

Lorton Parish Council and Yew Tree Hall Management Committee
Yew Tree Hall Development Group
Minutes of a Meeting on 27th February 2025
Held at Rachael Edmunds House

1 Present

1.1 **Committee Members:** Adam Baker (AB); Peter Deeks (PD); Derek Poate (DP); Cathy Lee (CL); Steve Irlam (SI); Rachael Edmunds (RE).

2 Apologies

2.1 None

3 Previous minutes

- 3.1 The minutes of the meeting of 16^h January 2025 were approved.
- 3.2 Actions were reviewed under the agenda items.

4 Progress update

4.1 Technical appointments

4.1.1 Yew Tree Hall Management Committee has appointed a quantity surveyor and M&E consultant to their design team. A bat surveyor is still to be identified. **Action All**

4.2 Early design observations

4.2.1 Preliminary calculations by WKD suggest it would be possible to use a ramp for accessible entrance via the NE wall, with the way in from the road likely to be close to the current garden gate. Flood risk data rule out installing a new external fire escape to the rear at the SW end of the building.

4.3 Storage requirements

4.3.1 Creative thinking is needed to find a way to improve storage and minimise loss of space in the main hall. Simple options are: to remove the staircase to the gents' toilets and create a wider access door; and, to create a storage area around the current fire exit. More elaborate solutions such as expanding the gent's staircase area at hall floor level, or making more use of the cellar by means of a lift need further exploration. **Action All, WKD**

5 Project timetable and Gantt Chart.

- 5.1 CL circulated an updated Gantt chart. Key dates are for WKD to join the next DevGroup meeting tentatively on 19th March to present work to date. Costings would take a further 4 weeks. A tentative date of 21st May was mooted for a public drop in event between 4-7pm. The aim would be to circulate key design aspects in advance, possibly by direct leaflet drop in the community. **Action WKD and DevGroup**
- 5.2 Following community feedback the hope would be for a preferred scheme to be ready by mid-June with planning permission application prepared 2 to 3 weeks later.

6 FOYTH – YTH Friends

6.1 AB reported on FOYTH, henceforth to be referred to as Yew Tree Hall Friends. Publicity in The Link and coffee mornings on 8th February plus an excellent pick-up by the BBC has

resulted in a number of Gift Aid forms being submitted and some regular contributions. Donations totaling £25,000 have been raised or committed so far. AB said the hall management committee will be asked to clearly designate all fund-raising events for the foreseeable future to be earmarked for the development work. **Action AB**

7 Heat pumps

- 7.1.1 A consultant from Greenfields, Penrith, is scheduled to visit the hall on 31st March to look into possible water source and air source solutions following an invitation from Aine Kelly . A site visit will be followed by a presentation to the community in the hall at 19.30. **Action Group members**

8 Jennings brewery

- 8.1.1 CL has made contact with the new owners of the Jennings Brewery site in Cockermouth. They have expressed interest in collaboration with the YTH as they too will be looking for a Heritage Lottery bid and want to build on the historical links in Lorton. **Action CL**

9 Publicity and ongoing community engagement

9.1 Link Article

- 9.1.1 There were articles in the Link in February and a further article will be included in the March Link **Action AB & CL**
- 9.1.2 AB reported that several local newspapers, including the Keswick Reminder, had released articles on the project.

10 Ownership issues

- 10.1 AB reported feedback from solicitors Minihan McAlister. They considered three possible courses of action to register the hall and the land identified for adverse possession. Their recommended approach which the group agreed to pursue is to submit the application to register the hall and gardens to the Official Custodian and make a parallel but separate application in the name of two to four trustees (holding on trust for the Charity) to register the adverse possession land. Once the adverse possession land is registered an application can then be made to vest the land in the Official Custodian. **Action AB, PD, DP**

11 Next meeting

- 11.1 Monday 24th March, 6.00pm at the Yew Tree Hall. Everyone thanked Rachael for accommodating the group. **Action All**