



COLNEY HEATH PARISH COUNCIL

Highfield Park Office
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Hill End Lane
St Albans AL4 0RA

Village Office
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MEETING:	Full Council
MEETING DATE:	Thursday 21 st October 2021
SUBJECT:	COUNCILLOR REQUESTED AGENDA ITEM – Roestock Hut
AGENDA ITEM No.	Item 21/22 – 62b
REPORT BY:	Clerk to the Council and Responsible Finance Officer with background provided by Councillor Graeme Shaw

1. BACKGROUND

To resume the negotiations with the Scouts on the Heads of Terms agreement for a short-term agreement to occupy the Roestock Hut until such time as it is required to build a new facility on the site, or to meet any other agreed plans that arise from the Public Consultation.

To engage an independent third-party facilitator to enable agreement on the necessary works that are required to be carried out before the building is occupied again, and how to implement such works.

The Scout membership has nearly doubled in the last two years, showing that there is a great demand in the Parish.

However, the current situation whereby the Scouts are using the Colney Heath Village Hall for two evenings of the week, does not provide the required facilities for the Scouting programme so is not a suitable long-term arrangement. Coupled with this is the need for storage facilities and space for equipment to dry after weekend camps.

The Roestock Hut is currently unoccupied, presenting the risk of vandalism and creating a liability for the Council, as well as bringing no income to the Parish Council. The time period to replace the existing Hut with a new facility could be several years, allowing for the preparation of the business case, public consultation, preliminary plans, planning permission, generation of detailed plans, obtaining and reviewing tenders, appointment of a contractor prior to demolition.

During this interim period, the Council could gain some income by leasing the Hut as well as offering a suitable place for the Scouts to meet, providing a much-appreciated service to the children and youth within the community, and enhancing the reputation of the Parish Council.

Difficulties in previously reaching agreement have included differences of opinion on the works that are necessary to render the Roestock Hut suitable for occupation, and how these works could be implemented.

An independent third party with suitable expertise will be able to recommend to Council and the Scouts what needs to be done, and how to implement, taking into account the context of a short-term occupation and resources that are available from the Scouts.

The costs would be for the 3rd party facilitator (which could be shared between the Parish Council and the Scouts), the time to negotiate the Heads of Terms agreement and any legal costs required to draw up a short-term occupation agreement.



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Council resolves to re-open negotiations on the Heads of Terms agreement with the Scouts, for a short-term agreement to occupy the Roestock Hut for 2 years, and to engage a third-party facilitator to agree on the necessary building repairs that must be completed before the Scouts take occupancy.

2. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

As the Proper Officer although this item has been placed on the agenda, there is not sufficient information provided to enable Councillors to make an informed decision. On this basis the suggested motion has not been added to the agenda and further debate is required.

Council is reminded of the following:

- the legal obligations of their role as corporate landlord are considered
- achieving best value under the s123 of the Local Government Act 1972 and how this is demonstrated
- remaining mindful of legal obligations as an employer

3. COUNCIL DECISION

1. To review the report and suggested approach
2. The Clerk will take further instructions at Council