

Hebden Bridge Community Association



NEWS RELEASE

TOWN HALL PLANS GO UP ON DISPLAY

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Proposals for major new community facilities for Hebden Bridge will be unveiled on Saturday February 13th, at an consultation event being held at the Town Hall. Everyone is welcome to pop in between 11am - 1.30pm and a warm welcome will be assured along with homemade cakes and hot drinks.

Hebden Bridge Community Association, the charitable trust which will be operating Hebden Bridge Town Hall for the community from April, is currently engaged in developing a £4m capital build project for land at the rear of the Town Hall site. Potentially the development will give back to the town the major public hall and function room facilities lost when both the Cooperative Hall and the Civic Hall closed their doors, many years ago. The development will also include an enterprise centre designed for small businesses particularly engaged in the creative and digital sectors, as well as secondary rooms and meeting space.

“This is a very major development for the town, which will still be here in fifty and perhaps a hundred years. We have to be sure that the facilities we’re planning are what the town needs. We also have to be sure that the architectural design is absolutely first-class, adding to the beauty of our town and not detracting from

it. We have only one chance to get things right, so maximum public consultation is central to what we're planning," says Association trustee Karen Houghton.

The event on February 13th follows an earlier consultation held on October 7th, and as then the architects Bauman Lyons will be present. Bauman Lyons, an award-winning architectural practice based in Yorkshire, was chosen by the Association for the project after a selection and interviewing process last year.

Central to the proposed plans will be a 200-seater hall, which will have a riverfront location beside the river Hebden. The proposals also include flexible workspace, to be known as Hebden Bridge Creative Quarter, which will be built primarily on land abutting the gable end of the Town Hall, facing the old health centre. A new entrance foyer and atrium will link the facilities together.

An additional advantage of the development plans is that full wheelchair accessibility will be provided to the whole site, including the existing Victorian Town Hall building, through the provision of a new lift.

"We believe that our plans will give our community some of the facilities it is currently really missing. We will aim to complement and not compete with the existing meeting spaces and meeting rooms in the town," Karen adds.

The trustees hope that the new development will be funded partly through a new government fund, CommunityBuilders, and partly through European funds, although there will also be a need to raise significant funds locally. They stress that there is at present no firm guarantee that the funding will be available. However both major funders have already been in detailed discussions, and the Association has recently been awarded £75,000 to develop the full business plan and to commission full architects' plans.

If the two proposed funding bids are successful, planning permission could be sought as early as this Spring, with building work commencing next year. The completed facilities would be available for use from 2012.

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