

HORNCASTLE
TOWN HALL WORKING GROUP

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INTERIM PROPOSAL

February 2009

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**HELPING TO RETAIN A COMMUNITY ASSET
FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS**



THE TOWN HALL

Photo: Courtesy of John Aron Photography

18th February 2009

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1. THE MAIN AIMS & OBJECTIVES

The Town Hall Working Group's (THWG) main aim and objective is, at this present time, to focus in on working along side the Independent Consultants to produce a robust Business case to support a community group to take over and run the Horncastle Town Hall in the long term.

There is a tight but manageable timescale. East Lindsey District Council (ELDC) to whom the building was vested in at the 1972 Local Government Re-organisation has declared that the building is surplus to their requirements. The business case must be presented to ELDC before the end of April. With a substantial framework from which to work we believe we are on target to achieve this objective.

The THWG have set the scene by way of a comprehensive feasibility study followed by a draft business plan and concluding with producing a business plan at the end of last year. ELDC stated that they required further work on that plan and Paul Davies, one of the consultants, has already started work firming up the business case.

In addition Magda Read, East Midlands Regional Development Officer of the Development Trust Association (DTA) is assisting the THWG. She has recently conducted an organisational and business assessment of our organisation to accept us as a member of the DTA.. As part of our membership benefit, we can also access the DTA's on-going support and advice around asset transfer and in developing our business idea. We have already valued their input.

With the work we have already completed and the help and advice we are receiving and the enthusiasm that the Group are displaying we believe we are on target to comply to the work schedule set and the business case will be completed and presented to ELDC on time.

READER'S NOTES

2. THE CURRENT SITUATION

Both ELDC and the Horncastle Town Council have vacated their respective offices that were located at the front of the building in October 2008. The function Hall continued to be used in a limited way until the end of January of this year.

Following the final hiring the hall was locked up and boarded up. The heating was also switched off. It was ELDC's intention for the building to remain like that until the end of June before a final decision was made.

Representations have been made from the Horncastle Town Council, The three ELDC Ward Councillors, The ELDC Steering Group, The Town Hall Working Group, members of the public and numerous hirers of the Hall to retain and refurbish the hall and keep it open even in the interim.

There has been a number of public meetings and a Parish Poll all in favour of retention and refurbishment. Concern has been expressed that boarding up the building is detrimental to the town, to the building itself and the neighbourhood.

Our proposal would be to manage the building in the interim at no cost to ELDC nor to their Council Taxpayers. We have set out this proposal in detail below. This short-term proposal is entirely consistent with our long-term objective of producing a robust business plan for taking over and managing the Town Hall on a permanent basis. Within this proposal we are presenting a short term (4 month) operating plan for the hall, which will be expanded and consolidated within the long term business plan which we will present to ELDC in April.

We, and users of the hall, strongly believe that by keeping the building open until the end of June it will in no way pre-empt or compromise ELDC's eventual decision on the future of the hall. It will, however, retain the loyalty of regular and occasional hirers, such that, should ELDC allow us to keep the hall open in the long term, the enterprise will have retained an important part of its future customer base, strengthening the Halls sustainability and viability and potential.

We would like to be given this opportunity to protect the Town Hall's future viability for the people of Horncastle as well as working with ELDC on this future provision and at no risk to ELDC whatsoever.

READER'S NOTES

3. THE PROPOSAL

Our interim proposal is that we should manage the Town Hall from the middle of March until June 30th at no cost to ELDC, and at no risk to the Council. The work schedule to re-commission the building, and to take over the necessary accounts and systems for the building could be as follows:

	Activity	Who	When
1	Meet with ELDC to negotiate a temporary agreement covering the terms under which the building could be temporarily re-opened	THWG / ELDC	Late February
2	Meet with ELDC to ensure that all safety certificates and checks for the building are current and up to date	THWG / ELDC	End Feb 2009
3	Negotiate terms for covering insurance costs and other fixed costs for the building during the period to June 30 th 2009	THWG / ELDC	End Feb 2009
4	Negotiate an agreement for taking over, temporarily, the utility accounts for gas, electricity, water and phone. If possible agree for ELDC to continue to hold these accounts but with THWG paying for all usage within the target period	THWG / ELDC	End Feb 2009
5	Agree a date, preferably Mid -March, with ELDC for handover of the building for temporary opening during the period to June 30 th 2009	THWG	End Feb 2009
6	Contact all relevant past hirers of the building to announce the temporary re-opening period and to begin taking bookings for events	THWG	After agreement with ELDC
7	Arrange for reconnection of all utilities one week ahead of the agreed re-opening date	THWG	TBC
8	Remove boarding from windows	TBC	ASAP
9	Reopen the building for use	THWG	MARCH
10	Take all meter readings	THWG	30 th June
11	Disconnect all utilities prior to handing the building back to ELDC	THWG	30 th June

The THWG is well experienced in handling this type of building management contract,. We share membership with the Horncastle War Memorial Hall Committee and would be using the management practices and procedures through which they have run the War Memorial Centre profitably, under very similar arrangements, for the past 7 years.

The Membership of the Town Hall Working Group is diverse and Members bring a wealth of skills. The Group has gone through the membership assessment of the DTA and as a member, we would be able to access the specialist support of regional staff in East Midlands. Indeed, Magda Read, the Regional Development Officer and Hugh Rolo, the Head of Asset and Investment nationally have already offered us a lot of advice and support.

We also welcome any support from other organisations who are willing to help us provide a better service to the community of Horncastle and its surrounding area through asset acquisition.

We have also been offered the services of the former caretaker who has completed the relevant Health and Safety and First Aid at Work Certificates.

4. FINANCIAL MODEL

The financial model which would operate during the interim period of the re-opening of the building, would be as follows:

INCOME:-

Main Hall & Room Hire	5,645.00	
Other Rental Income – Office Space	200.00	
PIP & DTA Grant	2,000.00	
Fund Raising & Donations	400.00	£8,245.00

EXPENDITURE

Utilities, Maintenance, Caretaker etc	7,450.00	£7,450.00
Balance		£795.00

- **Estimated operating surplus for the interim period £ 795.00.**
- **A detailed cash-flow forecast appears in the appendixes.**

Full details of the anticipated rentals during this period, and their certainty, are contained on page 8.. Should there be an operating deficit the THWG regards as a worthwhile investment in keeping the hall open during this period to ensure continuity of use by its key customers. A detailed cash-flow forecast is appendix A. We have used figures from ELDC and HWMC to arrive at our financial forecast.

Should a deficit arise it could be funded from one or other of the following:

THWG	£ 550	Secured
Charitable Donation - display	£ 500	Secured
Personal Bond	Up to £3,000	Confirmed - Contingency
Town Council	Up to £1,000	Confirmed - Contingency

The initial strength behind our submission to manage the Town Hall from Mid-March until June 30th is Robert Bell’s offer of £1,000 per month income for hiring the building for his monthly Auction Sale. Bell’s offer is in writing (appendix B) along with the user forms. In addition he has agreed to pay 3 months rent in advance to ensure the THWG have an adequate working capital to re-open the Hall. The THWG has some £550 in their bank account (appendix C) that can also be used to “kick start” the project. We have applied to People Ideas Places Fund (PIP) who offer to match fund small grants of up to £500 for pilot initiatives (appendix D). We have also applied to the DTA for their Cultivating Enterprise grant of £1,500 (appendix E). We have also received a Charitable donation of £500 just last week (appendix F).

In addition at this months Horncastle Town Council Meeting it was agreed if ELDC did allow the Hall to be re-opened in this interim period and a contingency was required then the THWG could apply for up to £1,000. In addition if a bond or security was required up to £3,000 then one would be offered (appendixes G).

We have studied the potential income from some 42 consultation user forms and e-mails that have been returned to us. These are all evidenced (appendix H). We have contacted at least 7 of these who have indicated that they would book to re-use the Hall as soon as we informed them it would be re-opened. In addition we have had an enquiry for urgent temporary office space. These pledges of project income will exceed expenditure. The PIP Grant would be used to promote the Hall's facilities.

We have used ELDC's current Hire Charges which we believe are not only competitive but will give an adequate return. We would also use ELDC Terms of Hire as the basis regarding lettings. We have confirmation from Keith Holland, the former Town Hall caretaker that he will return to act in that capacity on a self-employed basis. Keith knows the building inside out. We would ask that he continues to follow the procedures that ELDC had laid down for him prior to January 31st.

5. OPERATIONAL PROCEDURE

The Working Group are fully aware of the responsibility that they will be taking on. Assessments would be carried out by mirroring the procedures that are already in place by the Horncastle War Memorial Committee (HWMC) who have shared their good practices with us as they have successfully run their organisation for seven years.

We would ensure that safe working procedures and practices are in place from day one. This would be done to ensure that ELDC, the THWG and those that hire the Hall or rented out any of the rooms were not exposing themselves, ELDC or the Working Group to any risk or liability.

The safe working practices would cover fire precautions and practices. Running of events and hire of the Hall or rooms. All aspects of public and employer liability including that of the caretaker and volunteers would be assessed prior to re-opening. Rooms that were not in use would be locked up for security and Health and Safety reasons. The protection and security of the building and the contents would also be considered and action taken by the group. Professional assistance would come from:

Caretaker	Keith Holland	01507 522425	Secured
Electrician	Ken Sizer	01205 480555	Secured
Plumber	John Elliott	01507 588386	Secured
Gas Fitter	John Elliott	01507 588386	Secured
Builder	Robert Kisby	01507 526321	Secured
DTA Advisor	Magda Read	07515329894	Secured
Accountants	Dexter & Sharpe	01507 526071	Secured

6. CONSULTED USERS & POTENTIAL USERS

Probable users of the hall during the period to June 30th, 2009 (highlighted in bold)

NAME	No of HIRINGS	FREQUENCY	INCOME £	%
Robert Bell & Co	4	Monthly	4,000.00	100
Dee Dee Lee	12	Monthly	Potential	80
NHS Blood Donors	4	Monthly	400.00	100
Farmers Ball	1	Annual	Potential	10
Stickmakers Guild	4	Quarterly	Potential	50
Fitness Class	12	Monthly	Potential	75
Town Plan Meeting	1	Annual	Potential	50
Food Fair	1	Annual	Spring '10	90
Postcard Fair	4	Quarterly	Potential	100
H/c U3A Group	12	Monthly	Potential	90
Tiny Tots Group	2	Half Yearly	Potential	90
Young Farmers	2	Half Yearly	Potential	90
Community Lincs	2	Half Yearly	Potential	70
Dog Show	12	Monthly	50.00	100
T Allen Boxing	1	Annual	260.00	100
H/c Gardens & All	1	Annual	235.00	100
Shoe Sales	3	3 x a Year	400.00	100
H/c Jun Cricket	6	Weekly for 6 weeks	Potential	50
Poultry Club	2	Half Yearly	100.00	100
Antiques Fair	4	Quarterly	200.00	100
Town Council	1	Annual	Potential	50
Otters Swim Club	1	Annual	Potential	90
Beekeepers	1	Annual	Potential	60
Discos	52	Weekly	Potential	90
Carpet Bowls	52	Weekly	Potential	50
THWG	2	Half Yearly	Potential	90
QEGS	1	Annual	Potential	60
Sound Lincs	1	Annual	Potential	40
Sandow Clowns	1	Bi-Annually	Potential	90
Castle Bowmen	6	6 x a year	Potential	50
Fencing Club	6	6 x a year	Potential	50
Public Meeting	1	Annual	Potential	90
WI North Lincs	12	Monthly	Potential	90
Birthday Party	2	Annual	Potential	90
Ballroom Dancing	12	Monthly	Potential	50
Mums Club– Pilot	12	Monthly	Potential	90
TONY CRANWELL	LEASE	UPSTAIRS OFFICE	200.00	100%
BAR / CAFÉ	Franchise	When revamped	Potential	90
SOCIAL SERVICES	LEASE	INTERVIEW ROOM	Potential	60
C A B	LEASE	INTERVIEW ROOM	Potential	90
RED CROSS	LEASE	MEETING ROOMS	Potential	60

7. TOWN HALL WORKING GROUP CORE MEMBERS

Includes:-

WJ Aron	Horncastle	Chairman	
R Fisher	Horncastle	Treasurer & Vice Chairman	
James Tempest	Horncastle	Junior Vice Chairman	
Mrs M O'Neill	Mareham on the Hill	Secretary	
G O'Neill	Mareham on the Hill	Member	
June Benton	Horncastle	Member	
Maureen Traves	Horncastle	Ad -hoc Co-opted Member	
John Marwood	Hemingby	Member	
Gail Hinkins	Moorby	Member	
Roger Stephens	Horncastle	Ad-hoc Co-opted Member	
Angela Kisby	Horncastle	Member	

APPENDIXES

A Cash flow forecast

B Robert Bell Letter

C Bank Statement

D PIP Application

E DTA Cultivating Enterprise Grant

F JFI Grant Confirmation

G Personal Pledge

H User Consultation Forms