

**Arncliffe Refurbishment, Halewood – Frequently Asked Questions**

**Publication 1 – 21/7/2022**

This document seeks to answer some of the questions we have been asked about Halewood Town Council’s plans to refurbish The Arncliffe Centre. As more questions and comments emerge, the document will be updated:

|  |
| --- |
| What is the refurbishment project? |
| Halewood Town Council intends to undertake a major refurbishment of its main building, the Arncliffe Centre. To progress, the project needs the consent and support of Halewood residents. The Arncliffe Centre is a well-used and much-loved Halewood landmark. It is the place where many residents gather at important times to honour and celebrate, to commemorate, to play sports and improve their health. It’s where we hold our council meetings, host civic guests and provide the services/activities that so many people value.  |

|  |
| --- |
| Why is the project necessary?  |
| The Arncliffe Centre – having opened in 1975 – is showing its age. We also need to make the building more energy efficient, improve its ability to host larger-scale functions and offer a wider range of sports/leisure provision and to serve the growing population of our township. The building is already in vital need of significant upgrades to its heating/energy system, the bar facilities, staff working spaces and rewiring of its electric systems. The council has concluded that it is unwise to spend significant pots of money on such activities within an old, tired building. Better to make a wholesale reform which will include all of the upgrades within – we hope – a high-quality, accessible, sustainable and attractive refurbished building.The council also sees the new building as having potential to increase its income and revenue once the new building is completed. This will help repay loans at a much quicker rate, and assist with council running costs in the long-term. |

|  |
| --- |
| How much will it cost? |
| We estimate the project will cost around £1.4 million pounds. |

|  |
| --- |
| What is the source of funding for the project? |
| Funding for the project will be sought via a government loan. The costs will then be repaid over the next 15-20 years |

|  |
| --- |
| How will the council repay the costs of the loan? Will it have to raise the precept (part of your council tax) on households in Halewood? |
| No, your precept will not be going up to pay for this refurbishment. The council will have to pay the government loan back via a combination of the precept and increases in income. However, the refurbishment would not be funded by an increase in the precept for Halewood households, we have calculated that the increase in precept income from the new house building programme – and the subsequent increase in overall precept income – will be sufficient to pay off the loan over time. Increases in revenue and income via activities at the Arncliffe Centre may then help to pay this loan off more quickly. |

|  |
| --- |
| Aren’t the Town Council aware of the financial hardship faced by many people across society? |
| We are aware of this fact and appreciate it could be deemed the wrong time to undertake such a project. However, the parlous state of the building needs addressing as we have noted. In addition, Halewood Town Council is ambitious for the town of Halewood. Like you, we know it is growing and both its existing and new residents will need new, high-quality services and infrastructure. Despite the challenges, we think this is the time to take those steps and make our contribution to Halewood becoming a vibrant town. We have produced a ‘vision statement’ as part of our Neighbourhood Plan project. This statement tells you the council’s vision for Halewood by 2032. We would like your comments on this statement and, if you have the time, your support and involvement to make it happen. |

|  |
| --- |
| What if the consultation you are undertaking shows that a significant majority of people in Halewood are against the project? |
| If we cannot demonstrate that the project has the ‘consent’ of the people, then it won’t proceed. To secure the loan, the council must demonstrate that the project has the consent of the Halewood public. As previously stated, the project will be funded by a repayment scheme using the council’s precept and income from its activities.  |

|  |
| --- |
| If the project goes ahead, what are the timescales? |
| Our initial project timetable will see construction work commence in February 2023. The project completion date will be October or November 2023. We would hope to reopen in time for Christmas 2023. |

|  |
| --- |
| If it proceeds, would the new centre be different?  |
| Yes. And in ways that will be very apparent to anybody who will visit the refurbished centre. Some of the highlights will include:* A remodelled front of the building aimed at making more attractive, especially for the first-time visitor
* A reception area.
* An onsite café serving the public (our recent partnership with ‘Cleo’s Coffee’ has evidenced that an onsite café should be successful).
* Enhanced function facilities
* Improved community service provision
* Improved conference and meeting facilities
* Improved bar facilities
* Improved parking
* A moderately enlarged building which will be rewired, be energy efficient and utilise more sustainable sources of energy (thus reducing costs over time)
 |

|  |
| --- |
| The kitchen was refurbished just a few years ago, what happens to the funding invested in that? |
| There is an aspiration to have kitchen and café facilities in the refurbished centre. As part of this plan, many of the items purchased for the kitchen scheme will be recycled for use in the newly refurbished building.  |

|  |
| --- |
| If the Arncliffe Centre is closed, where will the Town Council staff go? Where will Town Council meetings be held? |
| The Town Council is fortunate in having Hollies Hall available. This centre will remain open throughout 2023 and become – at least temporarily – the main centre for Halewood Town Council. The majority of staff will be based at the centre and available to deal with residents’ queries. |

|  |
| --- |
| Will the refurbishment impact Junior Football at The Arncliffe Centre? |
| We don’t expect the refurbishment to have any impact on football activities at the centre given it is played outdoors. Given the changing facilities are rarely used these days by football associations (due to safeguarding challenges and the modern nature of junior football), the lack of changing rooms wouldn’t be a significant problem. However, we appreciate some provision must be made for toilet facilities and will work with the persons leading the Halewood-based football associations on solutions to this issue. |

|  |
| --- |
| What if I have more questions about the scheme? |
| This is the purpose of our period of consultation through July and August 2022. You will be able to attend an event in-person, to share your comments with our partners conducting this piece of work on the council’s behalf. The organisation is called “Placed”, look out for information on key dates. There will also be an online survey for people to complete if they cannot attend an event in-person. |

|  |
| --- |
| If it proceeds, will you keep residents updated on progress with the project? |
| Yes. We will aim to send regular updates via the council’s website and social media platforms to advise on progress with the refurbishment.  |