

The 'Why' of the changes going on at the Village Hall

Silchester Village Hall is a Charity registered under No. 301947 and as such is regulated by the Charity Commission, the regulator of all charities in England and Wales. The Charity Commission ensures that your Trustees and Management Committee comply with legal requirements. The Trustees and Management Committee are not trying to make changes for the sake of change, but to put in place a structure and development that will allow the Village Hall to move forwards to meet the needs of our 21st century village.

The changes break down into three parts:

- The new Governing Document for the Village Hall (Deed of Variation)
- The vesting of Village Hall land in the Official Custodian for Charities
- The Development of the hall, funded in part by a sale of land

Why is it necessary to have a new Governing Document? Because it is in the Public Interest, following advice that our management structure was badly out of date. The aims behind the changes are to put in place a more comprehensive set of rules for Trustees to follow and to help them run the hall efficiently. The Deed of Variation is being carried out under the provisions of section 74D of the Charities Act 1993, and is being put to Silchester Residents for ratification at an open Special Meeting to be held at the Village Hall on 25th July.

Why has the land been vested in Official Custodian for Charities? Again because it is in the Public Interest, following advice from ACRE [Action with Communities in Rural England]. The Official Custodian for Charities is an official appointed by the Charity Commission. This is now considered to be best practice and actually adds an extra layer of security to the land as any sale, whether of whole or part, now has to pass the scrutiny of the Official Custodian.

Why is it necessary to develop the Village Hall? Because at the present time, it is not fit for purpose, nor does it offer facilities comparable to other local halls. There are no toilet facilities for the disabled, nor does the kitchen comply with the escalating amount of legislation being imposed on professional kitchens. Unless Silchester Village Hall has the facilities to attract bookings, it will cease to be used. If it were to be unused for a continuous period of 12 months, under the 1927 Deed the Trustees would be required to sell it and the land surrounding it for the benefit of the residents of Silchester.

Why is it necessary to fund the Village Hall development in part by the sale of land?

The estimated cost of the proposed development, which was designed after considerable consultation with residents and hall users by Architects Interspace Design has been calculated by two independent persons, a developer and a builder. In each case, the estimate to include VAT @ 20% and a contingency sum of £50k has come to a figure in the order of £400,000. We will be applying for grants and donations, but it will be necessary to raise a considerable sum ourselves, and this is most likely through the sale of assets (land).

Stuart Sinclair
Chairman of the Trustees
Silchester Village Hall