

MUCH Chair's Report for the year 2022 / 23

Last year I reported that, as the estimated building cost had become fully funded (from Section 106 moneys, a large Welsh Government economic stimulus grant and a contribution from the Lottery), the project could in theory commence. Monmouthshire County Council had contracted Kier Construction and preliminary surveys and associated works had started and, providing MCC cabinet gave approval, (which would be based on final cost estimates and MUCH's revised business plan), the building could be completed by early 2023.

In the event, the final cost estimate was higher than the original due to post-pandemic supply shortages etc., which necessitated additional funding to be sought from the original sources. This was successful and on 27th July 2023 MCC gave approval for construction to commence, having a total project budget of £2.9m, with building expected to start in the following September. It also gave approval for MUCH to take on the lease for the building when complete, with an estimated market rent of £10,322 per annum (which would be eligible for rental grant) and for the first 2 years rent-free.

A joint project group has been established, including representatives from Kier, MCC and MUCH, to work on the fine detail of the building design and to ensure good community relations as the building work got underway. After a short delay, due to the translocation of the resident slow worms, the building work started in October and continues to plan, with MUCH representatives attending the site on a fortnightly basis to gain a full understanding of the fabric of the building and its operation.

As the building work progresses, MUCH trustees have been preparing for opening with the help of a growing band of volunteers. Activities have included –

- Highlighting progress to the Magor and Undy residents by regular website updates and holding a winter Wassailing event at the site's ancient orchard (which is maintained by MUCH volunteers)
- Continuing to work closely with The Living Levels project, who have provided help and advice with regard to the orchard.
- Securing and storing redundant quality equipment and furniture for the Hub that has been kindly donated by one of our Trustees (Linda Squire), The Highmoor Group (Properties and Facilities Maintenance) and South Glamorgan College.
- Preparing for equipping, operating and staffing the building, including security and access arrangements
- Policy updating and development.
- Developing a new, bilingual, website that will include an online room booking and payments system.
- Collecting names of local people who are interested in starting and running groups and classes at the Hub when it opens.

It has been a year of great progress, that has seen the building starting to take shape with completion expected by August and residents becoming increasingly interested and excited with the prospect of The Hub opening in September.

I continue to be proud to have been part of the group of trustees that has brought the project to the brink of completion and am sure, with the continuing support of the community, The Hub will very shortly become a well-used and valued feature of our local community.

Paul Turner (MUCH Trustee and Chair of Group)

MUCH 2022/23 Account

Opening Balance 01/04/22 **£15,965.53**

Income

Amazon Smile Donations £31.53

Wassailing Ticket Sales £87.00

Magor and Undy Town Council grant £5000.00

Total £5118.53

Expenditure

BHIB insurance £183.00

RDP Law – Legal fees for Hub £1508.53

Magor Frost Fayre stall £40.00

COVID bench matting etc. £80.71

Poppy wreath £25.00

Wassail Cider purchase £250.95

Total £2087.99

Year End 31/3/23

Closing Bank Balance £18,996.07

Petty Cash £30.00

Total £19,026.07

Prepared by
Kevin Wright
Treasurer