

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**Report by Chief Officer: Supply, Distribution and Property****Infrastructure Regeneration and Economic Development Committee:****7 July 2023**

Subject: Lease of Napier Hall, 312 Dumbarton Road, Old Kilpatrick**1. Purpose**

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to consider the transfer of Napier Hall to a community organisation that will manage the facility for the benefit of the local community in the form of a lease arrangement.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) Approve the lease to Old Kilpatrick Food Parcels on the basis of a 10-year lease at a rental of £10,200 per annum.
- (ii) Authorise the Chief Officer, Supply, Distribution and Property to conclude negotiations.
- (iii) Authorise the Chief Officer, Regulatory and Regeneration to conclude the transaction on such conditions as considered appropriate.

3. Background

- 3.1** In March 2023, as part of savings options put forward to address a £21million budget gap, members agreed to review community facility provision across West Dunbartonshire. The review sought to bring the number to a level more consistent with neighbouring local authorities and to address reduced usage post-pandemic. The £257,000 total savings will be achieved through the reduction in the budget for community facilities managed by West Dunbartonshire Leisure Trust. Transferring responsibility to manage and control community facilities to voluntary organisations through a combination of community asset transfers or community lease arrangements would reduce the costs to West Dunbartonshire Leisure Trust. Napier Hall is one of seven community facilities within scope to deliver savings.
- 3.2** The Council received four notes of interest from local community groups to take on all or part responsibility for the running of the Hall. The groups who expressed interest in securing the long term future of the Napier Hall are:
- Lodge Saint Patrick

- Old Kilpatrick Community Council;
- Community Group; and
- Old Kilpatrick Food Parcels (OKFP).

4. Main Issues

Submissions of Interest

- 4.1 Lodge Saint Patrick** submitted a note of interest whereby they would assume a key holding facility. West Dunbartonshire Leisure Trust would continue to take bookings and retain the income received to assist with running costs which the Trust would remain liable for. The proposal was for block booking users to let themselves in and out of the building. While one-off bookings would be referred to Lodge Saint Patrick who would organise access to and from the Hall. This option was rejected on the basis that it does not deliver savings for the Council as envisaged in the March savings option.
- 4.2 Old Kilpatrick Community Council** placed a note of interest in April for a Community Asset Transfer. Despite requests for further information by Officers of the Council no details were submitted. As a result, no assessment on the veracity of their proposals could be made.
- 4.3 Napier Hall Community Group** is a recently formed group with 23 members, not yet constituted and currently has no office bearers. The group expressed interest in a Community Asset Transfer. It was proposed that there would be an Initial key holding lease for a period of 6 months with a view to pursuing long term lease management with a future option to have outright ownership. WDLT would continue to take bookings and retain the income received to assist with running costs which the Trust would remain liable for. This option was rejected on the basis that it does not deliver savings for the Council as envisaged in the March savings option. Furthermore, this is a newly formed group with no experience of property management and all that is involved. The risk of the building being returned to the Council is considered high. As there is no date for arrangements, any short term potential savings are not achievable. Their proposal did not provide any information with respect to funding and it is considered likely that the group would request funding from the Council for property improvements. This option was rejected on the basis that it does not deliver savings for the Council as envisaged in the March savings option.
- 4.4 Old Kilpatrick Food Parcels (OKFP)** is a well-established group in the community being established since 2020. The group wish to assume a lease of the premises for a period of 10 years. The market rent has been agreed at £10,600 per annum with the organisation being afforded a rent free period to assist with adaptations to the property.
- 4.5 OKFP** is a constituted group and a registered charity (SC050874) with a proven track record within the Old Kilpatrick community. They have been

operating since May 2020, their current headquarters is at 5 Station Road Industrial Estate, Old Kilpatrick. They currently operate a foodbank and the Chatty Café. The café is run as a social enterprise.

- 4.6** The primary purpose of Old Kilpatrick Food Parcels is the prevention and provision of relief from food poverty in the local area of Old Kilpatrick and its environs. In so doing the organisation seeks to advance health in the local area; advance citizenship and the development of the community and helping in the relief of those in need by reason of their age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage. OKFP are supportive of all groups within the community particularly the needs of families and the provision of child care and after school care.
- 4.7** The offer of lease ensures the retention of crucial services within the Old Kilpatrick Community. OKFP will move their existing operation of foodbank and Cafe to the Hall. It is their intention to extend and refurbish the Hall and to refurbish the kitchen facilities to replicate their current facility. They plan to source funding for the provision of a safe children's garden and playground.
- 4.8** OKFP has committed to the continuation of use of the Napier Hall by existing groups and will look to accommodate existing bookings around their use of the property. They also intend to explore further opportunities for new groups to utilise the space.
- 4.9** West Dunbartonshire Leisure Trust have provided OKFP with their Community Facilities Service Charges for room hire and in their own business model they believe this would make the hall sustainable in the long term together with their own operations. They have also confirmed that they would apply a discretionary 25% discount on the current rates to groups who have multiple bookings per month and discuss direct with groups any other requirements or discounts to retain them.
- 4.9** OKFP have confirmed that in relation to use of the building they will only require to use the larger hall once a month for their fundraising social nights and are happy to discuss reconfiguring the room to meet specific user needs and also intend on creating a small kitchen area off the main hall to help facilitate wider uses. This reconfiguration has been looked at and moveable partitions could be used for this purpose.
- 4.10** The offer of lease is subject to agreement of the usual terms and conditions associated with a full repairing lease with a date of entry of 1st August 2023. The lease will contain the same terms and conditions for use as in in the current title deeds.
- 4.11** OKFP wishes to retain the option of a Community Asset Transfer at any time during the period of lease. This fully meets the requirements for a successful community ownership programme and would reduce the risk to West Dunbartonshire Leisure Trust and would deliver the required savings as per the Council decision in March.

5. People Implications

- 5.1 There are no significant people implications other than the resources required by Legal Services to negotiate missives and conclude the transaction.

6. Financial and Procurement Implications

- 6.1 The Council will benefit from an annual rent for the property in the sum of £10,200 per annum.
- 6.2 The Council will no longer incur resources in managing and maintaining the property.
- 6.3 The Council will generate a revenue saving of approximately £43,000 per annum achieved via running costs.
- 6.4 No financial outlays are required by the Council to facilitate this arrangement.
- 6.5 There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

7. Risk Analysis

- 7.1 The lease will be subject to is subject to legal due diligence.

8. Environmental Sustainability

- 8.1 An up to date asbestos report and condition survey has been obtained for the property and passed to the OKFP.

9. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 9.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not applicable for the purpose of this report.

10. Consultation

- 10.1 Consultations have been undertaken with Finance, Regeneration and Regulatory, Greenspace, Citizen Culture & Facilities and West Dunbartonshire Leisure Trust.

11. Strategic Assessment

- 11.1 By agreeing to this proposal the Council will benefit from savings in relation to operating costs and maintenance in line with the budget option approved at Council in March.
- 11.2 The recommendation in this report supports the delivery of the Council Strategic Plan and in particular the achievement of the following priorities:

Our Communities – Resilient and Thriving;
Our Council – Inclusive and Adaptable

Angela Wilson
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Date: 22 June 2023

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Appendices: None

Background Papers: None

Wards Affected: Ward 4