

Note of a Newenden Township meeting in St Peter's church at 6.15 pm on 22 March

Present:

Councillor Mr D Rose (chairman)  
Councillor Mrs T Gethin  
Reverend L Hammond Chairman and Trustee of Selmes Trust  
Councillor Mrs K Walder Ashford Borough Councillor

Clerk

Mr J Leeves

There were 48 residents present at various times

### **Apologies for Absence**

1. Apologies were received from Mr and Mrs Neilson, Councillor Mrs L Larkin and Mr V Robertson.

### **Purpose of Meeting**

2. The chairman said that the purpose of the meeting was to provide information particularly financial details, about the construction of the new village hall which was at present only partially complete. She invited Mr D Richardson the former chairman of the Newenden Trust, to explain the construction up to the point where the Janus Foundation had become involved.

### **Newenden Trust involvement in Construction of the new village hall**

3. Mr Richardson circulated a spreadsheet showing income and expenditure. He explained that the Trust had only received two tenders in May 2020, from building contractors and that some who had been contacted, had either not replied or had declined to tender. The two tenders that were received were more expensive than had been expected. Ground works and steel work respectively £47,000 and £23,000. At the same time the Trust had received grant funding of £23,000 from Kent County Council.

4. At this point the Trust decided to divide further construction into two phases. Phase one was for a contract of £100,000 but there was an overrun of almost £8,000. This brought total costs to around £171,000. At this junction it was apparent that there was insufficient funding to complete the project.

5. The Janus Foundation then became involved and offered to fund the project taking over management through Price Whitehead. Price Whitehead authorised payments of £11,000 from the Newenden Trust account for phase two and the Janus Foundation funded a further £8,100 of work. At this point the Newenden Trust stepped back from the project and a liaison committee was established.

### **Involvement of the Selmes Trust**

6. The chairman of the Selmes Trust, the Reverend L Hammond, then took over from Mr Richardson and explained the Trust's involvement. The new village hall was being built on land owned by the

Selmes Trust and therefore a lease needed to be granted to the village hall charity. After consulting valurer's the Trust proposed to grant a 125 year's lease at £500.00 per year.

7. However, as a condition of taking over the completion of the construction of the new village hall the Janus Foundation wanted to take over the management of the Selmes Trust land combining this with the lease of the village hall to produce a single lease. In addition, the Janus Foundation wanted to have car parking facilities on the Selmes Trust land. Whilst a single lease had been agreed in principle and Selmes Trust land had been offered as overflow parking for the Riverside Pavilion as part of this agreement, negotiations broke down after further conditions were insisted upon by the Janus Foundation concerning the constitution of the Selmes Trust. The Selmes Trust had subsequently asked the Parish Council to sort out the way forward.

### **Discussion**

8. It was generally thought that the monies raised from the sale of the old village hall and the grants and donations received had been spent and accounted for correctly. However, it was apparent that there had never been sufficient funds to build a village hall on the scale that had been proposed at the outset. The shortfall was estimated to be of the order of £100,000. The Parish Council would now consider how to take the project forward.