



QUESTION SESSION AFTER AGM ON 25th OCTOBER 2018

Questions and comments by CLT members and 15 members of the public during an unplanned and informal meeting after the AGM closed. Some answers were given at the time, others have been added in explanation.

- Q1: What suggested uses are in the Business Plan (BP)?
A: *The same or similar to what have been displayed at various public meetings over the last two years. See Aims and Vision in Chairman's AGM Report.*
- Q2: Is Highways happy about access / parking?
A: *The plan is for car parking for tenants to be in the playground behind the old school building and a travel statement to this effect will be part of the Planning Application for change of use. It is anticipated that there will not be a greater number of vehicles than when the site was operated as a school but parking should be contained within the site and not on the public highway as previously.*
- Q3: Will the 'village' have a vote?
A: No, only if the 'village' through the Parish Council was being asked to either fund the purchase or accept liability if the project failed would a referendum be considered.
The CLT has committed to consult on the proposals with the village and surrounding rural community. It is doing so through a survey and public drop-in session on Saturday 24 November in Queen Camel Memorial Hall.
- Q4: Does not a public share issue equate with asking the village for money?
A: No. A share option scheme is for anyone who supports a particular project to have the opportunity to support it with funding. It is not limited to this village or even to the wider community.
Note: item 3 of the CLT's Objects state:
To provide an opportunity for public-spirited people and organisations to contribute financially to the community, with the expectation of a social dividend, rather than personal financial reward.
- Q5: Does the Business Plan extend to five year?
A: The BP is a working document, currently extending to the first three years from opening but relevant sections will be updated and extended.
- Q6A: Understand that 'exchange of contract' is required by 20th December but what about other red lines?
A: SCC has requested 'exchange of contract' by 21st December and completion of the freehold purchase by 31st March 2019.
- Q6B: Where is the CLT getting the money from?
A: Purchase will only take place if grant funding for the full purchase price is available.
- Q7: To whom will the November community survey be addressed:
A: It will be delivered to every house within the Parish and is also for the wider community – we have a donut of abutting parishes around Queen Camel. The methodology for distribution, collation and the ensuing report will be done independently by the Community Council for Somerset in conjunction with the CLT's working group for the OSS.
- Q8: Assuming the £250,000 is raised, does the CLT have quotes for refurbishment and building of the 'artisan workshops' and how much more money will the CLT have to raise?

A: The CLT does not yet have quotations for refurbishment (we are awaiting survey reports on the state of the site) and there are no plans to build new workshops. Funding for some refurbishment (e.g. toilets) will be through grant funding.

Q9: Is it going to become a 'white elephant' and where are we going to get the people to use it?

A: If the CLT business plan comes to fruition, as we are aiming it to do, the OSS will become a significant asset to the local community adding value in many ways.

Q10: If it all falls over, who will pick-up the tab?

A: It would not be the precept. Should the enterprise fail, then it is the CLT's assets that would be at risk. The 'village' would be no worse off than if the old school site was sold to a developer today.

The CLT has been looking at other venues including the Red Brick in Glastonbury, the Balsam Centre in Wincanton, and further afield. These Community enterprises are sustainable with groups of start-ups that attract other new businesses and provide mutual benefits and support.

Q11 People are uncomfortable with the lack of information and would encourage the CLT to share more.

A We accept that communication could be improved and are now regularly updating our website. Our last presentation and display of information to the public was at the May AVM and the next will be at an Open Event on 24th November. We do try to update our members more frequently.

Q12 Regarding cash flow, what assets does the CLT have to cover periods of vacancies and non-payment of rents?

A The purchase price would be covered by grant funding. The Business Plan is based on 75% occupancy and these rents will allow us to be self-sustaining. The Business Plan also includes the cost of a Manager/Administrator to work with tenants.

Q13 If we do move onto the site do we plan to use the existing temporary buildings (the flat roof extension to the 1920s suite of classrooms).

A Yes

Statement by Mike Lewis

There has been concern regarding capital to purchase the OSS. SSDC is planning to offer a phased bridging loan (10%/£25,000 in December, 50%/£125,000 by 31st March, the balance of 40%/£100,000) to be repaid within a period of one year from grants secured for the purchase. If the CLT did not succeed with the project, SSDC would have a legal lien on the property. ML noted that the report was on SSDC's website.

see <http://modgov.southsomerset.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=136&MId=2294&Ver=4>

Q14 A query on interest rates to which ML replied that these would be extremely low (probably 1.8%).

Q15 Do we have any tenants?

A We started a register of individuals and organisations that had expressed an interest but we then had the hiatus during last year (which actually lost us tenants). We received initial conditions with price offer on the 9th February. We had our first meeting with SCC in June and since then have been working almost non-stop. An important purpose of the November community survey is to update our list of interested parties.

Q16 What about a planning application and timescales.

A We had early discussions with Planners (and the Environment Agency) and have resumed that dialogue. They are aware of our plans for the site, indeed recommended the class of use that we should include. The planning application is limited to change of use because of timescales.

Q17 Flooding was an issue and must be considered.

A It was being considered.

Statement by Angus Davidson

The decision to proceed with the OSS project was by a majority (i.e. not unanimous) Board vote.

Question session closed at 8.15 p.m.

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