

Norton Community Trust

Newsletter No 10

May 2022

Hello everyone - Things have been moving along nicely with the project to adapt the former Norton church building since our last newsletter. There is lots to tell you, so this is quite a long newsletter, but we hope you'll be keen to know what's been happening.

Firstly, a big thanks to everyone who took the time to complete and return the community-wide questionnaire at the beginning of this month. We had 88 forms returned which represents 34% of the households in Norton. This is a very satisfactory result for surveys of this kind. It gives us the information we need to include in funding applications, and the steer we need when starting to plan how the adapted building will be used.

Key facts include:

- ❖ Most respondents enjoy living in Norton! Of particular value is a sense of well-being and how well-kept (at least in parts) the village is.
- ❖ The lack of any base for social activities for adults and children was repeatedly commented upon, and an associated lack of community spirit.
- ❖ Respondents noted that the village is poorly served by public transport.
- ❖ Respondents had lots of ideas for how the hub will benefit the community.

It is of course intended that the community hub will help to address these issues, and it was no surprise to find that what respondents wanted most in the hub were the opportunities to socialise with other members of the community particularly through a village shop and café and a variety of clubs and groups.

We were particularly pleased to see so many interesting ideas put forward for the sort of activities the hub could host, and what sort of facilities the hub will need to provide in order to be a success. We are keen to set up a small group to work specifically on this, and we really hope we can engage some of you in that. If you'd like to volunteer to help with this, please do get in touch - you can register your interest using the "Volunteering" button on the website, or you can email us - details are in the yellow panel at the bottom of this newsletter.

We plan to repeat these consultations so that we can keep up to date with the ideas and views of the community. Meanwhile, this consultation has given us lots of evidence that we can include in funding bids to show what the needs of our community are. It also gave us the opportunity to invite residents to become a Patron of the Norton Community Trust. We had a great response to that, which also gives us key evidence of support to back up our funding bids. If you would like more information about becoming a patron (key facts: no cost, no obligation!) please do have a look at our website, or get in touch.

As well as all that, the steering group has been hard at work on the project planning. The various surveys and method studies required by Powys County Council as part of the planning approval process have been completed and submitted - these range from biodiversity and environmental surveys to method studies on the removal and reuse of pews and the font. And detailed build specifications have also been completed and submitted to Building Control. Once all of this has been accepted by Powys, we will be able to get started on selecting an appropriate contractor to get the renovation work on the former church under way.

We took great pleasure last month in signing the 30 year lease for the former church building! This is a great step forward, enabling the community to take control of the building in the very near future.

And as if all that's not enough , our funding sub-group has embarked on preparatory work to prepare a bid to the National Lottery Community Fund for a grant of £75,000. This is a big piece of work, and we're so grateful to our funding group members for the hard work they are doing on this, as well as on other smaller grants that are in the pipeline.

Finally, a reminder about the family fun events in the village over the Bank Holiday long weekend 2 - 5 June to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. All the details are on the hub website and local notice boards. We hope to see you there, and we'd love to chat with you about the project so don't be shy, just ask!

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Website: www.nortonhub.uk

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The Norton Community Hub project is managed by the Presteigne and Norton Community Trust, a registered charity No: 1195888. It is supported by funding from the Architectural Heritage fund, the Presteigne and Norton Town Council, the Church in Wales and the Norton community.

