

Notes of a Public Meeting held at Raglan Junior School prior to the Council Meeting on 28 November 2007

Present: Cllr R Moorby (Chair), Cllrs D Brown, T Phillips, A Crump, Mrs M Chilcott, R Parry and Mrs J Harry and approximately 30 members of the public.

In Attendance: Mr M Moran (Mon CC) and the Clerk.

Apologies were received from Cllrs N Porter, Mrs H Williams and D Watkins

Cllr Crump took the Chair for this meeting in his capacity as County Councillor for the area. He asked the various user groups of the Old School to identify themselves.

The following groups were identified: Art Group, Mother and Toddler Group, Rangers, Welsh Classes, Brownies, Stepping Stones Nursery, Village Hall Committee and Conservation Group.

Reference was made to a meeting with the Conservation Group on the previous evening.

Mr Moran led off on the discussion. The Old School had come into the ownership of the County Council via a land exchange with the Church authorities. A survey had been done early in the year which had identified a list of works to be done to make the building safe. The report had been considered by the County in October and it had decided that it did not have the money to carry out the works. Lifelong Learning and Leisure Dept took over the bookings for the buildings in October.

The decision was taken to close the building and to find other premises for the activities carried out there until the remedial works could be done. County Council considered it was not acceptable to carry on using the building if it was identified as unsafe.

It was agreed that in hindsight it would have been possible to tell people earlier of this. The estimated cost of all of the works identified was in the order of £30k, although the work was graded into three levels, with cat1 being the most pressing. It was necessary to cost out the various levels to assess how much had to be done before the building could be re-opened. There is no spare capacity in the Buildings Maintenance budget, but the County has a good record for attracting external funding and it does have responsibility for the maintenance of the building. The Category 1 works are mainly emergency lighting and fire alarm, and moving an incoming gas service pipe. It might be possible to move the back door to use it as a fire escape rather than move the gas pipe.

A number of questions were raised:

Why was it not done when the roof etc was done a few years ago? (County did not own it then!)

The building has been used in this condition for a long time. Why does it have to be closed now? Why not have a rolling programme of work to get it done according to priority?

The Brownies have used it for 40 years and have a lot of equipment stored there. It will be a problem for them to access the equipment when they need it.

When will the County get accurate estimates for the works to be done?

The Community Council may be able to lend the County Council some money (up to £10k,) to get the urgent works done as soon as possible.

A temporary building would be expensive and would probably cost as much as the remedial works.

Daytime activities would be easier to re-house than evening ones because of other evening uses.

Why not use the Infants School Hall? (This needs following up as no-one seemed to know why not)

A Village Hall Committee was due on Tuesday week and could be used to co-ordinate activities.

If the building closes will it ever open again as the real concern of all groups represented at the meeting. They were assured that was not the County's intention. It was confirmed that apart from one or two party events between now and Christmas, the building would close on Friday of this week.