

TITLE OF INFORMATION NOTE: NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE MUSEUM AND COMMUNITY FACILITY AT HITCHIN TOWN HALL**INFORMATION NOTE OF THE CONTRACTS AND PROJECTS MANAGER**

This note provides a further update for Members on the North Hertfordshire Museum and Town Hall Project following the last update.

PROJECT UPDATE**Museum Fit-Out**

Land and Property Act receivers were appointed by Adventure Capital Fund to recover assets from Hitchin Town Hall Ltd for disposal to cover their debts (mainly for the land previously known as 14 & 15 Brand Street).

Following the appointment of the receivers, the tender for 14 & 15 Brand Street was terminated as a deal was struck between Hitchin Town Hall Ltd's funders, Adventure Capital Fund and a newly formed company HTH Finance Ltd, where Adventure Capital Fund's debts were sold to HTH Finance Ltd without notifying North Hertfordshire District Council. The property therefore reverted to Hitchin Town Hall Ltd.

Due to this the contractors that had originally provided quotes to undertake the Fit-Out work have provided revised quotes without the inclusion of the land previously known as 14 & 15 Brand Street. Due to the complexity of the project and to ensure that all items have been quoted for, it has taken slightly longer to complete the contracts. They have now been signed and the contractors commence work back on site on the 31st October.

When the contractors first discussed the fit out with the Council they projected a programme of eight weeks, however, now they have been on site and fully understand what is required, the programme has been increased to fourteen weeks. The main reasons for this are due to them identifying new items of works, having to work around the building without the land previously known as 14 & 15 Brand Street, and making slight amendments to the design due to the issues around 14 & 15 Brand Street. Based on this start date and a two week contingency the Fit-Out should be complete by late February 2017.

The fit-out contractors have begun to install museum objects in the showcases; each object sitting on a purpose-made mount, so at last the museum is beginning to take shape. The team is starting on the first floor, and will then work on the ground floor, and finally the Terrace Gallery.

Although the museum is not ready to open, the Museum Service is showing its first exhibition Pirates, Pants & Wellyphants, in the Lucas Room of Hitchin Town Hall. The exhibition is of colourful illustrations by Nick Sharratt, the popular children's illustrator, and will certainly be a huge hit. The exhibition opened on Saturday 27 November, and runs until 21 January 2017.

TOWN HALL UPDATE

Since its opening to the public in June, the Town Hall has seen a steady growth in its programme of events. Recent events, regular hires and one-off hires of the Town Hall include;

Dancing at Hitchin Town Hall

Hitchin Town Hall runs regular Tea Dances on the 2nd Sunday of each month. These dances have proved extremely popular, with attendees commenting on how enjoyable the sprung floor is to dance on and how beautifully restored the building is. In addition to this, Hitchin Town Hall is once again home to Rodney's Dance School, previous hirers of the venue before its refurbishment. Rodney's classes run every Wednesday from 6pm – 10pm.

Wedding Parties

Since opening in June, the Town Hall has played host to several Wedding parties, with caterers utilising the fully refitted kitchen to serve 3 course sit-down meals for up to 150 guests and bookings for next year's wedding season are already being taken.

Comedy Evenings

As part of Hitchin Festival, Hitchin Town Hall played host to an evening of comedy with Russell Kane. This was a sell-out event, with a fantastic atmosphere enjoyed by all.

Book Launches

Hitchin Town Hall hosted an evening with Alan Titchmarsh to celebrate the launch of his new book, the event was organised by local business David's Bookshop, proving to be a great success and was very well attended.

Hitchin Fencing Club

Hitchin Fencing Club runs every Monday from 7pm- 9pm. The club was founded in 2000 and is now a thriving fencing club that calls Hitchin Town Hall its home. The club runs for both juniors and adults of all abilities, for further information, please visit <http://www.hitchinfencing.com>

Zumba

Zumba classes run on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 7pm – 8pm in the Mountford Hall, with ever growing numbers of attendees.

Yoga

Yoga classes are held every Monday morning from 9:30am. NHDC are looking to expand its fitness programme in the New Year to include a wider variety of fitness classes across the weekly fitness timetable.

Forthcoming Events

By the end of 2016, Hitchin Town Hall will be playing host to its first night of professional boxing since refurbishment as well as a Live Music concert, both of which have completely sold out. NHDC are also running three Christmas party evenings and playing host to a variety of private bookings before the end of the year.

The Town Hall has received bookings as far in advance as Christmas 2017, with some fantastic events taking place next year.

For further information, please contact hitchintownhall@north-herts.gov.uk or via telephone on 01462474554. For information on hiring of the hall, upcoming events and any other information please visit the webpage <http://www.north-herts.gov.uk/hitchin-town-hall> or like us on Facebook; www.facebook.com/hitchintownhall

FURTHER INFORMATION

The Council's website provides information on the background and progress on this project at http://www.north-herts.gov.uk/index/leisure_and_culture/museums.htm

A dedicated Museum Service Blog is available at <http://www.northhertsmuseum.org/>

Updates on the significant events in the project are provided on the Council's Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/northhertsmuseums> Twitter feed <https://twitter.com/NorthHertsDC> and Flickr pages <http://www.flickr.com/photos/northhertfordshire/sets/>

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TOWN HALL EVENTS 2016



Figure 1 - Hitchin Chamber Orchestra



Figure 2 - Alan Titchmarsh book signing event

HITCHIN (6.12.16)



Figure 3 - Sunday Dancing at the Town Hall



Figure 4 - Hitchin Fencing Club

HITCHIN (6.12.16)



Figure 5 - A Birthday Party at the Town Hall



Figure 6 - A wedding party at the Town Hall