

Lindfield Parish Council (LPC) is pleased to note that MSDC have decided to consult on the future of Clair Hall, which is a community facility used by many, from a far wider geographic area than its site within Haywards Heath.

It is important to highlight that there is no other similarly sized facility alongside a public transport hub (e.g., buses and rail) in the locality. However, LPC also recognises that the hall in its current format looks tired, is not particularly well set out or equipped for modern use, fails to capitalise on its location alongside Clair Park and generally falls significantly short of the type of facility that should be available to the residents of Haywards Heath, the surrounding villages, and further across Mid-Sussex.

Accordingly, LPC wholeheartedly endorses Haywards Heath Town Council's response to this consultation and considers that a new, state of the art cultural, arts and community facility must be provided either on the existing site or immediately adjacent to it, if a wider redevelopment of the area is undertaken. It should incorporate theatre, cinema, studio, rehearsal space, exhibition space, meeting, and conference facility, alongside youth and teenage services, supported by good quality food and beverages through café, bar and restaurant facilities. This will require a new, well-designed premises, fully equipped with up-to-date technology, built, and run in a sustainable and environmentally friendly manner.

Recognising that the car is likely to remain a key element of access given the geographic spread of its likely users, appropriate car parking provision with suitable electric charging capability (e.g., both destination and rapid charging) should be incorporated. Indeed, the new facility could help to support the move towards such vehicles and reducing pollution, by including a significant focus on electric vehicle parking.

Further, it is considered critical that the provision of a 'new Clair Hall' is safeguarded by a clear, binding commitment from MSDC to deliver the new facility to a good standard, with at least the facilities outlined above and within a defined timescale from the date of closure, if prior demolition of the existing building is necessary achieve the new community facility for the benefit of the district's residents.

Finally, it is important to recognise that the closure of Clair Hall has negatively impacted many users and restricted their ability to be "*Spending time and connecting with people (which) is important...*" (Source: MSDC Wellbeing). Accordingly, as soon as the facility is no longer required by the NHS as a Covid vaccination centre, it should be re-opened to users on a temporary basis pending delivery of a suitable replacement, as detailed above.