



# COLNEY HEATH PARISH COUNCIL

Highfield Park Office  
 Highfield Park Visitor Centre  
 Hill End Lane  
 St Albans  
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<b>MEETING:</b>	Full Council
<b>MEETING DATE:</b>	Thursday 23 <sup>rd</sup> September 2021
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Roestock Hut Correspondence</b>
<b>AGENDA ITEM No.</b>	<b>21/22 Item 54b (1) &amp; (2)</b>
<b>REPORT BY:</b>	Lisa Chaplin: Clerk to the Council and Responsible Finance Officer

<b>For Information?</b>		<b>For Action?</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>For Discussion?</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>For Resolution</b>	<b>X</b>
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## 1. BACKGROUND

Correspondence has been received with requires to be noted and potential responses approved by Council.

There has also been a further request to access the hut to remove items.

## 2. OPEN LETTER

Letter dated 12<sup>th</sup> August 2021 – has been acknowledged and advised would be presented to Council at this meeting. The letter is not from a resident in the Parish but is involved in several community organisations including a community venue for hire.

Open letter to the Colney Heath Parish Council  
**re: proposed Community Hall in Roestock Park**

The Council proposes to demolish the former Scout Hut being c205 m2, and build a community hall of c285m2 comprising a Parish Office, meeting room, main hall, kitchen, WCs and storage (data as indicated on the Architect's drawing included in agenda item 21/22-38(b) for the Council meeting on 25th July 2021).

Your Architect's professional services proposal dated 14th May 202 commences with "Stage 1 of the RIBA Plan of Work 2013 Feasibility and preparation of brief", followed by Stages 2 and 3 up to Planning Permission. The RIBA Plan of Work 2013 defines Stage 0 Strategic Definition where a project is strategically appraised and defined before Stage 1.

Key activities in Stage 0 include

- identify client's Business Case and Strategic Brief and other core project requirements.
- ensure that a strategic sustainability review of client needs, and potential sites has been carried out, including reuse of existing facilities, building components or materials.
- establish project programme.

The output from this stage is the Strategic Brief which includes the Business Case. Stage 0 Strategic Definition is evidently therefore a vital part of the process where the Business case is identified – this comes from the Client, in this case the Council.



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I understand that the Council intends to consult the residents on this proposal.

In order for the consultation to be meaningful the Business Case needs to be presented to the residents (along with the strategic sustainability review and project programme). The Business Case should compare the proposed Community Hall with the alternatives e.g the Scouts' proposal to lease, and the provision of a Parish Office which could be a standalone office with a meeting space and WC.

The office could be on the Roestock Park site, or some other location. There may be other options too. The costs and the "case" for upgrading and continued use of the existing building, funded by the Scouts (and the s106 compensation from the adjoining development) are known - bar the rent to be paid which has not been concluded, so there is not much to work to do on this option.

A robust Business Case should include:

1. The current and future need for social facilities taking into account the planned development of up to 100 dwellings on the field between Bullens Green Lane and Roestock Park (and other potential housing developments in Colney Heath village).
2. The capacity, utilisation and potential of the existing facilities in the village – the Village Hall, St Marks Church, the JMI School and the Football Club. The managers of these facilities will, I am sure, be happy to provide the relevant data on their facilities. This can then be mapped against the need analysis.
3. A preliminary estimate of the capital cost including professional fees. The proposed Community Hall is indicated to be c40% larger than the Scout Hut. The rebuild value of the Scout Hut was noted by you as £558,000 in 2018 so the proposed building should be expected to cost considerably more, being both 40% bigger and construction costs have increased since 2018.

### 3. COUNCIL DECISION

A resolution is required on the following:

1. To consider the contents of the correspondence
2. To consider a response other than to note and thanks for comments made.
3. The Clerk will take further instructions at Council



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### 4. SCOUT GROUP CORRESPONDENCE

Letter received 3<sup>rd</sup> September. Some of the questions were answered in the meeting held 22 July 2021 during the course of business discussed on the agenda so suggested responses are in italics below each question.

As you are aware, a number of questions were asked at the Full Parish Council meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2021. To date we believe none of them have been fully answered so we would be grateful if you could let us have answers to the following:

1. A question was asked about the architects drawing of Roestock hut which had been positioned as a 'feasibility study'. Please can you outline the full process with timescales that the Council will be undertaking with regards to a full and proper feasibility study?

*The feasibility was discussed, and the feasibility stages are available on the CHPC website, until such time as the Council know that planning would be available to them from SADC a full feasibility study would not be commenced. Any feasibility study is now on hold pending the results of the public survey.*

2. The Scout Group were strongly advised by the Parish Council to take legal advice on the draft heads of terms issued to the Scout Group in February this year. As you know, the Scouts did this as advised by you, in good faith and spent a significant amount of time and money preparing a full response. This cost the Scout Group E900 — money that has been donated by residents of this Parish. We have now been informed that the Parish Council are once again changing the goalposts and no longer pursuing these heads of terms. As such, please could you advise us if the Parish Council will be reimbursing this money that was spent in good faith by the Scout Group on the strong advice of this Parish Council?

*The Parish Council cannot be held to account for legal advice obtained. The Parish Council also undertook significant legal advice after issuing the s25 and costs were incurred in delaying any further action by offering an extension to the Scouts whilst they undertook legal advice on issuing a s26 for a new lease. The only avenue open to the Council to repay any contribution to legal costs would be by way of a full grant application.*

3. Many people within the local community do not believe there is a need for new community building in Colney Heath — especially if it has to be funded by parish council money. Please could the Parish Council explain and outline details of any needs assessment that has been undertaken to assess the local need or demand for a new community building in Colney Heath?

*The public survey will determine the public need and want for any new projects within the Parish. The outcome of which will then determine the next steps for the Council.*

4. You are elected to represent and serve the best interests of local residents. Please could you let us know if local residents have been (or will be) consulted on whether they wish the council to spend what will presumably be significant public funds on such an expensive project in the rebuilding of facilities in Roestock Park?

*The decision to consult the public was made in 22 July 2021 meeting where this question was answered.*



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### 2. COUNCIL DECISION

A resolution is required on the following:

1. To consider the contents of the correspondence and draft responses.
2. To consider a response other than the draft responses.
3. To consider the request to access the building and remove items.
4. The Clerk will take further instructions at Council