



**NEW ROMNEY TOWN COUNCIL
FULL COUNCIL MEETING 16th SEPTEMBER 2020
CAPITAL PROJECTS REPORT – Proposed Community Hall and Sports Pavilion**

I am pleased to report that there has been significant progress with this project during the intervening months since my last report in January – despite the intervention of a global pandemic.

1. Planning Approval Received

I am delighted to report that the application went before the first virtual meeting of Folkestone & Hythe District Council's Planning & Licensing Committee on 26th May 2020 and received the unanimous approval of the Committee. I was able to make a presentation to the Committee in favour of the application as local Ward member. Here is the text of my speech

Quote.

Re: Y19/0553/FH – Community Hall and Sports Pavilion and associated 34 unit residential development

This application relates to a long-awaited and much needed enhancement to the local infrastructure. Led by the Town Council, the new Community Hall and Sports Pavilion's pleasing design and form has been developed in response to local residents and user feedback. Strong community endorsement is demonstrated through more than 7 stages of extensive and applied consultation with residents and businesses – each stage consistently evidencing local support. For example, in 2016 1422 respondents replied to a questionnaire seeking support with 84% confirming the need for the improved facility.

New Romney is classified as a Rural District Service Hub providing key amenities for the wider Marsh. The new building will form part of a proposed 'Health and Wellbeing hub' for New Romney, and the wider hinterland the Town serves. The Clinical Director of the SKCCCG confirmed his CCG's support for the community hub stating that it is part of 'a positive and holistic approach (that) is being taken to develop and improve the local Health Services infrastructure'.

The Shepway Sports Trust plan to use the facility as part of its outreach work in developing sporting opportunities across the District. Sport England have raised no objection to the development since the community benefit outweighs the loss of a small area of unused field to the rear of the sports ground. The new ground layout will actually increase the number of pitches.

Indeed, para 5.1 of the report before you reveals that this application has, without exception, been supported by all key consultees. Whilst, just 3 representations from local residents objecting to the development have been received – which is highly unusual given the size of the proposals.

This development therefore makes a positive contribution towards the supply of community, health and sporting enhancements so fully satisfying the principle of sustainable development as required by the NPPF

Delivery of the new Community Hall is entirely dependant upon the need to optimise the potential capital receipt from the sale of an adjacent area of land owned by the Town Council. Hence the linked residential development, with its appropriate housing mix, will deliver extensive community benefit by facilitating the construction of this landmark new amenity. The application also includes some improvements to the on-site nursery building – adding further positive community value.

Finally, I would suggest that post pandemic our current socially distanced society will require greater access to facilities such as the one here proposed to help bring our fragmented communities back together. I therefore urge all of you to support the recommendation made in the Case Officer's report – exactly as drafted. The Romney Marsh deserves first class, not third world facilities, this application delivers exactly that at the heart of the Capital of the Marsh.

Unquote.

Councillor Wimble also spoke in strong support of the Project for which I thank him.

The section 106 Agreement has only just been released by the District Council's Planning Department and there is likely to be some negotiation taking place regarding the final details contained therein. All being well once a mutually agreeable solution is agreed the formal Planning Consent will be issued.

2. **Funding Streams**

I have liaised with the potential funders who were delighted that such a significant step forward has been taken. I am in the process of revisiting the Council's application to the Roger De Haan Charitable Trust and hope that the application may be considered at the Board's November meeting. I have met with the Chief Executive of the Collyer Fergusson Trust and provided her with some key project information to enable her to share this with the Charity Trustees. Again, it is hoped that our application will go before the board's meeting after next.

Other funding sources are being sought and it is hoped that some local fundraising may take place (pandemic permitting)

3. **Project Steering Group**

Following the grant of Planning approval the PSG met with its Project Management Team to discuss next steps in taking the project forward.

Once the Section 106 is finalised we will have details of the key conditions and obligations linked to the implementation and construction of the building which may affect the build time. The Project Team are also re-visiting the water heating system to ascertain whether a 'greener' more 'climate-friendly' alternative to gas may be installed in the new building. Very important given that this Council has joined the District Council and many others across the Country in declaring a Climate Emergency.

My thanks to the Town Clerk and her Team for their support, and to my fellow PSG colleagues. Working together we WILL make this happen!

Councillor Patricia Rolfe - Chair of CHSP Project Steering Group

8th September 2020

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