

## **Meeting at Reading Room 23<sup>rd</sup> February @10am**

Present: David Bysh, Chartered Surveyor; Councillors: John Rose, James Roberts, Vivienne Blandford;  
clerks: Beccy Macklen and Claudine Feltham

Various options were discussed, led by David Bysh. He emphasized that, under current conditions, a good deal of work had to be undertaken to comply with current fire safety regulations and new exits/entrances and were required with also making the ceiling in the main hall conform to fire safety standards. Other internal alterations needed included remodelling the entrance, lavatories, and kitchen. This would ensure disabled access to the building and toilet facilities made possible by installing two unisex disabled friendly toilets. Making better use of the kitchen space by reducing the overall space giving the opportunity for the potential of inserting a fire exit in a contained corridor, rather than in the kitchen itself.

Also discussed at some length was how to use space in the main hall and whether the stage could be removed or not. Currently it is thought that the understorey is not safe to be used due to the number of props and ephemera stored poorly by the Buxted Players. Whatever work has to be done requires the removal of everything in it and the space better used and shared. The boiler room needs to be made fire safe with a closable fire door and overall safety will possibly require the insertion of another fire exit. Obviously, the discussion here is pre-empting the official assessment but was discussed generally in an attempt to understand what changes may need to be made.

Without further lengthy discussion it was decided to check whether the stage is structural, or as John suggested, a wall that could be lowered and, to that intent, David offered to make a further inspection. A structural engineer may need to be hired to check whether we can remove the stage if that decision is made. Also required is further assessment of the most recent electrical survey to ascertain the condition of the wiring (David will contact the contractor). After having received the Fire Safety Assessment David has volunteered to write a specification of works needed and the way forward with very approximate costs.

The Parish Council will have to decide if they can afford to carry out immediate, and budget for future works, possibly having a five-year plan. Also needed is a clear vision is for the renovated hall which is likely to be small scale providing a clean bright space for small multiuser groups. Whilst the amount that a small hall would be used is difficult to predict it will remain a parish asset and could even be sold on in a better condition than it is now.

The parish council obtained planning permission to demolish the hall and replace it with two semi-detached houses in 2019 it was thought this would make £165000.00 (have not a clue now). It is unlikely that there is the local will to build a new hall, either on the current site or on the Ionides Land. The criticism's would remain now as then, the new hall would not be considerably larger than the current one.