

CLP Recommendations to Parish Council about lease of Methodist Chapel and Schoolroom 3 December 2019

Results of November 2019 Consultation:

- Total Number of Households entitled to vote: 222
- Number of Household Votes received: 78 (35%)
- Number of Votes in favour: 56 (72%)
- Number of Votes against: 22 (28%)

Voter turn-out at 35% is apparently typical for South Derbyshire local elections.

The above percentages are very similar to the results of the referendum in Repton which resulted in an increase in Council Tax precept to fund a six figure Public Works Loan for the new Village Hall.

CLP Observations about the November 2019 Consultation:

The consultation carried out during November 2019 in Church Broughton Parish identified strong support for continued use of the Methodist Chapel and Schoolroom. 72% of votes received were in favour of the Parish Council leasing the building and covering the cost through an increase in Council Tax precept.

If the Parish Council leased the building for continued use as a community space, it would be refurbished as part of the lease agreement. Existing activities could continue, such as chair based exercise classes, soup and pud lunches, pop up shop and café, meetings and occasional parties. The space may also attract additional activities.

Some significant concerns have been raised by the residents of Chapel Lane, such as vehicular access, parking and noise. The CLP considers that these concerns can be mitigated through appropriate use of the community space along similar lines as for the current use, along with restrictions on vehicular access and parking on Chapel Lane. The CLP and PC have committed to have further discussions with the local residents to fully understand their concerns and generate some basic principles and ideas to mitigate these concerns wherever reasonably possible. This would then inform a set of rules of use of the community space, to be developed and enforced by a Management Committee, which will be established to run the facility for the community. The option of a shorter lease and/or inclusion of a termination clause in the lease should also be considered.

A formal referendum (which was not required in this situation) would require only a simple majority of greater than 50% of votes received in order to proceed to increase the Council Tax precept.

Based on the Parish Consultation in November 2019 and the above observations, the CLP makes the following recommendations to the Parish Council:

1. Raise the Council Tax precept in order to fund the lease of the Methodist Chapel and Schoolroom, from 2020.
2. Delegate authority to someone with relevant experience and skills to negotiate (but not sign) Heads of Terms and a subsequent Lease Agreement. Note: whoever is asked to lead this negotiation will have to bring the negotiated Heads of Terms and Lease Agreement back to the PC for approval and signature.
3. Assign someone from the PC to support the CLP in discussions with the residents of Chapel Lane, in parallel with the Heads of Terms negotiations.