

The Proposed Future of Tomlin Hall, Bickington's Village Hall.

Tomlin Hall was conveyed to Fremington Parish in 1938. The Hall is for the use of the inhabitants of Bickington and people living nearby. It is a registered charity and is a community asset. In its heyday it was well used, however over the last two decades or so it has gone into decline. There are reasons for this. The building itself is tired, and it has been subject to rumours of closure. There has been no plan to close the Hall permanently, but closure for several months has been an implication of past renovation proposals. To some extent this has inhibited the activity of the Hall. Nonetheless it remains financially viable in day-to-day terms. The venue serves ten regular clients, accommodates occasional events such as children's parties, and functions as the local polling station. Management and maintenance, the voluntary engine that runs the hall is down to a core of three people. The focus of this group has been the development of a new Hall. Functions such as fundraising, marketing, community consultation, revising the archaic governing document, and improving communication are waiting on fresh energy in the community. It is hoped that a new Hall will help to promote community engagement.

The proposal is that the present hall be demolished and replaced by an L-shape building with two major spaces. This will increase the capacity of the Hall. At present requests are turned down because popular times are already in use. The "two halls" solution will also allow an appropriate separation of activities (e.g. dog training vs Pilates). Importantly the "two halls solution will allow the use of the hall to continue with minimal disruption. The old hall will not be demolished until one of the two new halls is built. This development will take place on the site of the current Hall and carpark. It will be consistent with the requirements of the local conservation area. Architects drawings are being drawn up and, when agreed, planning permission will be applied for (a recent renovation project had planning permission, but had to be abandoned for structural and financial reasons.). Finance, in the form of s106 monies is in place.

If this raises questions for you please contact me on
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