

An unsigned leaflet was put on every chair at the QC Parish Meeting on 6th December 2018, with the heading: **Take a minute to consider the following points.** We have to assume it was prepared and sanctioned by those calling the meeting and signing the meeting's agenda..

The CLT has considered and gives the following, point by point, responses *in italics* to the statements reproduced in **bold**.

1. To consider borrowing a quarter of a million pounds from public money, which would be a financial millstone!

This is a misleading statement. The loan was always to cover a potential cash-flow situation if grant money was not released in time to meet SCC's purchase timetable. It was originally being sought for the full asking price, however with progress on grant applications this figure is now reduced to less than £70,000, maybe even nil, and as ever will be a bridging loan.

2. Pending grant money will not cover the cost of the loan.

The bridging loan would only be taken if grants had been awarded to cover the loan value.

3. Redevelopment costs will be far higher than the CLT's Business Plan's guesswork!

The scope and costs of any redevelopment schemes would be dictated by the size of grants that are awarded in the future, but this is outside the scope of the current 3 year development plan. It would be helpful and demonstrate community spirit if the calculations done by the contributors to this paper were made available so that the CLT can examine and see if they have omitted important costings.

4. Viability unclear as the Business Plan is incomplete – there are no costs for extensive revenue/repair items; no capital costs for improvements or conversions; lack of information about running costs; no allowance for Public Liability and sinking fund and so on!!

This is not correct. For commercial reasons some of the financial information in the Business Plan is confidential but some refurbishment, e.g. toilet blocks, has been addressed as has public liability cover and there is a contingency figure, obviously not negatively classified as a sinking fund.

5. No mention of VAT @ 20% on all building materials! No building quotes!

The CLT is well aware that VAT is payable on most building projects, except new build. Grants to cover this work will include VAT. However, we have not yet obtained quotations.

6. Each of the school buildings contain Chrysotile (white asbestos) which would need to be removed before any building works can take place. –very costly!!

'Contains asbestos'! With the age and range of buildings on site there is a certainty of some asbestos. The CLT has obtained a detailed asbestos survey from SCC. In respect of any refurbishment, the contractors' would be asked to include cost provision for dealing with any hazardous material and if and when any building work is done by ourselves, we would follow well established industry practices.

7. Architectural – plans are very basic - they show no specifications!

As yet the CLT has not commissioned any plans. Plans will be needed for, for instance, the refurbishment of the toilets

8. The site needs to be lifted by 2 feet – Zone 3 flood plain – i.e. 1-20 chance of flooding –

An interesting and another provocative statement, The CLT will certainly not be lifting the buildings on the site by 2 feet. This may apply to any residential new build but it does not apply to commercial use of existing buildings. The main issue previously was that SCC took no flood protection precautions, not even sandbags.

For planning related matters the Environment Agency categorises the whole of the OSS as Zone 3 / high risk, meaning an annual chance of flooding of greater than 3.3% (once every 33 years). This categorisation precludes any new build residential use. In addition, SSDC, the planning authority, has said that 'conversion of the listed school building to residential use would be inappropriate'. The Environment Agency has stated that they 'would not want any built development to occur within 20m of the main river.'

While local media has reported flooding on '7 occasions in the last 15 years', the school buildings have only actually flooded on three occasions in nearly 40 years (1979, 1998 & 2008). After 1979 there was considerable work to clear obstructions and ease the flow of the river, and after 2008 amongst other remedial work all the electrics in the Victorian and 1920's buildings were raised to a high level. The actual depth of the 2008 flood, in the 1920's building, was less than the height of the skirting (approximately 100 mm) as evidenced by a 2008 photo.

The CLT has reviewed various flood resilience measures, from permanently installed systems (approximately £25,000) down to individual doorway barriers (approximately £350/door). The CLT would seek to implement a scheme combining temporary door/air brick protection, with permanently installed sewerage / drainage protection and barriers across the front school gateways to protect from vehicle wash in the event that the police do not close the road.

9. Where are the interested businesses? Will they pay £12,000 a unit?

This is another provocative statement. From where did the figure of £12,000 per unit come? It is totally incorrect.

Various potential businesses, organisations and individuals expressed an interest in renting space but that was end 2016/early 2017 before the hiatus in progress. The sole purpose of the current survey is to update the earlier information and to clearly identify needs of any sort that the Community Business Enterprise could support and also the need for work spaces.

10. Our own village businesses will suffer!

No. The shop and Post Office should surely benefit from more people coming into the village as could the pub, pottery and Fabric Barn. The CLT is aware of the need to avoid compromising existing businesses and village organisation (e.g. church, hall, playing field), indeed the Business Plan includes the sentence '...our aim is to complement by adding value and not by competing'.

11. What experience and qualifications do board members have to carry out a scheme of this magnitude, to develop and manage the project through to fruition and future commitment?

It has a proven track record of delivering a significant housing project. It had to give virtual personal CVs to the major grant funder. Board members have a range of relevant experience and qualifications between them; and most importantly they, at all stages of the development of this project, had support from qualified professional people and organisations providing expert advice. The Business Plan already identifies the need to bring in further skills and expertise if the project goes ahead.

12. There is a rumoured bid to buy the site at £350,000 with the Somerset County Council – should they sell and use the money to assist their health and education budgets?

The CLT was aware of this rumour but that was in 2016 and we have not heard of this since.

The discount offered by SCC to the CLT was on the basis that in due time we would save them that value of money through the facilities and services that we offered.

13. Do you and your family want to be left with a legacy of failure?

Another facetious question because no one in their right mind would answer yes. It is scare-mongering and actually insulting to infer this would happen if the scheme went ahead.

The CLT has repeatedly said that should the enterprise fail, it is the CLT's assets that would be at risk, only if the Parish Council acted as guarantor to any loans / or works undertaken by the CLT, would there be a risk of a charge on the parish precept.

The 'village' would be no worse off than if the OSS was sold to a developer today.

This is a once in a lifetime opportunity for the village to regain this valuable asset.

Prepared by the CLT's OSS Working Group. 16th December 2018