

Wickham Market Village Hall: Modernisation

Utilising Reduced or Delayed Budget: S Gunn

One year ago, the proposed budget for the modernisation was £1 million, and the architect considered that to be adequate. Because of inflation, the budget estimate is now £1.23 m.

Funds in hand or assured are £0.6 m and potential additional funds in the near future would be Sizewell C; applied for £0.6 m but might be reduced. Possibly additional (less than £ 0.5 m) available from small funds but the other most likely funds available within 2 or 3 years would be:

a) a loan, either from Government or from energy efficiency funds; say £0.3 m, incurring annual service charges of £9,000.

b) a second CIL award, following further housing development in the village (in 2026/27?). This might be less than the first CIL award and chances of receiving it would be improved if the project had already been started.

Thus, budget available is likely to be £0.6 and maybe £0.9 m in the near term if Sizewell C comes good, enhanced if a loan could be considered, and up to the full amount only after 3 years.

The project should now prepare as to how to proceed within these realistic budgets.

Priorities

Is it the intention to reduce the scope of modernisation or would work be done over many years?

Which of the following are the priorities for a first phase of Modernisation?

- ensuring that the fabric of the building does not deteriorate further
- reducing running costs, allied with rewiring so that heating and lighting can be changed
- making the building more pleasant and attractive, including improved natural and artificial light, warmth and appearance of both the interior and exterior.
- improving sanitary facilities and kitchen/bar facilities
- adding several smaller rooms and aggregating storage

The Trustees also need some direction on this as some maintenance is being delayed.

How to Proceed

1. The Modernisation Committee should identify and rank priorities (approval by PC).
2. Better understanding of the breakdown of costs is needed to support any planning. This will identify main cost items and minor ones and will identify aspects of the work that could be targeted by specific grants or loans.
3. Understanding of the phase ability is needed; such as electrical rewiring cannot practically be phased? could the main roof be replaced after other work has been done? Can enough energy efficiency measures be lumped into a separate phase with identified funding? Professional advice is needed on this.
4. To support this work and further grant/loan applications, it is important that the project has a good planning (Gantt) chart and cash flow plan. These can be prepared by Working Group members without incurring costs.
5. Design and management fee contracts should remain proportional to project size.