

## Beatrice Drewe Trust – News and Views September 2023

All Quiet on the Western Front? Perhaps it should be the eastern end of the Lower High Street.

For those of you who have come back from your summer break in the blistering heat to a more temperate climate and hoping to see a magic transformation of the Village Hall – Phase 1, you may be slightly disappointed. However, we are progressing. With a Grade 2 listed building we have had to go through Planning Permission, have visits from the Conservation Officer from Rother, arrange asbestos surveys and draw up some very detailed joinery drawings, details of what can be reused, those which have architectural merit and then replicate, where necessary, those parts that are original. Hence the plans and drawings for the main entrance doors at the top of the steps and the door into the main Hall. These designs are based on the eastern/disabled access doors from the Hall towards the play area.

I know that the Chinese could have probably built a new city with all the associated infrastructure with the time we have been working on this, but it is important we get it right and go through all correct procedures.

Our sincere thanks to Ted Curley who has put an enormous amount of time and effort with the details required by the planners, especially when he is trying to get his own house finished.

However, unlike the old British Rail “We’re getting there” we ARE getting there. For the eagle eyed there are 2 planning notices to the left of the main entrance. One refers to the “Restoration of Entrance Lobby and Bar/Reception Room” and the other for “Demolish of outside brick lavatories and storeroom” so returning some of the building to its former glory.

The Trustees have not been idle during the summer months. We received a long report on ways of achieving Zero Carbon from Rother and KCC backed Laser Energy. Having done a detailed survey on the whole building they have given us some guidance and recommendations on what measures we can look at to lower our energy usage and therefore carbon footprint. Helpfully they included rough costs and payback times. The walls are already very thick – thanks to the original design and any extra insulation there would have a payback of 28 years! Double glazing (where we don’t already have it on the Lounge) 59 years! Perhaps asking everyone to wear an extra jersey may be the cheapest and most cost-efficient way of lower the bills.

However, for Phase 2 we will be looking very closely at installing PV panels on the south facing Lounge flat roof and combining this with an air source heat pump. We would still have to have either gas and more likely an electric immersion heater to raise the water temperature above the normal 40c for the kitchen and wash basins.

When are we starting Phase 1? Assuming we get all the consents and permissions, Neil and his team from NOAHS are lined up for January 2024. We will be quieter bookings wise and the project will take around 6 weeks. It will also give us a bit more time to fine tune the smaller details such as the bar, lighting, colours and floor covering.

Can we afford it? An enormous thanks to all those who have donated to our fund raising and to those who have promised to help. We did apply to the Queen’s Jubilee fund for Village Halls and unfortunately, so did many others. Despite all the work that went into it with spread sheets, supporting comments from the community users and a lot of information on our Phase 1 plans, we

were unsuccessful. However, we have since then had a very productive meeting with a lady from ESCC who has given us various other sources of grants. We are investigating these.

I feel a bit like young Oliver coming up with his bowl in front of Mr and Mrs Bumble. Please Sir, may I have some more?

MORE!

My thanks to all our local and outside the parish users who pay on time and help to balance the books and create a small surplus which goes into the refurbishment fund.

As always, my thanks to John Brooker who makes the whole enterprise run smoothly and to Sheila Jemmett, our secretary and treasurer for keeping me inline. Also, thanks to the other trustees and members of the BDT who, together with the vast majority of the people of Ticehurst, want to see the whole building ready to serve the community for at least the next 121 years.

Peter Reeves

Chairman Beatrice Drewe Trust.