

Pavilion update - June 12th 2009

Francis Rowland & Robin Laidlaw met with Graham Beattie, who has been appointed as 'interim manager' for Parks & Planning, David Sharp – Planning Manager, and David Allister - Parks' Manager to consult on the plans for the Pavilion. A summary of this meeting is below:

- Graham has been to visit the Pavilion and has now reviewed the history and requirements. He started by confirming that he understood the constraints and financial issues, and that he has been tasked with bringing this project to a firm conclusion, with a committed plan and full consultation with the community.
- He also made it very clear that any money raised from the sale of part of the property was entirely to be used in the re-development project. He expressed concern that there might be a shortfall and that it would be difficult to obtain additional funds in the current economic environment.
- We had a very open and frank discussion about the history (including the lack of consultation) and agreed to share all of our thoughts and potential concerns.
- He set out their thoughts, in particular the probable need to split the building vertically and include the space allocated to the 'club room' and above. They have accepted that a café is a high priority.
- We discussed the requirements as we believe they have been expressed to us (The Friends) and representing the needs of the community and as presented at the AGM. In summary: changing rooms, café, public toilets - including disabled and baby changing facilities, community space (possibly a flexible area for extra changing room(s) area, club room and meeting area), covered area to provide shelter for park & playground users, and the possible opportunity to provide for child/youth friendly facility including the possibility of a nursery or play school. We explained that we understand the need to confirm these as true requirements and that some compromise may be needed but that we should explore all of these before any decisions were finalised as we should be taking a long term view.
- Almost all of these were accepted as reasonable requests and we then had a more extensive discussion about the idea of a nursery or playgroup. We suggested that there may be an opportunity to sell the house to a commercial operator of nurseries and that this might raise a similar amount to selling it to a property developer for a 3 bedroom house? This would require a new planning application and space not currently in the plans but they agreed to discuss this and to review whether this could be an option.
- We then shared the plans that had been developed by Veronica Congdon. These are excellent and they too were impressed. We agreed that we are now much closer than both sides had expected, with the main issues being the inclusion of the club room in the house and the alternative use of the 'house' for a nursery or similar. They had already come to a conclusion that a café would require an extension to the building at the park end with outdoor seating area. They liked the outline plan for changing rooms and public toilets (but may want to incorporate these into the café area (for good operational reasons). They accepted the idea of a 'flexible space' that could be used for changing rooms (when there is a demand), cricket pavilion, meetings etc. Also, if this area is moved up to the space adjacent to the café there may also

be some opportunity to share some of the facilities. While all of this is speculative at this stage, there was a high degree of agreement and openness.

- Many thanks to Veronica for preparing the plans and the time spend consulting with members of the committee and others.
- Finally, they presented a detailed pert plan with key activities and milestones. If this is achieved then work will start in June 2010 and could be completed by November!

Community Consultation feedback

We presented the draft plans to visitors at the Activity Day on Sunday June 14th. A summary of the feedback is:

- Certainly all in favour of a 'Café of some sort. Seated patio area very popular.
 - To be financially worthwhile for a café owner, it would probably have to be a destination / potential meeting place, as well as just passing trade. Generally, the feedback was against a 'chain' type café (such as 'Pizza Express' or 'Starbucks'), but ideally something independent / characterful.
- Covered area, with benches, also met with strong support.
- We received no objections regarding the reduced changing area.
- There were several people who expressed an interest in having a nursery or playschool operating from this location. (Apparently there is a real shortage of places in the area). Some concern was expressed about the impact of a 'commercial operation' running on this site and the demands that might be placed on the area? On the subject of residence / nursery, one person expressed a valid point that a residence (occupied at most hours) could help reduce potential vandalism.
- We had mention of the use of Solar Panels on the roof to support the heating & electricity, as well as other 'green' initiatives
- We had positive response to other proposals from The Friends, including the Orchard and improved planting & raised beds.

Other feedback

- LBRuT have ordered some new litter bins and these will be installed as soon after they are delivered
- The council have approved the use of the club room for specified events but it will not be open for the general public at other times.