

Walberswick Common Lands Charity

Founded 1901 - Registered Charity No. 206095

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SUBJECT TO CONTRACT

Mary Mitson-Woods
Clerk to Walberswick Parish Council
Rose Farm Cottage
Mutton Lane
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Dear Walberswick Parish Councillors

HERITAGE HUT

Over the past year the Trustees have been kept informed of the excellent work being undertaken by the Heritage Hut Working Group. They strongly support the Working Group's and the Parish Council's plans for the Heritage Hut and now have great pleasure in submitting a formal financial and management proposal that they believe will help to secure the long-term future of the Hut for the Village.

1. Key points

1. The Heritage Hut would become the headquarters of the Parish Council, History Group and Common Lands Charity, making it a 'community hub' in the heart of the Village
2. It would provide a secure showcase for the Village Scroll
3. It would be available to 'not for profit' users on a free of charge basis; such as school groups and Village artists
4. We understand that the funds raised to date are in the order of £15,000, plus there is an outstanding application to the Coastal Community Fund. In addition to these funds the Charity would take financial responsibility for:
 - a. Underwriting the additional cost of the proposed improvements and refurbishment
 - b. Future management and maintenance costs

5. The Charity would take day to day management responsibility for:
 - a. Project managing the improvements and refurbishment
 - b. Ongoing cleaning and maintenance
 - c. Bookings, general organisation and accounting

6. The Heritage Hut would continue to be owned by the Parish Council, with a lease to the Charity

The Trustees believe that the Charity is well-placed to take on this responsibility because it has the financial resources and property management skills, plus the services of a full-time Clerk.

2. Use and charges

Purpose	User	Uses	Charge
PRIMARY			
Headquarters	Parish Council History Group Common Lands Charity Village Fete	Clerks' work station Meetings Records & Archive storage Fete organisation	FOC
Exhibition	Village Scroll	Display Storage Protection	FOC
SECONDARY			
Education	School groups	Walberswick environmental and heritage education	FOC
Gallery	Village artists & craftspeople	Display of works (but not sale)	FOC
TERTIARY			
Gallery	Village artists & craftspeople	Display and sale of works	CHARGE
EXCLUDED			
	Any user	Pop-up shops Parties and events Sale of food and drink	N/A

Notes:

1. Primary and Secondary uses comply with the Charity's charitable purposes, so can be provided free of charge (FOC)
2. Village artists & craftspeople = Council tax payers within the Parish of Walberswick and their immediate family living with them (i.e. fitting within the beneficiary class of the Charity)
3. Tertiary charges to be benchmarked against the Village Hall Annex hire cost for Village groups
4. Availability for Tertiary use to be limited to ensure equal access for Village artists and to avoid over-commercialisation. Initial proposal; a maximum of four days hire, twice each year, per artist
5. Excluded uses – the purpose of the Heritage Hut is not to compete with the Village Hall, plus it must remain a secure environment for the primary users

3. Operating principles

The principles and practicalities of operating the Heritage Hut need to be discussed and agreed between the four principal users (Village Scroll Working Group, Parish Council, History Group and Charity). While a primary user, the Village Fete requirement is known and is only one week a year.

The initial thoughts of the Trustees are:

- It would be a shared space with none of the four principal users having a dominant role.
- Use of the space would be via a shared booking system, hopefully with most meeting requirements being booked annually in advance.
- Operational issues would be resolved via a four-person committee as and when required (i.e. one from each principal user).
- Operating expenses (power, broadband, office consumables, cleaning, insurance etc.) would be split between the four principal users on a formula to be agreed.

4. Tenure

In return for taking financial and management responsibility for the Heritage Hut, the Charity requires security of tenure against which it can commit the required resources. The Trustees would require a formal lease from Walberswick Parish Council, the key terms of which are proposed below:

1. Ten-year term
2. 'Peppercorn' rent of £10 per annum (reflecting it is non-profit making)
3. Charity to be responsible for carrying out the improvements to a good standard and generally in line with the approved planning application plus maintaining and operating the Heritage Hut
4. Charity to be responsible for maintaining insurance of (a) the fabric and fixtures of the building, (b) the contents and (c) public liability
5. In order to ensure that the community use in section 2 and operating principles in section 3 were maintained, they would be enshrined within the lease
6. In order to ensure transparency of operation, the Charity would be required to produce an annual report and accounts for the Heritage Hut, which would be presented to the Parish Council and also to the Annual Parish Meeting

5. Next steps

If Councillors broadly agree with the proposal outlined above, then the Trustees see the next steps being:

- Formal agreement of the four principal users to the improvements and refurbishment proposed by the Heritage Hut Working Group
- Confirmation of the financial support already secured by the Working Group and the Parish Council
- Agreement of the operating principles between the four principal users
- Agreement of the lease terms with the Parish Council

Once those steps are completed the lease can be executed and the restoration project commence.

6. Conclusion

The Charity's association with the Heritage Hut goes back a long way. The original Congregational Chapel was an early tenant of ours as the land was then owned by the Charity (see Appendix A). This land was subsequently re-classified as Village Green in 1926.

Given that history, the Trustees would be delighted to renew their association by being part of a project that would see this attractive Victorian building restored to its former glory. That in itself is a worthy objective. However, what the Trustees are really excited by is the opportunity to bring the Heritage Hut alive by giving it a purpose that places it at the heart of the community. The Trustees hope that the Councillors share their vision and that all sides can work collaboratively together to bring it to reality.

With kind regards

Yours sincerely



Matthew Wetmore
Clerk to the Trustees

APPENDIX A

Extract from Charity 'Plan Book' 1905-16

