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NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

HITCHIN COMMITTEE

TUESDAY, 2ND MARCH, 2021

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

Please find attached supplementary papers relating to the above meeting, as follows:

Agenda No	Item
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| 11. | <u>DISCUSSION ITEM - CHARNWOOD HOUSE</u> (Pages 3 - 12) |
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To discuss options for the future use of Charnwood House.

Please note that the documents enclosed in this supplement are submissions from members of the public.

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DOCUMENTS INCLUDED:

Survey Comment Responses

Halls in Hitchin Review 2015

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Survey Results

28 Questionnaires completed

Online Total – 5

Written Total – 23

22 Respondents gave comments

9 Respondents would be interested in becoming a supporter or member

11 Respondents would prefer not to become a member or supporter

8 Respondents provided other alternatives e.g. be kept informed; provide further input or not sure

24 Respondents are Hitchin residents 3 from surrounding villages and 1 other

27 Respondents declared they or members of their household are members of local groups or clubs

In response to the question on ability to secure suitable premises for their club or activity

Always able – 6 Usually – 9 With Difficulty – 6 Never- 2 35
There were 5 non-respondents to this question

The criteria ranking for the most important aspects of suitable premises for consideration is:

(The responses to always have been used as the primary ranking order. The Sometimes and Never responses are not ordered in order of importance)

CRITERIA	ALWAYS	SOMETIMES	NEVER
Location	22	2	
Cost	21	4	
Availability	19	2	
Access	16	4	
Size	15	9	
Facilities/Equipment	12	10	2
Storage	10	4	8

Comments

22 respondents provided comments, 7 did not. The online survey comments are more substantial than the street survey. The comments are listed below. No qualitative analysis has been done as yet.

1. I am a member of local Friends of the Earth who have regular meeting room at nearby Quaker House. However I still feel that Charnwood House should be made available for groups like this as it would help maintain and improve a local community feel in Hitchin. I work on some youth projects during the daytime and often require such spaces to teach, though not always in Hitchin!

2. We think Charnwood House would be a fantastic asset to Hitchin to use in the similar way to the Hub in Letchworth. Although we don't have to find locations for the groups we belong to, I am sure many people would use it if it was available at a reasonable cost.
3. I am a committee member of the Hitchin Art Club (which will be 71 years old this year). We have for a great number of years traditionally held our Annual Exhibition in Hitchin Museum, apart for the last three years due to it being closed we have had to use the British Schools Museum and twice the Letchworth Arts Centre.; We are getting very negative response from the Museum people regarding pour return as they creating an image of not wanting local clubs in their new museum and would prefer famous exhibitors from London. We are feeling very let down by NHDC and its lack of interest in local people and clubs.; Therefore we would be very interested in the use of the original museum, not just for our Annual Exhibition bur also for our weekly meetings.
4. I have recently become a member of HAC but, so far, have just enjoyed their company and kindness, meaning I have not been involved in the finding of premises on any level. ; That being said I believe Charnwood House could be a real asset for all the local community being both a lovely building and so central to Hitchin. I am sure many diverse projects could benefit from the use of this facility, given the chance. With the seemingly never-ending demise of other community spaces in the area, e.g. Bancroft Hall, it makes the use of Charnwood even more important to local residents.
5. Hitchin Art Club need a space for their Annual Exhibitions (used to be in the museum) and for other meetings/exhibitions. Charnwood is potentially an ideal venue.
6. Base for community volunteer groups - access to computer facilities for these and meeting rooms for small (5-15) groups.
7. Permanent base for volunteer groups in Hichin - even if not used for meetings- central reference/information point will be valuable

8. Bridge Club, W.I.
9. General use for clubs, societies, re-establish registry, council services office
10. Art Classes
11. With refurbishment it would be useful for all meetings, exhibitions etc.
12. As a community centre
13. Should be for public benefit e.g. citizens advice etc.
14. Hitchin Historical Society uses Church House/Orpheus Choir uses Benslow and Tielhouse St. Baptist Church
15. Hitchin Society
16. For use of Hitchin and surrounding area residents
17. Community Centre for all sections of the community
18. Community workshop like the man's shed project
19. Community Use

Should be community usage, including small groups who do not want / need a regular weekly booking

Must be kept as given to Hitchin by the Moss family

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Halls in Hitchin in addition to community centres-review 2015

	Space & Capacity	Weekday Availability	Storage	Disabled facilities	Kitchen	Parking	Other comments
St Mary's Church House	Hall max 75	Booked every evening Afternoons booked except Tues and Wed	No	yes	yes	no	£14 per hour
Woodside Hall	2 rooms small -max 40 main - about 60	booked except for main hall - Mon afternoon both Friday afternoon both 3 out of 4 Friday evenings	possibly	yes	yes	public carpark adjacent	needed for rehearsals by Thespians limiting regular use
NH Minority Forum	open area - about 50	booked except for Wed, Thurs & Fri evenings after 6.30	none	yes	yes	on street only	
Holy Saviour Church Hall	about 70	available afternoons & occasional Tuesday evenings	possibly outside building	yes	yes	on street and limited both time and spaces	
British Schools Museum	main about 100 small about 20	booked except for main - possible Mon & Fri evenings	none	not for main room	no	limited on site	main room is set up as museum for school visits most of the time expensive
Riverain Bowls Club	no space is available for hire by public						
Hitchin Christian Centre	room upstairs & main church area - about 80	main church area only available some Wed evenings	none	none	yes	some outside & in Waitrose	church use of main area takes priority looking for additional space themselves
Walsworth Baptist Church	main hall-about 60 upstairs hall-about 60	booked except Thurs eve	none	downstairs only	yes	limited public carpark nearby	

Tilehouse Street Baptist Church	main hall - 80 upstairs room and small lunch room - 20 plus permanent pre school room	booked except for main - Tues evening/Fri afternoon lunch - Mon afternoon after 2 p.m & after 8 p.m. Tues	none	yes except for upstairs room	yes	yes but heavily used by church	always getting enquiries for space they haven't got
Grace Baptist Church							
Hitchin Spiritualist Church	no space is available for hire by public						
Market Theatre							
Queen Mother Theatre	rehearsal rooms	used nearly every evening may be some availability in afternoons	possibly	yes	?	in public car park	
Nightingale House	2 small rooms - about 15 each	not available any afternoon some evenings possible	none	yes	coffee bar	limited	
Ravidassia Centre							
Catholic Church Hall	Seat up to 100	Now booked most days but some availability	no	yes	yes	yes	cost £50/session
Church of the Latter Day Saints	no space is available for hire by public						
Curves Gym	side room to gym	some when gym open	no	no	no	limited	
Bowls Club	not offered to public and used exclusively by bowls club 5 months of the year					carpark	
Wymondley Wood Scout Hut		only possible occasional afternoons					covenant to be used for youth activities
St Faiths Church	Main church over 100 Side meeting room 20	evenings except Thursdays booked most of time	No	yes	yes	public parking	main church expensive £22/hr
Benslow Music trust	Main hall over 100 other hall about 40 small rehearsal 30	all halls booked most of the time could not be used for regular bookings	No	yes	No	yes	expensive. Main hall £160 per evening Other halls £120 and £70 per evening

Priory school	Sports facilities and main school hall	Booked most evenings can't be used in afternoons Main school hall is not hired out on a regular basis because of evening events and exams	No	yes	?	yes	expensive main sports hall £30/hr No chairs in sports facilities
Hitchin Boys school	Do not hire out space in main school Sports centre	Only suitable for sports organisations					No chairs or tables for groups
Hitchin Town FC	Function hall hold up to 80	Available most evenings, Wed a problem and some afternoons	Outside	yes	yes	yes	Lighting poor, suited for dances one area only with stage block No separate meeting area
Centre for Healthy Living							
Hitchin Girls School	Lower Hall will take 60 Main hall	Booked Tues/Wed /Fri Not available for regular bookings	Limited	yes	?	yes	Only available up to 9.30pm
Highover JMI school	No space is available for hire by public						
Wilshire Dacre school	Hall will take 60	Booked Tuesday/Thursday	No	yes	?	yes	Caretaker only available to 10.00pm £20/hr
Friends meeting House	small room up to 20	available afternoons, booked eve except Mon & Thurs	No	yes	yes	no	small room £17
	large room up to 40	available afternoons, booked eve except Tues					large room £24

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