

Report and update for the Newenden Trust.

Though it might seem as though nothing has been occurring throughout the Covid 19 lock down and beyond, nothing could be further from the truth. Our main administrative boost has been the confirmation that Newenden Village Hall has been recognised as a registered charity in the eyes of HMRC. With our charity number in place we are now able to buy goods and services free from VAT . During lock down through March and April there was a six week delay awaiting Ashford Borough Council to ratify the building regulation drawings.

Newenden Trust has been meeting regularly via zoom and in the open air whenever possible and there is movement afoot. Volunteers from the village have placed and hung the gates to the entrance of the new car park and we are grateful for their help saving us some money. The foundations, car park and the steel frame are in place and Heras construction site fencing has been erected in order to deter anyone entering the open area within the frame.

Having successfully secured a grant from KCC towards the cost of the new build we were now able to request a variety of building contractors to offer their tenders to complete the build. For various reasons – not least Covid 19 – many builders have either been too busy to take us on or rejected the opportunity as being too big a job. We were left with just two. One of those two builders would not be able to begin the work until next year. Fortunately a local builder has tendered a quotation for the build as a whole and is able to start fairly soon. However, the cost for the completion of the building is more money than we currently have, even with the grant.

If we opt for a two phased construction process we can secure a building that is both watertight and useable but without the extra amenities and trimmings. As soon as we have raised the rest of the money phase two can begin and the finer aspects of the internal appointments of the hall can be established.

With that in mind we are looking forward to the Newenden Fun Day, where we shall endeavour to raise some much needed funds. We are also hoping to tap into Ashford Borough Council resources, as we are advised that there may well be money available for help with the fixtures and fittings.

The primary role of the Newenden Trustees is to fundraise and find money for the Newenden Village Hall and once the building work begins all our energies will be focused on raising the shortfall. If you have any fundraising suggestions, please contact one of the Trustees (David Richardson, Richard Gould, Ellen Hannavy-Cousen, Alan Seal and Hugh Edmonds (Treasurer)) or Ingrid Nilson, who is kindly co-ordinating our fundraising activities. We will welcome any ideas you may have.

Needless to say we are open to receiving any gifts of money that would support the final stages of building the hall - any amount from a fiver to five thousand pounds would be gratefully received. Please send any donations to the Treasurer – a gift of £40,000 and we would name the hall after you !