

The Victoria Hall, Radstock.

6 February 2012

Although the Victoria Hall has limped along since 2000 in limbo between B&NES and NRTC, it has flourished as the heart of community life and is well used by community groups, the silver band, a Pentecostal church and businesses every night of the week and at weekends. It is the only large community space capable of holding big meetings and with a proper kitchen could host many more parties and celebrations than it does at present. To board it up now would mean the dispersal, or even the end of some of these groups because there are no alternatives nearby. It needs LTC, proper management and committed volunteers, and a group has come together as 'The Victoria Hall Interim Management Committee' and has written to Tom McBain in Property Services offering to run the hall for a year as a trial period.

At issue is the future of the Susan Hill School of Dance, with 120/500 clients using the hall every Saturday, the Forerunners Church on Friday evening and the dog obedience classes on Mondays. In addition there must be about 50-60 under 18s using the snooker hall, as well as some middle aged serious players. These are activities which draw people into Radstock and provide vital custom for the shops and small businesses, not to mention Radco. There is also the Secret Garden project behind the Victoria Hall which engages young people in a 'healthy eating vegetable growing project.'

It may well prove that there is a reverter on the site, as with other central Radstock buildings, or a covenant mirroring the one laid on Lady Waldegrave's first community hall on the site, built in 1866, which will constrain future use, but what is needed now is action.

I request cabinet firstly, to make a commitment not to sell it for offices or some other private purpose. Paul Crossley has done this privately.

Secondly, to instruct officers to work with the community to ensure a viable future perhaps on the model of the Old Town Hall in MSN, perhaps co-run by the Museum but in all cases to ensure that the vibrancy of night life in Radstock remains, and it provides for recreation and education as originally intended. I would agree with Cllr Bellotti that a long-term sustainable future needs to be organised for the 'jewel in the crown' of Radstock. It could be done for £20,000 less rental revenue. Surely with all the millions ebbing and flowing through the Budget, approx. £15,000 can be found. (excepting rates)

Mini-Budget based on 2010/11 Budget.

Electricity	£5,000	(RTC's computer equipment set against rising costs)
Gas/heating oil	£4,500	
Heating/hygiene	£ 4,000	
Insurance	£ ,750	(is this the true figure?)
Equipment	£ ,500	(Maintenance. (? piano tuning)
Property maintenance	£ 3,000	
Licences	£ 50	
Water rates	£1, 200	
Total	£19,000	Revenue in 2010/11 would be c £5,000

Cllr Eleanor Jackson, Radstock.