

Debden Recreation Ground Trust

c/o Rowney House

Thaxted Road

Debden CB11 3LW

**Lt Col W R MacDonald RE
Station Quartermaster WSSU
Carver Barracks
Wimbish
Saffron Walden
CB10 2YA**

31/01/2017

Dear Colonel MacDonald,

With reference to our recent correspondence, the Recreation Ground Trustees have worked closely with a group of interested village residents headed by Simon Langman, to bring to fruition a new proposal for building a new village hall on the same site as the current one.

A distinguished qualified architect, Peter Purkiss, has produced plans to very high quality specification. The drawings have been presented to the Village Hall trustees and offer a very good alternative to the one proposed by the New Village Hall Group. As the new plan will not require any land exchange there will be no legal impediment to overcome.

The Recreation Ground Trustees have sought advice from a charity law solicitor, the Charity Commission and a number of advisory bodies such as the Essex Playing Fields Association together with ROSPA and the Football Referees Association and concluded that the land exchange would not be in the best interest of the RG Trust and building a new hall across the edge of the recreation ground could lead to serious "safeguarding children" problems. As a result the RG trustees have been advised by their insurance company that to ignore all the advice received would imply maladministration and the trustees would not be insured. Therefore, at present, the new plan proposed by Simon Langman is the only viable project.

Many of the reservations and questions asked by the Village Hall trustees are being addressed by the new group and resolved, the needs of the Village Hall current users are being dealt with and progress is made all the time. Two open meetings for the village are planned for February and we are confident that this new proposal is viable, achievable and will meet the needs of the village and gain the approval of the VHT.

The Recreation Ground Trust joins with the Village Hall Trust in its request for an extension to the timescale of the Community Covenant Grant to allow this new idea, on the current site, to be developed so that all parties and the village have the best possible chance for a new hall.

Yours sincerely

**Elisabeth Blackie
Chairman
Debden Recreation Ground Trust**

Statement by the Debden Parish Council 26th February 2017

We the undersigned being elected members of Debden Parish Council confirm that we fully support the Community Covenant Grant application by the Village Hall Trustees to fund the rebuilding of the village hall on its existing site.

In addition, both the Parish Council and the Recreation Ground Trust are prepared to assist the Village Hall Trustees wherever possible to ensure the viability of Simon Langman's alternative proposal for a new village hall.

Signed

Cllr Roger Forster (Chairman).....

Cllr Andrew Tetlow (Vice-Chairman).....

Cllr Elisabeth Blackie.....

Cllr Stewart Luck.....

Cllr Amie Roper.....

Cllr Alicia Tetlow.....

Cllr Stephanie Watson.....

STEPHANIE WATSON
AUTHORISED BY PHONE

Debden Village Hall Trust

Richard P Cawte, F IDM, FGPT
Chair of Trustees
Debden Village Hall Trust
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27/02/17

Dear Will,

The Debden Village Hall Trust (VHT) has received a proposal from Simon Langman, a village resident, to rebuild the village hall on the present site. The trustees consider this to be a potential way forward, which will overcome the obstacles we have encountered, and would provide a hall to meet the needs of the village. We expect the proposal to have the full support of the Recreation Ground Trust and the Debden Parish Council.

As you would expect, the proposal needs considerable further development before the VHT trustees can be satisfied that it is viable. In particular planning permission has to be obtained and the trustees need to be satisfied that the needs of the current users will be satisfied during rebuilding.

I can confirm that as the present Chairman of the VHT, I and my fellow Trustees are willing to take the lead in trying to bring this to fruition to safeguard the moneys already raised, raise the remaining funds to ensure that the MOD, the residents of Debden and the surrounding area have a memorial hall that everyone can be proud of.

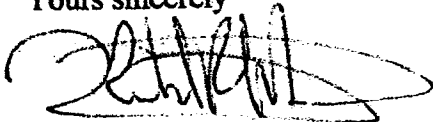
I can also confirm that the MOD CC grant will only be used in the construction phase of the new hall and not for any other purpose i.e. portacabins for the pre-school or post office during rebuilding. We agreed 4 years ago, that no building or demolition work would take place until all the funds to complete this project are in place so that there is no chance of us ending up with nothing.

I would also like to pass on my appreciation to yourself and Capt. Dale for all your hard work, support and patience during this difficult process.

I hope that I have convinced you to recommend the retention of the Community Covenant Grant so that we can build a Memorial Hall we can all be proud of.

Please don't hesitate to contact me on (01799) 543 048 or on e-mail: richard.rpc5@gmail.com if you require any further clarification.

Yours sincerely



Richard P Cawte
Chairman
Debden Village Hall Trust

Debden New Village Hall Group

Lt Col W R MacDonald
Station QM
Carver Barracks
CB10 2VA

26 February 2017

Dear Will

I am writing to explain the position of the New Village Hall Group (NVHG) ahead of your 27th February deadline for a resolution of the new village hall project.

As you will recall, the NVHG was set up four years ago in partnership with the Village Hall Trust (VHT) and the parish council to design a new hall and raise funds to build it. You will also be aware that, when new councillors were elected in 2015 and automatically became trustees of the Recreation Ground (RGT), the project ground to a halt because of the refusal of the newly appointed trustees to allow a land swap to enable the new hall to be built. That impasse has continued despite advice from our charity-specialist lawyers, the Rural Community Council of Essex and pressure from the community.

It is now clear that the majority of RGT trustees will not change their minds and back the plan put forward by the NVHG. In these circumstances, the NVHG members have accepted that the plan they have taken so much time and trouble to develop cannot go ahead

As you are aware, an alternative plan has now been put forward to build a new hall on the original site. This plan is backed by a majority of the RGT trustees. The decision as to whether or not to move this new plan forward rests solely with the VHT trustees. If this plan moves ahead there will be a need for a group similar to the NVHG to carry it forward and, with the VHT, to demonstrate that it is viable and therefore justifies retention of the MoD grant. The alternative plan is at an early stage and while the design is generally regarded as acceptable, there are many issues to be resolved including evidence of a plan to complete fund raising. The VHT are working through these issues with the team who have put forward the alternative scheme.

I recognise the frustration that the delay over the original plan has caused you and your colleagues at Carver Barracks, for which I apologise. It has also caused us embarrassment because of the amazing support you gave us in helping to secure an unprecedented grant.

In summary, while the original NVHG-sponsored scheme cannot proceed, there is now an alternative project that could take its place, subject to confirmation of viability. I appreciate this poses a problem with regard to your deadline but I am sure that Richard Cawte, on behalf of the VHT whose final decision it is, will keep you up to date with progress.

Again, sincere thanks for your continued support, and let us hope that we now have a plan that could come to fruition.

Best regards.

Mike
Mike Fairchild
Chairman, NVHG

PS: This is probably not the most appropriate moment to wish you a happy retirement but I will drop you a note to that effect soonest.