

Refurbishment of Community Hall, North Finchley

Submission to Finchley & Golders Green Area Committee

January 2020

1. BACKGROUND

The Stephens Hall is a community hall owned and administered by Christ Church North Finchley. The Hall is at 620 High Road, in the Woodhouse ward of Barnet. It is specifically dedicated for the use of the local community in North Finchley (rather than just for church use). Each week approximately 150 adults and 160 children, use the Hall facilities including:

- Badminton groups (the majority of players being over the age of 60) use the larger hall, which has badminton court markings and a high roof.
- Dance groups (Scottish, Israeli, classical) use the halls for lessons, appreciating the stage and fitted siderails.
- Teaching groups (Kumon, Pilates, Keep Fit Association) hire the halls, and is sometimes use for small-scale wedding receptions.
- Non-for-profit organisations use the hall for local activities (e.g. for blood donations, British Polio), and the local Brownies troop attend weekly.
- A nursery school (Gainsborough) ran for many years from the Hall, but this discontinued recently due to shortfall of education funding.
- Community activities run by the church including language classes for adult women who are non-English speakers (e.g. Japanese, Pakistani); weekly coffee mornings for elderly people in the community; a weekly playgroup for toddlers, parents and carers; activities for the local Iranian community (e.g. the Nowruz, Shab-e Yalde festivals).
- The church itself uses the Hall on Sundays, running a creche and Bible classes for children, as well hosting a large monthly community lunch which is open to all to attend.

It's expected that community usage would increase significantly were the Hall to be modernised. For example, ~50% of potential users reject the venue specifically due to outdated facilities.

The Hall is not run for profit although it is carefully managed to cover its own expenses (an administrator, cleaning, and utility bills), with any annual surplus having been set aside to go towards this refurbishment programme.

2. DEVELOPMENT PLANS

The Stephens Hall was built in 1938 and by-and-large has received little investment since then. The Hall Committee – under the guidance of the Christ Church church council – has drawn up plans to modernise some of the facilities, specifically:

Toilets

The disabled toilet – currently not fit for purpose – will be expanded and brought into line with regulations; both the women's and men's rooms will be brought up to modern

standards, including increased capacity, accessibility for children, more hygienic flooring, new plumbing to prevent leaks, baby changing units etc.

Kitchen

At present the cooking facilities are limited only for in-house use. For example the current cooker is old, complex to operate and has a small capacity, meaning it can't be used for cooking classes (a common request). The plan is for new facilities to be installed. A new oven and new microwaves will greatly increase the capability and capacity to cook large volumes of food for Hall users; a new industrial dishwasher will make it possible to host more people for meals (currently all washing-up is done by hand); a new heating element will mean address hot water capacity (the current boiler is very small); an upgraded store room will reduce clutter in the kitchen itself, and reduce back-and-forth work for Hall users.

Glazing

The venue is not double glazed, which makes it very cold in winter, to the detriment of the many senior citizens who visit it. The plan is to install secondary glazing in all windows as well as upgrading the thermostat controls so as to deliver a constant temperature in all rooms of the building. This is for both the comfort of the Hall users as well as for environmental reasons.

Some smaller-scale items will also be addressed through the work.

3. PROPOSAL

Detailed plans have been drawn up, and on Monday 20th January the church council will appoint a builder to progress with the work in 2020, at a quoted price of £79,456 including VAT. Whilst money is available to cover much of the work, covering the full amount requires additional funds which are to be raised from both external and internal sources.

It is with this in mind that we are requesting the support of the Finchley & Golders Green Area Committee for the project, specifically whether funds from the Community Investment Levy could be made available. Any contribution is incredibly welcome.

4. CONTACTS

For further information, please contact the project lead Will Hawkes at 07880118934, or will_hawkes@hotmail.com.