

Cuckfield Lawn Tennis Club

Refurbishment Plan document for Cuckfield Parish Council

January 2024

Introduction

We are seeking an open discussion with the Council to explain our plans to refurbish our clubhouse and seek the support of the council, particularly to assist and guide us overcoming the challenges we describe here. We would welcome a face to face discussion.

Background

Cuckfield Lawn Tennis Club ('CLTC') was established 103 years ago and currently has 240 playing members, which includes over 60 juniors. The club is managed by a dedicated team of volunteers and we are a registered charity.

The club has three hard courts and provides tennis facilities for the community and club members, from juniors through to seniors and across a whole range of abilities. We try hard to offer as broad a range of tennis as the facilities allow. Subsidised or private coaching including Easter and Summer junior camps are open to everyone. There are member social tennis sessions five times a week bringing together all levels and experience. Our Mens, Ladies and Mixed teams play in the local tennis leagues and host visitors from other local clubs.

We typically offer 30 hours of activities per week open to everyone, for example junior and adult group coaching, adult beginners social tennis and teens casual tennis. In the last year approximately 4,500 hours of tennis were played on the courts.

The clubhouse was originally built by the members around 1970. It is a timber frame on brick pillars without insulation, simply comprising an outer plastic cladding with inner lightweight timber facia. The original structure comprised just the Clubhouse and bar area, with the changing rooms added in the early 2000s. It no longer reflects how we use the facilities, for example, the storage space for our equipment is completely inadequate with the changing rooms and clubhouse both becoming extended storage. There is also no disabled provision which limits the range of opportunities we are able to offer.

Planned Refurbishment

We aim to refurbish the clubhouse by:

- restructuring the internal space,
- updating the kitchen facilities,
- providing access for the disabled including toilet facilities,
- creating additional storage space for our equipment
- adding insulation and a vapour barrier to the external walls and ceilings creating a more comfortable, welcoming interior space
- Fitting an external awning to provide shade during the peak summer season.

We believe that achieving the above aims would transform the usability of the building and encourage more of local community to participate in active sport.

We are not intending to change the external footprint of the clubhouse, excepting there are likely to be changes to the landscaping to accommodate disabled access.

Challenges

We believe there are two primary challenges:

- Obtaining support from within Mid Sussex Council within their leisure, legal and planning teams.
- Obtaining sufficient funds to carry out the work.

With respect to Mid Sussex, they have recently outsourced much of the parks and leisure team and we no longer have any relationship with this team, despite our efforts. We are convinced the refurbishment is supportive of the Mid Sussex Playing Pitch Study dated 2020 although have been unable to obtain any formal confirmation or other comment.

Quote from clause 3.62

“It is a key finding of the Needs Assessment that there is evidence of robust demand for tennis in Mid Sussex, primarily emanating from pro-active clubs, with a significant element of latent demand. There is increasing interest from juniors and from those wanting to improve their game through coaching and opportunities for a better standard of play. Although future population change will have some impact upon demand for outdoor tennis, it is likely that any such increase could be absorbed by improvements to the existing stock of facilities.”

Any application we make for planning or funding would be far stronger if we are able to evidence it is supportive of the local leisure strategy.

The club has limited reserves available to fund the refurbishment, built up since 2017 when the club resurfaced the courts. (The club signed a lease with Mid Sussex Council in 2016 and then spent around £40k resurfacing the courts, which were in a terrible state. At the time, the club obtained grants for about fifty percent of the funding, including from the Cuckfield Mayor’s fund. At the end of 2017, the club reserves were understandably minimal.)

We estimate the overall cost of the work described is approximately one hundred thousand pounds and our current reserves are twenty eight thousand pounds. Hence we need to raise around seventy thousand pounds.

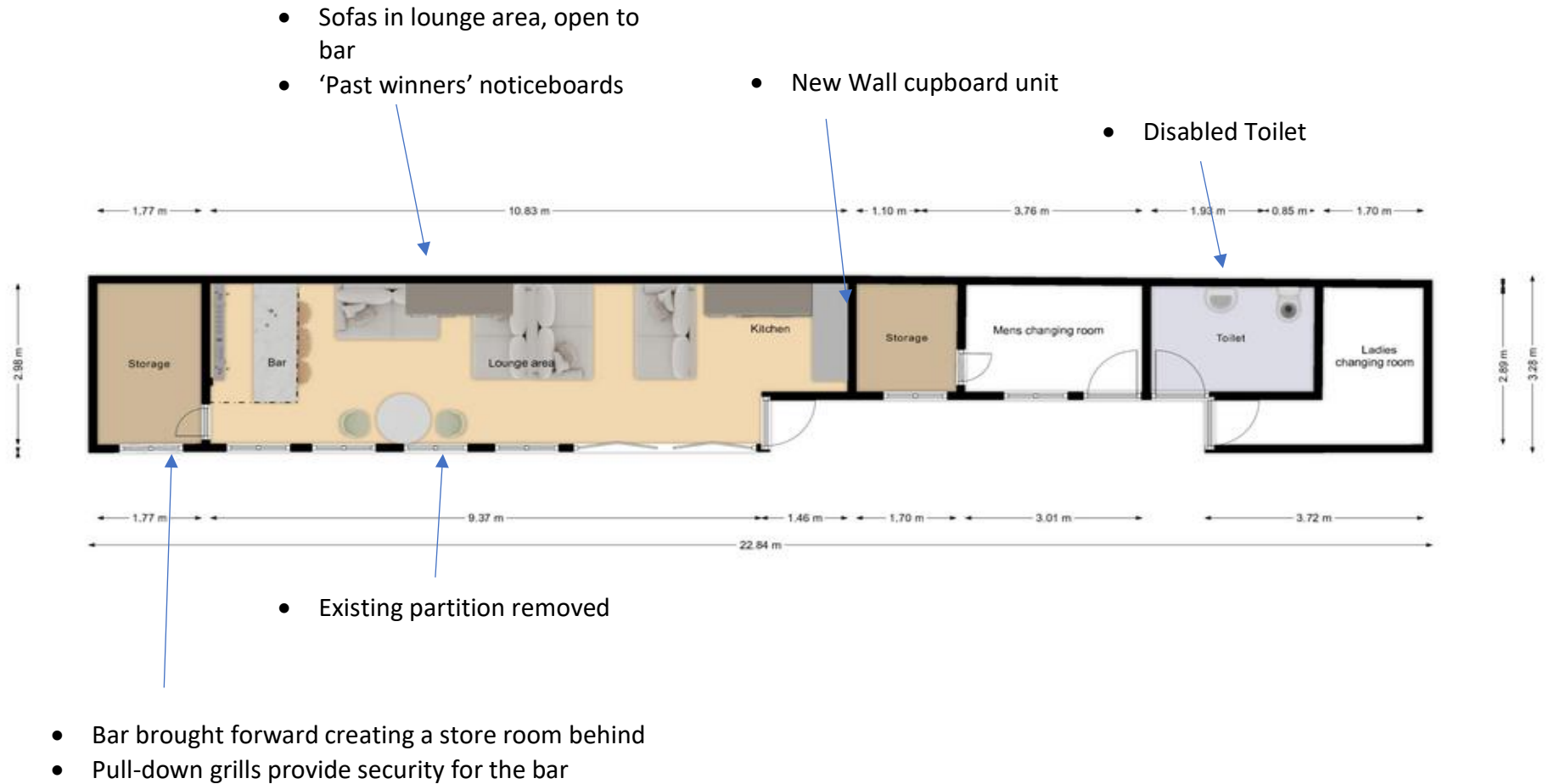
We will seek to obtain grants from a variety of sources, one source being Section 106 funding, which is administered by Mid Sussex Council. We would like to understand how we might influence Mid Sussex to look favourably on our proposed refurbishment beyond the public documentation. For example, do Mid Sussex Council seek the views of Cuckfield Parish Council for local community grants?

Douglas Mower (Chairman)

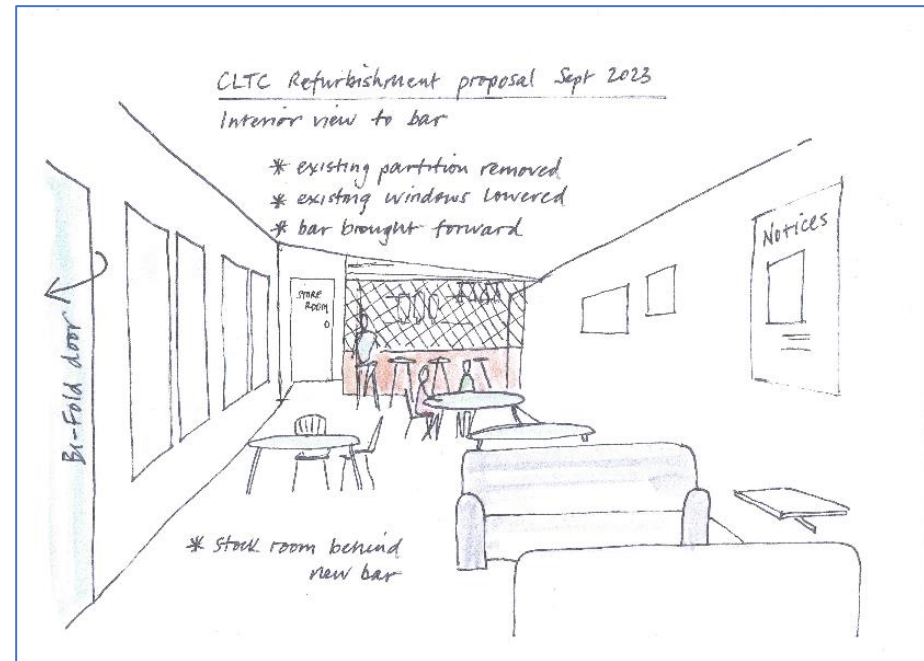
Peter Brinsley (Treasurer)

Appendix 1 – Photos of Proposed Refurbishment

CLTC Clubhouse Refurbishment – Phase 1 Works 2023



Clubhouse Interior views



Appendix 2 – Detailed Plans

Structure and Background

The clubhouse was built by the members around 1970. It is a timber frame on brick pillars. The original structure comprised just the Clubhouse and bar area, with the changing rooms added in the early 2000s.

The walls of the clubhouse are a simple sandwich comprised of the outside white plastic panelling, some fibreglass insulation in the void and the internal wooden panelling. The walls of the changing rooms are similar except that the internal face is plasterboard. What is important from a technical perspective is that there is no vapour control barrier and the insulation is poor.

We commissioned a condition survey of the building by Gould Baxter in January 2022. The conclusion reads: “In general terms, we consider the clubhouse to have been adequately maintained and is generally well preserved in most respects. Inevitably during the course of our inspection, we have identified a number of items of disrepair together with upgrading works which we would recommend be programmed in over the next 5 years as set out in our 5 year maintenance programme

Proposed details of the work?

1. General and safety related

- a. Remove the existing low level tubular heaters throughout which are used for frost protection. There are currently no fixed heaters for space heating. Replace with fixed high level radiant heaters. The heaters to be used for frost and damp protection as well as space heating.
- b. Remove water pipework where it runs in the wall void (which is a frost risk). Replace with insulated pipework at high level inside the building (heat rises and there is less risk of the pipework freezing, but not zero).

2. Open the bar area into the main clubhouse and create a friendly space where members want to stay and have a coffee after a game.

- a. Remove the partition which divides the bar area from the clubhouse and open up the whole space to members. To do this will require the alcohol in the bar to be secured in a different manner (see below).
- b. Build a new storage room at the end of the opened clubhouse where the current bar is located including shelves. The door will open into the clubhouse and be primarily used for storage of bar stock and the two umpires chairs.
- c. Build a new bar forward of the existing. The new bar will be a walk behind bar with a metal pull down grill to secure the area and a locked door. Provide new fridges to fit under the bar. Provide a new bar counter. The rear of the bar to be mirrored with shelves for glasses.
- d. Install new large folding patio doors approximately 3m long adjacent to the existing clubhouse door and replacing the existing smaller broken patio door.
- e. Drop the windows in the existing bar area such that the bottom sill aligns with the windows in the main clubhouse. The windows are different heights, so will not align to the head of the window.
- f. Fit a reflective film to the existing windows to reflect the heat from the sun and help to keep the clubhouse cool during summer.

- g. Remove the wooden cladding to the clubhouse and bar area, fill the void with rigid insulation with a vapour barrier and install a plasterboard surface with a painted finish.
- h. Remove the hardboard ceiling to the clubhouse and bar area, fill the roof void with rigid insulation with a vapour barrier and install a plasterboard surface with a painted finish.
- i. Purchase four sofas with coffee tables.
- j. Replace the existing carpet tiles in the clubhouse.

3. Refresh the kitchen area

- a. The works to the cladding and ceiling referred to in the clubhouse item above also apply here.
- b. Replace the existing kitchen door units. We believe the existing carcass is perfectly serviceable. Some of the shelves will be replaced.
- c. Provide small additional cupboards (to take the “stuff” and club balls off the tables in the clubhouse).
- d. Replace the existing carpet tiles.

4. Significantly increase the storage space

- a. Provide a secure storage room behind the bar. (duplicated with clubhouse item b)
- b. Provide a sizable store room in the space currently occupied by the gents changing room.

5. To refresh the toilets

- a. Provide a unisex disabled toilet.
- b. Provide a unisex standard toilet.

6. Provide an External Awning

- a. Install an awning over the largest section of decking to provide shade during the summer.