

## Report to Oswestry Rural Parish Council. Re Morda & Sweeney Village Hall. A Future.

Over the past 5 years in my capacity as 'Chair of the Morda & Sweeney Village Hall Committee', I have been exploring how funding can be obtained towards the refurbishment of Morda & Sweeney Village hall. To this end we have identified the work that would be required to bring the existing two connected buildings up to a modern and acceptable standard that would be able to support all users, both abled and less abled, in a variety of activities that the hall currently supports or is being requested to host. During this period as 'Chair of the Village Hall Committee' I have engaged with many differing grant funders to explore potential financial funding.

Currently the hall supports over 16 groups plus additional sporting activities, with enquiries from other groups that we are unable to provide for, due to a lack of safe room provision. Activities at the hall supports groups and individuals from Maesbury, Trefonen, Treflach and all other areas of Oswestry Rural along with groups and individuals from the south of Oswestry and beyond. This is reflected in the number of hours the hall is used which averages 2500 hours a year.

Our options are as follows.

### Option 1. (Unacceptable)

- Apply a 'plaster' approach to carrying out repairs and ignoring the effect of the serious dry rot and damp issues, whilst securing external funding which would be a total waste of funding due to not securing the life span of the building

### Option 2. (Impossible funding target. Est £1.5m)

- To deliver a complete refurbishment of both halls, as described in the supporting document. However, in speaking with contractors and suppliers the estimate broke through the £1.5million barrier and as such combined with the impossible task of raising the supporting contribution we revised our decisions and have been looking at the rebuild option.

### Option 3. (Preferred. Est £750,000))

- This would provide a modern facility providing a mix of facilities able to support a greater number of users combined with delivering a 'hub' facility for local and other parish communities with supporting services and organisations. The preferred design is estimated at £750,000. To deliver this preferred option I have again been engaging with various funders, i.e., The Heritage Lottery Fund, various private funders, Sport England, The Football Association. Unfortunately funding for a new build has become extremely difficult to secure, however with the large numbers of housing developments in the village of Morda in recent years, revenue from this has the potential of securing the build funding which would then secure additional funding from other funders to support the 'fitting out' and activity requirement.

In my capacity as 'Chair of Morda & Sweeney Village Hall Committee' I have been speaking with external funders, both private and corporate, along with Shropshire Council to explore options on how we are able to provide a modern facility. Of course, one option is to simply close one's eyes and pretend nothing will happen, however within the next 5 to 10 years the hall will close under H&S issues, Harris safety fencing will have to be erected and someone will have to assume the responsibility of dealing with a rotting derelict building.

In my capacity of 'Chair of Morda & Sweeney Village Hall', I gather information, look at the possibility of will it/can it work, deliver that information to the Village Hall committee and then feed it onto the Parish Council when needed. Currently I am in 'discussions' with various organisations, not negotiations, not drawing up agreements, or delivering new properties in the village. Any future development of Morda & Sweeney Village Hall will be determined by the population of Morda & Sweeney in a public consultation, when that occurs and a decision is made, the formal process will begin.

Robert Milton. (22.06.2020).