



## Crail Community Trust

### Report on meetings held to consult users over proposals for the Community Hall

26<sup>th</sup> July and 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2011

**Present (26<sup>th</sup> July):** Dan Clayton (Chair), Ed Stephens (Secretary), Jack Jarvis (Treasurer), Bruce Geddes (The Beacon), Peter Salkeld (Festival Committee), John Mackay (Indoor Bowls), Seonaid Anderson (Monday Club), Iain Robertson (Folk Club), apologies from Tony Kingsbury (Festival Committee).

**(2<sup>nd</sup> August):** Dan Clayton (Chair), Tom Phillips (Fife Council), Ed Stephens (Secretary), Jack Jarvis (Treasurer), Geoff Robinson (Strolling Players), Margaret Robinson (Crail Kirk), Archie Gray (Badminton Club)

### BACKGROUND

An *ad hoc* meeting of the Community Hall users was convened 6<sup>th</sup> July 2011 to discuss the future management of the Community Hall with Tom Phillips of Fife Council. The meeting agreed that wide consultation with all users was necessary before the Community Trust could proceed with a proposal to take more responsibility for the Community Hall. Two meetings were arranged so that each user group would be able to send a representative.

Each meeting was introduced with Dan Clayton outlining the purpose of the consultation. Fife Council was making it attractive for communities to take over their halls and the Trust had been approached with a view to leading a community initiative eventually to take over Crail Community Hall. The meetings with users were aimed at sounding out opinion, particularly the pros and cons of taking on a management lease and, perhaps, eventual ownership of the Community Hall. Also it was important to know the concerns of each user group and to consider how the Hall might be managed if management was transferred from Fife Council. Dan identified three key issues for discussion, namely (1) access & keyholding, (2) cleaning, and (3) marketing & promotion.

At the second meeting Tom Phillips of Fife Council stated that in his view the Council had no intention to close any of the Halls in Crail but a process of restructuring was underway based on usage and building condition surveys. He outlined the benefits of local management (or ownership) in terms of freedom to apply for grants (the Community Hall is a B-listed building), and assured the meeting that Fife Council would assist in exploring all possibilities. Fife Council would hope that at the end of a three-

Crail Community Trust is a Guarantee Company under Company Number SC357039  
Scottish Charity under Charity Number SC040436  
Incorporated 2009

<http://www.crailcommunitytrust.org.uk/>

Registered Office: W.E. Stephens, Kirkmay Farmhouse, Crail FIFE KY10 3XA

year management lease the community of Crail might be in a position to purchase the Community Hall (2% of the Hall's market value was mentioned as a likely purchase price at an earlier meeting). If the community did not wish to take over the Hall at the end of the lease it would remain in Council ownership and would not be closed; but nor would it be high on the Council's priority list for improvements. The process leading to the granting of a management lease requires that a working/steering group be established. This working/steering group would need to demonstrate to Fife Council that the community is eager to manage the Hall and will work collectively towards this end.

## **ISSUES RAISED**

### **Maintaining the Fabric of the Hall and Surrounds**

At the AGM Iain Robertson presented the Trust with copies of recent surveys into the condition of the Community Hall and the Town Hall commissioned by the 2020 group and conducted by Simpson & Brown Architects. The report on the Community Hall identified some problems with the roof and other aspects of the fabric of the building that will require attention in the short to medium term.

At the AGM Jimmy Aird raised the issues of area around the MUGA and the Community Hall and how these may be developed. Felling of trees close to the wall will be necessary (with new trees planted). A plan is required to deal with car parking, road access, changing room facilities, lighting, etc.

Without adequate funds, development to the Hall would be slow but Tom Phillips indicated that such projects are eligible for a range of grants that could not be raised through Fife Council.

### **Hall Improvements**

It was widely agreed that in its present state the Community Hall is not fit for purpose and improvements are required. Seonaid Anderson described how the Hall kitchen facilities were inadequate and it was agreed that improved facilities would make the Hall more attractive for hire. Similarly the heating system is antiquated and inefficient, and installation of a modern system could save money and provide better heating. Lease/ownership will enable us to bid for grants for such improvements from funds such as the Lottery and energy efficiency bodies.

### **Insurance and Responsibilities**

During the period of lease insurance would be based on wind and watertight condition being the responsibility of Fife Council. Everything inside the Hall would be the responsibility of the leaseholder. The leaseholder/owner would take responsibility for disabilities, health and safety issues, although Tom Phillips pointed out that there were many grants to assist with upgrading to meet legislative standards.

The issue of insuring contents and third party liability was debated, and whether this might best be done by the Trust or left to each group to arrange. Tom Phillips advised that a general insurance policy for all activities in the Hall would be desirable, including third party liability. It was suggested that group insurance for all halls and the MUGA be

Crail Community Trust is a Guarantee Company under Company Number SC357039  
Scottish Charity under Charity Number SC040436  
Incorporated 2009

<http://www.crailcommunitytrust.org.uk/>

Registered Office: W.E. Stephens, Kirkmay Farmhouse, Crail FIFE KY10 3XA

explored. It was also suggested that a condition of leasing the Hall would be evidence of the hirer's insurance cover.

Several other issues were identified such as the need for appliances used in the Hall to be PAT tested, costs associated with the Performing Rights Society, storage for users such as the Beacons.

## **Finances, Promotion and Business Development**

During the period of lease there is the possibility of a recurrent annual grant from Fife Council based on a service level agreement.

Rates would not be charged as the Trust is a charity, and it would pay a discounted water rate; however we would be liable for the full cost of electricity. Charges would be set by the Hall Management Group.

It was accepted that long-term financial sustainability of the Hall would be dependent on increased usage and income. There was some discussion of why greater use is not made of the Hall. Peter Salkeld outlined a vision for increasing activities at the Hall, attracting commercial as well as local use. He argued that promoting the Hall and developing the business required a dedicated employee experienced in promoting commercial enterprises, and that such a Hall Manager might begin with a small numbers of hours negotiated with the Hall Management Group, increasing the number of hours in line with successful implementation of the business plan. He also proposed some modifications to the structure of the Hall so that a box office could be created isolated from the main hall. The principle was well received but in the absence of any guaranteed income, investment in such a manager at this juncture becomes very dependent on attracting additional sources of funding. Iain Robertson agreed to look into sources of such funding.

## **Access & Keyholders and Cleaning**

Without a caretaker funded by Fife Council there will have to be an alternative means of accessing the Hall. (Note that the caretaker will be redeployed by Fife Council and will not become redundant as a result of these developments.) A structure of keyholding will need to be devised to facilitate authorised people accessing the Hall at appropriate times while keeping the premises secure.

There will be an ongoing cost of cleaning the Hall. Anecdotal evidence suggests that a minimum of £10/hour needs to be paid to ensure adequate cleaning of the premises.

## **Management/Steering Group and Preparation of a Business Plan**

Tom Phillips responded to a query from Geoff Robinson by stating that the Community Trust was probably the best organisation within Crail to take forward this initiative as it is a charity with Trust status and is recognised by the Inland Revenue which gives it particular advantages in the process.

Tom agreed to provide Dan Clayton with a list of Chairs of Management Groups currently running halls in the region, so that the Trust can seek advice about the management and business sides of the process.

Crail Community Trust is a Guarantee Company under Company Number SC357039  
Scottish Charity under Charity Number SC040436  
Incorporated 2009

<http://www.crailcommunitytrust.org.uk/>

Registered Office: W.E. Stephens, Kirkmay Farmhouse, Crail FIFE KY10 3XA

Tom Philips advised that the next stage normally is to establish a Management/Steering Group (or Committee) and recommended that this consist of Community Trust Trustees and representatives from the different user groups. The Community Trust will initially prepare a vision statement for the Hall including an outline business plan (approximately one page), which the Management Group will then discuss, refine and take forward. Through discussion and negotiation this would gradually congeal into a proposal to Fife Council for lease holding leading to ownership. This business plan should include evidence of wide consultation and support among the user groups, Community Council, and prominent individuals and organisations in the village.

## **SUMMARY OF THE USER CONSULTATIONS**

The key outcome of this consultation was the enthusiastic support for taking a long lease for the Hall with Fife Council with the aim of eventually acquiring ownership of the Hall. While many problems were identified, none appeared insurmountable and with a user-based Management Group taking the project forward with the active support and engagement of all the users and the wider community. No user group expressed the view that the *status quo* was preferable.

The Trust will now work to establish a Management Group drawn mainly from the community of users, and a proposal about the composition of Management Group (by user group) will be appended to the vision statement. The Group will work on preparing Business and Management Plans for discussion with Fife Council officials. In particular the Group will need to focus on access & key holders, cleaning, and increasing income through promotion. It is anticipated that outstanding issues will be clarified over the coming months leading to an offer of a long-term lease. Should the period of lease prove successful the Hall will be taken into community ownership through purchase from Fife Council. However if it appears that the Hall is become an unmanageable liability then progress to ownership will be halted.

The general feeling of these meetings was that there is an opportunity for the village to make a success of the Community Hall through its own efforts, and that this opportunity should be taken.

***Ed Stephens***  
**14/8/2011**