



Odiham Parish Council

**BUSINESS PLAN FOR THE
OWNERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF
The Bridewell, The Bury, Odiham, Hampshire, RG29 1NB**



1. Introduction

Councillors are asked to consider accepting The Bridewell freehold including all management liabilities and associated expenditure.

This document explains the process and steps OPC has taken in reaching the current position and aims to provide Councillors with sufficient information in order to reach an informed decision.

2. Process followed and timeline

January 2020	HCC consultation on the possible closure of 10 libraries, including Odiham.
March 2020	OPC responds to consultation objecting to closures.
July 2020	HCC resolves to close Odiham Library at the end of the year.
August 2020	OPC forms Library working group to look at community led library options.
October 2020	OPC first hears HCC will consider gifting The Bridewell to OPC. A SWOT analysis is presented to Council and OPC resolves to conduct a feasibility study.
November 2020	OPC reviews HCC's building Condition Survey and estimated running costs and appoints The Goddard Partnership to review HCC's Condition Survey and make recommendation on essential repairs. No major items which were not on the HCC condition survey were identified.
	The Library Working Group agreed to recommend to OPC to support the formation of the Book Exchange Community Managed Library and a funding application was submitted.
December 2020	OPC sets up a small Working Group to continue feasibility research. Hampshire Library service withdrawn. OPC receives £10,000 library transitional grant from HCC.
January 2021	OPC researches social enterprises for future ownership & management of the Bridewell and concludes this is not a suitable governance model and was likely to lead to duplication of administration with no reduction in liability
March 2021	OPC runs a community survey which generates 378 responses and confirmed 96% support to OPC for accepting future ownership. OPC seeks additional funding to cover maintenance identified in the HCC survey and assistance with installation of a second toilet but this is rejected by HCC.
April 2021	OPC signs Heads of Terms confirming intent to take over ownership and Tenancy at Will for the Odiham Book Exchange to use the library room.
June 2021	OPC appoints The Goddard Partnership to produce a costed schedule of works and feasibility study. Draft business case with provisional budget presented to OPC.
July 2021	Odiham Book Exchange opens. The Bridewell Working Group formed. OPC receives confirmation of £10,000 building grant from HCC which will be paid when receipts for work are submitted.
September 2021	OPC accepts concept plans generated <i>pro bono</i> by a local architect and resolves to incorporate the plans into a vision statement.
October 2021	Odiham Book Exchange Community Interest Company formed.
December 2021	Freehold transfer legal documentation complete.

3. Evidence gathered and reviewed during the research phase

- i. HCC's Condition Survey – August 2020 (Appendix 1)
- ii. The Goddard Partnership's Condition Review – December 2020 (Appendix 2)
- iii. OPC's SWOT analysis (below):

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OPC gives the best long term security to the building remaining a community asset. • An existing community resource • Existing tenants who pay rent • Good voluntary use from Odiham Society(OdSoc) and others. (U3A) • OdSoc maintain the courtyard garden. • Key Mechanical/electrical items eg. Boiler, distribution boards replaced within the last 5-10years. • Location within the heart of the community • Support from the community to retain the building already • OPC already in situ • OPC has existing premises management systems eg. Accounting, contracts, HR • Listed building • An asset of community value • Helps to build a strong community • Keeps the local services in a rural community. • Social cohesion and a meeting point. • Potential for income generation 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased premises costs including inspections • Cost of facilities management service level agreements. • Building maintenance costs • Only one accessible toilet • A mix of old and new mechanical/electrical fittings. • Increase staff costs for OPC to manage the premises, organisation, lettings etc • Unknown community support for a long term financial spend. • Listed building • Security of the building use in the evenings and weekends • A number of attractive spaces already available in the village for room hire. • The current kitchen space is too small.
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transform into a community hub • Multi use of space in the building • Use of Library room eg. evening meetings, • Available for Community hire for organisations to use eg. local groups for activities, support groups and training sessions. • Free the parish room for more community use. • Potential for income generation 	<p>Threats (separate)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If OPC do not take it on who will be the landlord and what impact could that have on OPC after 2026 (when the current OPC lease term ends). • If the library closed who would be the additional tenant in the building and would that be appropriate for the community? • Loss of a public service as there is a chance the library service would be lost. • Unknown Long term maintenance (HCC Condition Survey did not report further than Year 2) • HCC Condition Survey costs – how accurate? • If the MP plans not to stay in the Bridewell, loss of tenant. • The cost of renting space, high commercial rents if OPC was to move out.

- iv. Legal advice from The Surrey Hill's Solicitors on social enterprises – January 2021.
- v. Community survey monkey which generated 378 responses (Appendix 3).
- vi. Legal advice from The Surrey Hill's Solicitors on the freehold transfer process, documentation and tenancy at will for use of the library room. (Appendix 4).
- vii. Regular working group meetings.
- viii. Meetings with The Goddard Partnership.

4. Existing tenants and users

- i. OPC – lease for downstairs office space. This will cease when the freehold transfers to OPC.
- ii. Police – lease downstairs office space which expires June 2022.
- iii. MP – tenancy at will for downstairs office space. A new lease will need to be negotiated. A verbal expression of interest on the same terms has been received.
- iv. Odiham Book Exchange – OPC holds a tenancy at will with HCC which enables the Book Exchange to use the library room.
- v. Odiham Society – free use of upstairs office and small kitchen not covered by any written agreement.

5. Future Liabilities

- i. Building management – administration of tenants and hirers, financial administration, H&S checks, arranging R&M issues, publicity, licensing, security, cleaning, insurance.

- ii. Repairs & maintenance costs noting Grade II listed status and further responsibilities of managing a public community building.
- iii. Landlord responsibilities – *legal references unknown*.

6. Budget impact

A revenue budget has been produced based on known costs provided by HCC and quotes provided by 3 suppliers, where possible. This budget excludes capital repairs and additional toilet which are planned for 2022.

The budget estimates running costs of £27,773 and income of £17,172. The deficit in running costs is partly covered by a saving £4,000 for office rental (£5,500 saving from year 2), £360 for Parish Room Cleaning and £800 for Parish Room maintenance. The estimated £5,441 impact on OPC's budget is in line with "The Business Case for The Bridewell" presented to Councillors in June 2021:

"Given the above there is currently a short fall of £5385 in year 1 and a smaller amount falling to £2433 in year 5. There is little prospect of this shortfall being met by additional revenue in year 1. The shortfall in year 1 could however be found from within the current budget – for example by vireing from the £30k budget for repairs to the Chapels."

In year 2, revenue will increase as soon as R&M is complete and the second toilet (shown in Appendix 5) is provided. There will also be an additional £1,500 saving in OPC's office rental.

The full budget is shown in Appendix 6 and this should be read in conjunction with OPC's draft 2022-23 budget.

7. Opportunities

- i. To fulfill OPC's vision of transforming The Bridewell into a thriving community hub. See concept plans (Appendix 7).
- ii. Expressions of interest have already been received from the following hirers: U3A, All Saints Church, an art group, a sewing group, reading group, book club and Hart Conservative Association.
- iii. A formal vision statement with plans is more likely to attract external funding.
- iv. By securing an alternative meeting venue, this creates an opportunity to dispose of The Parish Room.
- v. To provide hot desking opportunities.

8. Risks

- i. Financial – unforeseen building repair, loss of tenant or hirers, future cap on parish precept increase, failure to secure sufficient grant funding.
- ii. Impact on OPC's resources – staff, Councillors and committees.
- iii. Business interruption – downtime during building maintenance and refurbishment works.
- iv. Reputation – perceived competition to other community buildings, managing residents expectations.
- v. Impact on existing parking problems in The Bury.
- vi. Failure to secure listed planning consent for future works.

9. Mitigation of Risks

Risk	Mitigation
<p>Financial:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unforeseen building repair. - Loss of tenant or hirers. - Future cap on parish precept increase. - Failure to secure sufficient grant funding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HCC survey report, Structural Surveyor's report, respond to initial R&M using HCC grant. - Regular reviews and marketing. - Watching brief on sector news. - Future vision to focus on maximizing income to break even after year 5. - Develop clear project plans capable of attracting funding and dedicate sufficient OPC time to fundraising.
<p>Impact on OPC's resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff - Councillors - Committees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Year 1 budget includes 4 additional hours per week. - Provide sufficient information to Councillors. Allow non-Councillor members of working groups. - Annual review of committee structure to focus resources.
<p>Business interruption</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Downtime during building maintenance and refurbishment works. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Follow formal costed schedule of work route. Schedule works during quiet hire times, weekends public holidays. Don't allow additional hirers before phase 1 works complete.
<p>Reputation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Perceived competition to other community buildings. - Managing residents expectations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop clear vision statement. Review local hire charges before determining OPC rates. Communicate with local venues. - Develop comms plan.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Impact on existing parking problems in The Bury. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase parking bays at front and side of building. - Install bike racks. - Lobby for reduction in The Bury car park charges. - Promote walking & cycling in hirers literature.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Failure to secure listed planning consent for future works. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Take professional guidance throughout. - Consider Hart pre-application advice.

10. For Decision

- i. To resolve to accept The Bridewell freehold and £1 cost.
- ii. To appoint two Councillors to sign the legal title (Appendix 8).
- iii. To agree service and utilities contracts as shown in (Appendix 9).
- iv. To delegate implementation of the above to the Clerk, in consultation with the Working Group where necessary.

Appendices

- 1 – HCC's building Condition Survey - pages 7-27
- 2 – The Goddard Partnership's Survey Report - pages 28-58
- 3 – Community Survey Monkey responses produced by Cllr McFarlane - pages 59-68
- 4 – Legal advice from Surrey Hills Solicitors on the freehold transfer - pages 69-79
- 5 – Floor plans showing location of 2nd toilet, produced by The Goddard Partnership - pages 80-81
- 6 – Budget - pages 82-84
- 7 – Concept plans produced by Leo Cornall - pages 85-86
- 8 – Land Registry freehold document for approval - pages 87-91
- 9 – List of contracts for approval - pages 92-93