



FOUR MARKS AND ROPLEY SCOUT GROUP

Registered Charity No 302240

New Scout and Community Building – Planning Phase Completed!

I am pleased to report that we finally have the full construction plans for the new Scout and Community Building. It took a bit longer than we hoped, because some of the engineering consultants were late producing their plans and figures. Given the funds, we could seek tenders from suitable construction firms tomorrow – but we are still a bit short (just a million or so!). What we do have now is the Quantity Surveyor's detailed professional cost estimates: so how do they look?

The potential overall cost for the whole project is (pause for deep breath) £1,537,000. It doesn't sound too bad if you say it quickly, does it? However, things aren't quite as dire as they first sound. That figure is the absolute maximum, and its main purpose is for grant applications. Many grants are made as a percentage of what's needed, and 10% of £1.5 million puts more cash in the funds than 10% of £1 million.

So how can we trim that rather large total? Well, for a start, it includes about £187,000 for inflation and contingencies – normal practice in such costings. But with care, most of that cost will never actually arise, so we can prune a large slice off the full amount. The total also includes all the initial costs of planning, architects, surveys and consultants; but we have already paid out about £75,000 on these from our own fundraising, so this is already covered.

Next, the remaining amount covers not only the building itself, but all the surroundings, fixtures and fittings, and equipment. While it is desirable to start out with a fully fitted and equipped building, we could if necessary defer some substantial costs. Tables, chairs, storage racking, PA systems and the like could be obtained later by further fundraising, if we have to. Some £80,000 has been costed for car park surfacing, cycle hoops, landscaping, etc. At a pinch, we could manage for a while with a few hundred pounds worth of hardcore, just as we have now at the old Scout Hut. If we are really pushed, the meeting room divider and fitting out kitchen, stores and office is costed at another £34,000. This leaves a cost of £1,133,000 for the basic building – but that is a fully functioning place, with lighting, heating and ventilation, flooring, toilets etc, plus licensing necessities such as fire alarms and extinguishers.

Yes, that still sounds an awful lot of money – but it's what buildings of this size and specification cost these days. Buildings for public use always cost more, because of all the extra requirements for safety, licensing, etc, over and above what is needed for a house or an office building. Could we cut back on the specifications? Go far enough down that road and we would put up a farm barn with concrete floors and no heating – and nobody would want to use it! We started off by consulting both Scout leaders and a good few other villagers and groups about what was needed, and the current design meets the majority of their requirements. We have also factored in running costs, which with the insulation and advanced heating and ventilation system, will not only be a more comfortable building, but use far less energy. 18% of the Village Hall running cost is gas and electricity; the new building will use far less

of both. In fact, it is being planned to Passivhaus principles, making it both ‘green’ and sustainable.

A few other projects in the area, over the years, have fallen into the trap of cutting back work to match readily available funds, only to find later that people are less than happy with the final result. Our committee have taken a firm decision that we will hold out for the full spec, even if it means a longer period of fundraising and grant chasing before we start to build.

So what now? We have raised £87,000 so far in only 3-4 years, and we continue to work flat out raising still more. We are also now starting the process of looking for funding from a wide variety of organisations and charities. One of the key factors of funding is that many of the bigger grants (such as Lottery funding) operate on the basis of matching what you already have raised. To maximise the advantage of this, we need to raise as much as possible locally – this also demonstrates wide local support, so we are always pleased to accept donations, no matter how large or small. If you can help, with any amount, large or small, please contact Jenny Lake on 01420 562731, or talk to any Scout leader. Who knows? In a year or so time, we hope to be ready to start work – we’ll keep you posted!