ongoing, but during our discussions one thing has become very clear. We do not believe that progressing with the idea of a village hall as the centre of our activities is the right way forward and indeed is taking away the focus we should have on the original charity which was to use the recreation ground for the benefit of the residents of the village and to develop any buildings that would support that objective. Previous trustees worked very hard to develop a village hall but were not able to gain the substantial financial backing, circa £750,000 at the last estimate. We now also have a situation where the planning permission has lapsed so we need to think again about how we can deliver something that supports the primary objective of the recreation ground being used as much as possible.

Our view is clear that we need to change the focus from a village hall to a community hall that supports the activities that residents want to undertake on the recreation ground. This includes maintaining and developing the first-class football pitch we have and supporting this with better facilities in terms of changing facilities and showers and developing a recreation hall that can be used for a range of activities such as short mat bowls, table tennis, an indoor/outdoor gym, possibly badminton and importantly could be used by the school for a range of recreational and other activities to build upon what they already have in place. Of course, a hall like this can be used for many other activities as well which may cover some of the potential uses that were identified for a village hall. However, the key issue is that recreational activities more readily attract funding than a village hall and there is also some developmental support available to help with these ideas.

This change of emphasis will also build upon our emerging Neighbourhood Plan that is currently with North Norfolk District Council to take forward their required actions regarding wider consultations. One of the key strands of the plan is that we do not wish to develop a situation where the activities of a village hall on the recreation ground compete with those of the pub. We need them to work together and offer an integrated service to residents not a competitive one. Small gatherings can, and should, take place at the pub and any larger ones in the recreation ground hall using the license from the pub to supply alcohol if required. The current village hall is currently closed as it does not meet the standards required to be used as a public venue so we need to change the direction we take now and hopefully receive the support we will need to make the recreation ground, its facilities and any buildings upon it somewhere residents can be proud to use.

We would welcome your comments on this change of approach and, if you have any, please email clerk@tunstead-pc.gov.uk and these will be passed on to the council.

Chris Oakes Chair Tunstead Parish Council