

Winscombe Community Association (‘WCA’)

**New Community Centre Business Plan:
Winscombe New Space: ‘WiNSpace’ Project**



Our Vision

For our villages to have new and refurbished facilities in the heart of our local community, to enable people to come together for health, education, fitness, volunteering, social well-being, and fun.



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1 Executive Summary

This is an exciting time for the Parish of Winscombe & Sandford as we look to create an improved and enlarged community hub. There is an urgent need for this to enable both existing activities to continue and to provide modern facilities for an expanding Parish. Much of the existing facilities are in their last few years of life, having served the community well for over 40 years; action is needed now to replace them. We have drafted this business plan to provide you with details on who we are, what we are planning and importantly how we envisage it being funded both now and ongoing.

What is it?

- A once in a 100 year project to establish a new Centre designed to provide a focal point and inspiration for the community and surrounding villages, for generations.
- A visually stunning centre built with eco credentials and connecting with its surroundings; the historic Strawberry Line cycleway and Millennium Green; a standout modern venue to be proud of.
- A Centre that will encourage visitors to the Parish, supporting trade to local businesses and providing space for an already thriving community to come together.

What difference will it make?

New activities that have not been possible before can happen. Those already taking place can move forward confident that there is space, and with better access and modern facilities for all.

- Much improved youth provision with a robust space designed specifically for the younger generations, and arts
- A 200+ seating space for parish events, drama, music, fitness and conferences with a bright exhibition entrance space for the arts, sales, or special interest events
- Space for a thriving weekly market, with easy access for the disabled and pushchairs, and areas for socialising and for young children to play.
- A sought after venue for weddings and celebrations, with a professional kitchen
- Enhanced spaces meeting the demand for exercise, craft, singing and health and well being, all in one centre.

Next steps

We have professional support through our architects and surveyors and have to date of this document identified just under 30% of the estimated £2.2m cost for the project.

Following a pre-application process, we are preparing for full planning application which we envisage obtaining during 2021. During this period we are also working to identify the next 50% of our funding and are seeking commitments “in principle” from major funders. We hope you will be interested in supporting us and would welcome an early discussion.

Please contact us if you can help , our plans depend on your support.

Contents are shown below. There is a separate Appendices book that supplements this document.

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2 Background

The Parish of Winscombe and Sandford covers approximately six square miles on the western edge of the Mendip Hills in North Somerset. It has a population of 4,546 in 1916 households^{1A}. It is a rural community, with Winscombe designated a service village by North Somerset Council, and the Parish incorporating 5 villages plus several hamlets.

Winscombe Community Association ('WCA') was established in 1979 as a Charitable Trust (Charity No. 280231). In 2020 a new incorporated charity (CIO) of the same name was established (Charity Number 1186290) to create a more robust legal structure to support development plans. The legal process of transfer is currently in progress.

The purpose of the WCA, taken from our constitution is:

To further or benefit the residents of The Parish of Winscombe and Sandford and the neighbourhood, without distinction of sex, sexual orientation, race or of political, religious or other opinions by associating together the said residents and the local authorities, voluntary and other organisations in a common effort to advance education and to provide facilities in the interest of social welfare for recreation and leisure time occupation with the objective of improving the conditions of life for the residents

The demographics and socio- economic breakdown of the Parish are included in the Appendices (see separate booklet). The WCA are particularly keen to support

- The elderly, many of whom need support to combat loneliness and improve health and well-being
- Families with pre-school children where stress caused by limited time and financial pressures and social isolation, can be an issue
- Young people where there is a need for a safe meeting place, outside of a formal sports club or more organised youth organisations.
- Cross –community activities that improve the social cohesion of the Parish
- Educational and cultural activities for all ages that encourage lifelong learning
- Fitness for the health and resilience of the local community
- Art and creative activities with the existing building being repurposed with a focus on youth and the arts
- Local Business, with spaces suitable for conferences and meetings

¹ Winscombe and Sandford Parish Council web site

^{1A} Census 2011



Since 1979 the WCA has managed; a former local authority school building, four outbuildings (including garage), plus the former headmaster house and surrounding land, as facilities for the community. Until 1994 the land and buildings were owned by the local Council and leased to the Parish Council. In 1994 the land and properties were acquired by the WCA with the support of the Parish Council and community. Membership of the WCA is open to all adult's resident in the Parish.

Just over 6 years ago, the WiNSpace project was started with a remit to ensure the WCA was able to provide facilities to support the community longer term. The WiNSpace team has responsibility to drive the project forward and includes representatives from both the WCA Trustees and wider community. The WCA Trustees remain responsible for all assets and non-delegated decisions.

The WiNSpace committee includes professionals and retired people with relevant experience including; retired architect, engineer and actuary; and senior civil servant. The Trustee Board also includes a variety of working and retired professionals including a practicing solicitor.

The purpose of this Business Plan is to provide a summary of our ambitions and how we envisage they will be achieved. It is anticipated it will be provided to third parties to support application for grants and other fundraising activities. Given the nature of the project and long history of use of the current WCA facilities, the Business Plan ignores the hopefully, temporary disruption caused by the current Covid-19 epidemic. We recognise that this will likely present further challenge to raising the necessary funding for the project but that equally it further highlights the needs of the community for sustainable and local facilities.

3 Need for development and support of the Community

3.1 A growing community.

Significant housing development in the Parish and surrounding villages is expected to put further strain on the already heavily used WCA facilities. Since the 2010 census for the Parish, there are c.500 (25% increase on 2010) new homes currently either under construction, within the planning process, or built. Similar growth is also being seen in the surrounding neighbourhoods whose populations also use Winscombe as a designated service village.

3.2 Need for bigger and better.

At peak times (evenings) the current facilities are over or close to capacity with new bookings being turned down. In part this is due to the facilities we have not being fit for purpose with bookings concentrated into two or three key spaces. This is already restricting activities for the local community. An example week booking (pre-covid) is given in the Appendices.

The existing facilities comprise 6 separate buildings including garage; three of which are by their construction only temporary buildings, and are well beyond their normal expected life, with probably only a few years left of remaining usage. None were designed for their current use and whilst well looked after are not of the size and layout that would be expected of modern community facilities, details are given in the Appendices.

This places a restriction on the use of the buildings with for example large functions, drama or small concerts not being able to be held in the buildings. Many of the activities that take place are also at or near maximum group sizes for the space available with no capacity for further demand. For others, the practical implications of restricted space mean it is very difficult for those with limited mobility or with pushchairs to access them, despite ramps etc being provided.

3.3 Local facilities

The Parish is fortunate to have a number of community halls across both Winscombe and Sandford, albeit as with the WCA these are all old buildings; details are given on the map in the Appendices. WiNSpace have discussed the proposed plans for expansion of the WCA with representatives of all the community halls, and they were unanimous in their support for this project. Importantly none of these existing spaces have a large multi-purpose hall-eg.18m x10m,(such as recommended for the design of a standard modern village hall : “Sports England” design guidance). In consultations

across community groups, the need for such a space to enable activities such as large dinner/dance, wedding reception, drama productions, art exhibitions etc was consistently raised as the greatest community need.

The rural location of the Parish means that transport is needed to access facilities further afield, as roads are not paved for walking. The Parish is served by 2 public bus routes, with infrequent (half hourly or less) services which can be viewed as slow between key locations, expensive and difficult to access, particularly for families. Car transport can also be difficult to access for the more vulnerable in the community, including the elderly meaning that as a rural community there is a greater reliance on local facilities. We also believe the provision of local facilities is important in terms of local social cohesion and environmental sustainability.

3.4 Community Support

The WCA has been well supported for over 40 years and has a strong track record of community fundraising and activism. There is strong governance with a Trustee Board of 11, and a separate fundraising committee of over 20. In addition separate groups who fundraise for specific events, bring the total number of volunteers to over 50. Booking income and community fundraising has enabled the WCA to purchase the existing buildings and land as well as successfully run the facilities over this period.

There has been Parish wide communication and consultation of the development plans, that has included (to end Nov 2020):

- Two Parish led wider surveys (2010 and 2018)
- Open meetings
- Outreach to other community space providers in the Parish
- Consultation with representatives of numerous interest groups
- Individual liaison with immediate neighbours to the centre
- Regular liaison with the Parish council and local Councillors
- Consultation with existing users and potential new users
- Information stalls at local events

Overwhelmingly support has been positive, with results of the 2 formal surveys included in the Appendices.

The WCA funds, largely from community giving are at over £100,000 and our funding plan includes a further assumed £200,000 from community giving.

4 The Vision

For our villages to have new and refurbished facilities in the heart of our local community, to enable people to come together for health, education, fitness, volunteering, social well-being, and fun.

4.1 Design

We have appointed B2 Architects to design the new build and take us through to planning. Our initial thoughts were to develop one new building to replace the outbuildings and sell off the old schoolbuildings. Following a pre-planning application we have decided that the new community hub will comprise two buildings, with a new centre replacing the three current outbuildings and the old existing former school hall being refurbished and modified. Both buildings will be joined by an attractive open air walkway and outdoor meeting spaces. We believe this design is cost effective, recognises the hertitage/local interest value of the old school and is less obtrusive for neighbours and the environment. See below (figure 1) for an artists impression. The former headmaster house and garage will be sold for alternate use.



Figure 1:- Artist Impression of the approach to the New Building
(see section 9 for additional views and layouts)

The new design will be both inspiring and welcoming giving the community modern facilities that they deserve and expect. The refurbishment of the old building will be focused on creating a more robust internal space for youth and the arts. In designing the new build the architects have been asked to ensure it is sustainable to last 100 + years and we have rejected any cheaper temporary build alternative.

In addition the WCA recognise their responsibility to the environment and look to take positive actions to improve it. Our objective is to achieve this through:

- An eco –building that will be cost effective to run and harness where practical, modern technology and materials to reduce the impact on the environment
- Encourage ‘local’ by enabling local market trading eg through weekly produce market (as currently)
- Promote cycling and walking – the centre is adjacent to a cycle way and nature reserve formed from a disused railway (Strawberry Line & Millennium Green)
- Reduce the need for traveling by holding events to provide specialist support to the community – eg ‘craft’ day or ‘support in your home day’
- Encourage recycling – through education events
- Improve the surrounding grounds to the centre (currently a green field used primarily by dog walkers) for greater access by all such as ‘toddler’ area and sensory garden

4.2 Future Proofing

The overall footprint of the new community hub will be broadly similar to the combined area of the existing buildings, but the layout, facilities and design will mean much greater utilisation of the spaces can be achieved. Future proofing is also built in with room for expansion into the roof void (made development friendly) of the new building, should it be needed in the future. Alternatively, should usage be less than anticipated for any reason, the old refurbished hall could be re-imagined for example for local therapy, or business rooms.

The Appendices include an example booking for a typical week, allowing for both existing users and assumed new users. We have discussed plans with potential new users such as badminton and theatre groups who have provided input into the design.

Our research suggests that the new hub will be sufficient for both existing and new users and importantly the quality of the spaces will also be much improved allowing for greater access and a wider range of activities.

We think the Parish of Winscombe & Sandford is a special place to live, a real community. We want to create a space that supports and nurtures this for generations to come.

- A hub of life and activity for everyone
- A modern venue
- A facility serving all age ranges
- A venue well connected to other community assets
- A space that the whole community can use and take pride in

5 Project Plan

The below (figures 2&3) set out a high-level timetable for the project and milestones achieved. It was launched in 2014 and we are now at stage 5. The key actions at stage 5 are taking the design through to full planning approval and identifying our major funding partners. Figure 4 (overleaf) sets out the steps to open the Centre in 2023, on a best case scenario.

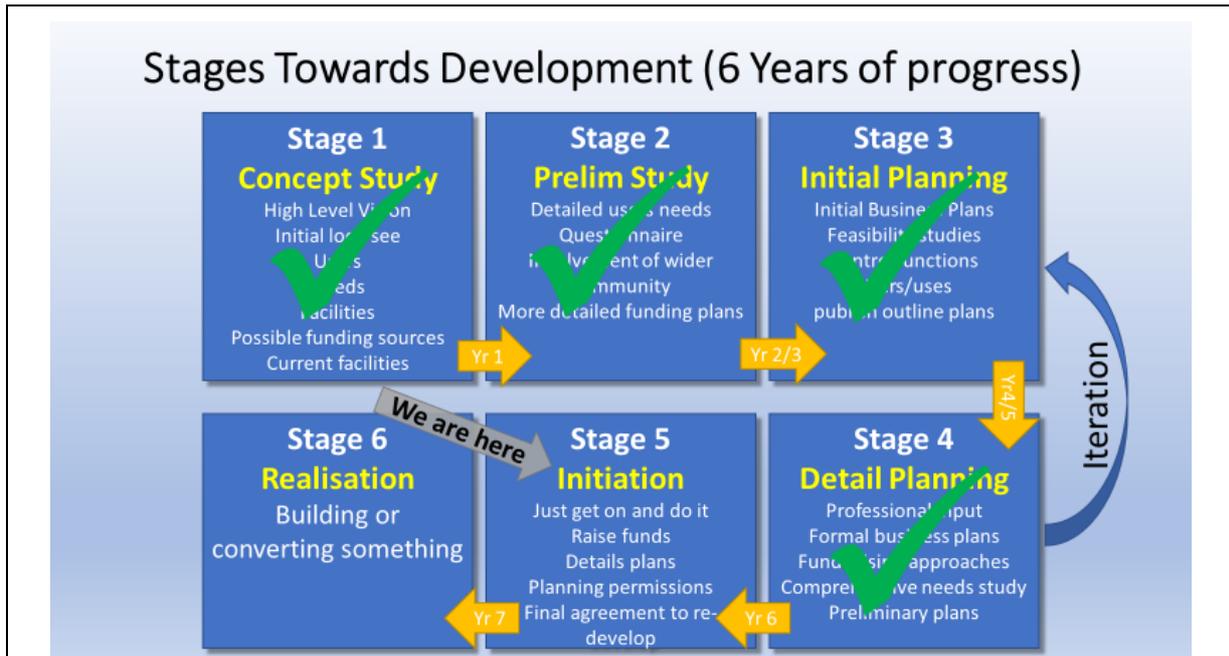


Figure 2:- High level Project Plan -

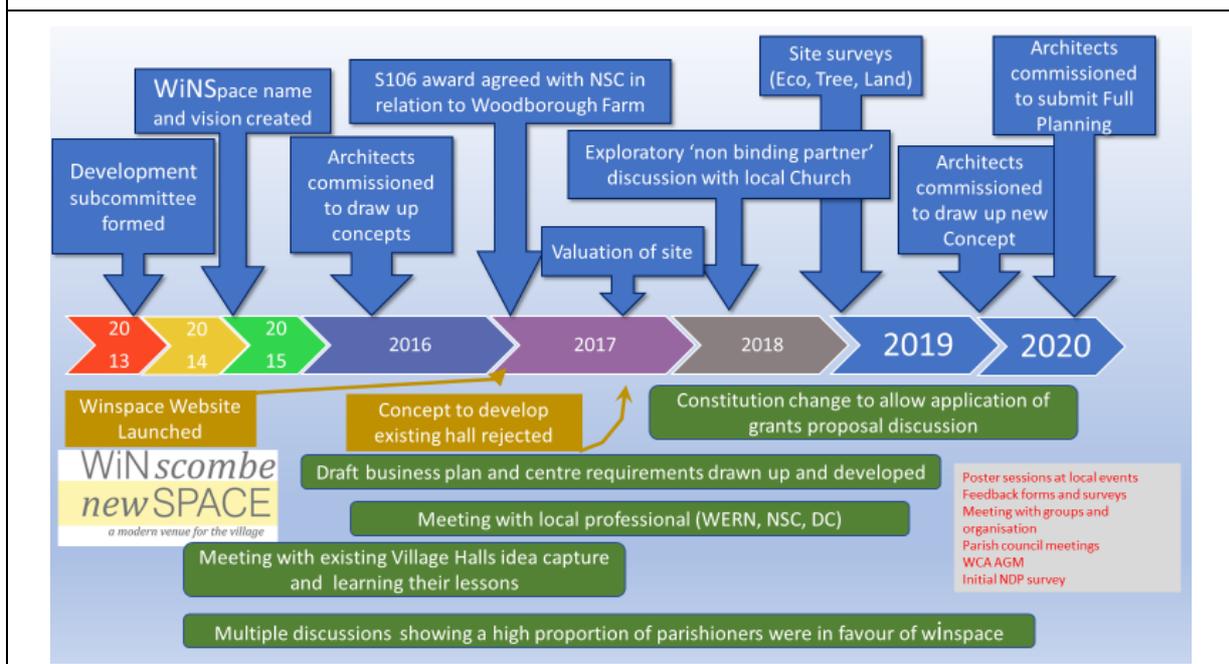


Figure 3:- Key milestones to date

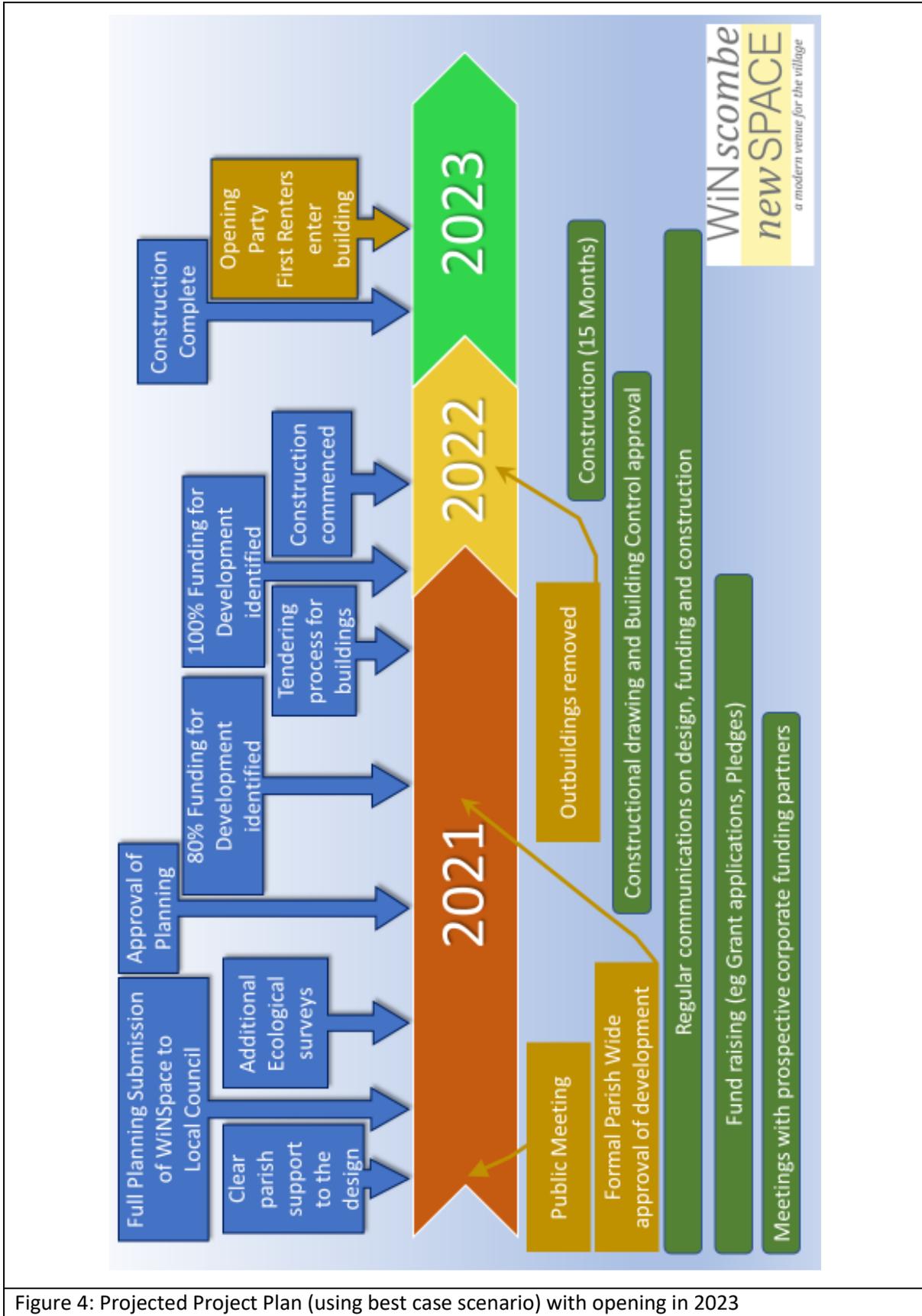


Figure 4: Projected Project Plan (using best case scenario) with opening in 2023

6 Funding the Build

6.1 Estimated Costs

Following initial design by B2 Architects and costing estimates by Hookway chartered surveyors, a development cost of c.£2.2m (plus VAT where applicable) has been estimated as set out below. We have set a total budget of £2.2m, with the aim of value engineering during the build, reducing costs to offset the impact of any VAT or unforeseen additional costs. Some cost savings have already been identified making this a realistic aim.

Breakdown of Building Phase	Cost
Demolition of buildings:	£65,000
New Building (assuming upper floor not fitted out)	£1,350,000
Refurbishment of Current Building	£200,000
External (Services & Carpark)	£235,000
Professional Fees	£200,000
Contingency	£150,000
The total cost of the Project:	£2,200,000

6.2 Sources of funding

The table below summarises the funding plan for the build

(see notes)	Source	Value	Current status
1	Existing assets	£250,000	Valuation obtained
2	S106/Cil funding	£400,000	300k committed.
3	Local grant/awards	£250,000	In discussion
4	Loan	£250,000	In discussion
5	National Grants	£500,000	£20,000 received to date
6	Community giving	£200,000	
7	Current reserves	£100,000	Already raised
8	Funding Partners	£250,000	Preliminary discussions starting
	Total	£2,200,000	

Notes

1. **Existing assets.** The WCA own (in trust) the existing WCA buildings and land. These include the former headmaster house (currently let to the Parish Council), and garage. It is envisaged these could be sold and initial valuations suggest a sum of c£275,000. *Note N Somerset have a restrictive covenant on the property and have confirmed there could be a price to release this (unquantified).*
2. **S106/Cil funding.** £300,000 (Woodborough Farm housing development) has been awarded. Building is underway for stage 1 of the development with ground prepared for build across the whole site. The money will be released in 3 tranches as houses are sold. We are targeting an additional £100,000 from one or more further developments in the Parish.
3. **Local grant/awards** We are in early stage discussion with the Parish Council on how a grant award could be financed and any parish support would need clear community backing. Parish Council Support of £1,500 has been provided to date.
4. **Loan** Low current interest rates mean a modest loan of c £250,000 repayable over 30 years, would require c £13,000 p.a. to repay and could comfortably be serviced through ongoing WCA rental income and fund raising.
5. **Grants.** Currently major grant providers such as National Lottery and Sports England are focused on Covid 19 related projects for grant awards, with normal programmes having stopped. For a project of this type we believe in normal circumstances £500,000 is not an unreasonable amount to assume will be available. If these grants do not become available for us, funding from the other sources listed will need to be increased and also smaller grants from wider sources sought. For example we have already received £20,000 from National Grid.
6. **Community giving**
 - Direct donations
 - Community shares (or other tax efficient investments, depending on demand)
7. **Current Reserves** Significant effort goes into existing fundraising to maintain the current facilities. With existing bank reserves, it is assumed c£100,000 could be available but any further 'normal fundraising' has not been included as this will provide a buffer for fitting out the new spaces.
8. **Funding Partners** We are wanting to partner with a small number of local Companies/Organisations/Individuals to become primary funding partners. It is envisaged we would work closely with these partners and, if wanted, ensure they get full recognition in the community for their support. One or two such doners providing six figure amounts would get us to target. We have started preliminary discussions but please do contact us if you may be interested in supporting and have not yet been approached.

6.3 Support in Principle

The above will be updated as more funding commitments are achieved. To date of this paper, we have identified funding for nearly 30% of the total estimated cost. This is a strong position from which to move forward as we seek to identify major funding partners and grant providers. We are seeking support “in principle” for the project at this stage, with binding funding commitments to follow once we have identified closer to our target 80% of project cost. We are targeting for this to be achieved in 2021. Once the initial 80% target is achieved, we will look to finalise commitments and obtain the remaining 20% funding. For this we will look at grant bodies which focus on providing this last stage funding.

7 Ongoing Revenue sustainability

7.1 Overview

It is the objective that once built, WiNSpace will be self-funding. This means that running costs must be met from income and there must be sufficient excess to build a fund for future maintenance of the facility and to ensure it can meet the needs of the community for generations to come.

7.2 Expected Running Costs

The new facilities will be c.700 m² compared with c.650m² currently. Importantly the spaces will be purpose built and multi functional, allowing for much greater utilization of the spaces and improved access. It is planned there will be 7 spaces available to let (excluding kitchen and storage areas). The new spaces will also be significantly more energy efficient. The following breakdown of costs has been estimated as an indication.

	Projected £pa		Current £pa (2019)
Energy costs	£8,250	Assumed to increase only c.25% as solar panels, insulated build etc offset greater usage and size of buildings	£6,500
Rates	£1,500	Assumed to increase 50%	£1,000
Cleaning and other perishables	£13,500	Assumed to increase by 50% on current costs due to greater utilisation	£9,000
Day to Day Maintenance	£2,500	Assumed to stay the same as new and refurbished build but see also amortisation fund	£2,500
Servicing	£1,500	Health & safety checks, ground maintenance etc – no change	£1,500
Utilities (water & sewerage, sanitary)	£3,000	Assumed to increase 50% compared with current due to extra usage	£2000
Insurance	£5,250	Assumed to increase 50% on current costs	£3,500
Bookings	£3,500	Booking secretary and online system- little change	£3,000
Internet	£1,000	Stay same	£1,000
Total	£40,000		£30,000

7.2.1 Loan

If we were to borrow £250,000 as envisaged in the Funding Plan in section 6, we estimate annual repayment at c.**£13,000 p.a.** over 30 years (Public Works Loan Board – fixed rate est. on 4 Oct 20). This will of course depend on interest rates at the time the loan is taken out but are anticipated to be around these levels for certainly the next 12 months.

7.2.2 Total Annual Outgo.

The above provides a total annual funding requirement of c **£53,000**

7.2.3 Amortisation

In addition a reserve must be built up to pay for ongoing more substantial maintenance and eventual refurbishment of the build. To smooth costs, we have assumed that the bulk of these reserves would be built up after the 30 years of loan repayments had been met. Our target would be to accrue c.**£13,000** pa for the first 30 years, doubling to c26,000 pa for the next 70 (once the loan had been repaid), with these amounts increasing each year by inflation. In this way we would be expecting to cover the £2.2m (plus inflation) cost of a re-build or major refurbishments over the 100 years. In practice the reserve would be unlikely to be spent in this way, with amounts needed throughout the building life, but it gives a sense check on the amount required to be sustainable.

7.3 Total Annual Income

The key drivers for future income will be the hours of usage, and room rates. We have modelled different scenarios for these. Our **central** scenario is that on average we achieve a utilisation of 35%, which equates to just over 4 hours a day per room. We have further assumed this would only be generated for 39 weeks a year (in line with term times).

The table below sets out an assumed charging structure under this **central** scenario, that would give us a projected rental income in excess of the required c. £53,000 p.a. The table also shows how the charges could be varied if utilisation were lower than this, or the impact on income of higher charging rates.

We have modelled a discount on rates of 25% for non-commercial local users, and charities (Lower) and assumed based on current experience these would represent around 60% of users.

Under all scenarios, projected annual outgo is more than covered by rental income. The balance of rental income, in excess of £53,000 and ongoing fundraising (historically in excess of £10,000 p.a) would then be available for the amortisation and general reserves, to build up over time.

Case	Rent	Util	Charge Rate	Old Hall	New Hall	Small Halls (2 of)	Meeting Room (2 of)	Est Income
A	Base	Base (35%)	Lower	£8.00	£12.50	£9.00	£7.00	£66,000
			Upper	£10.00	£15.50	£11.25	£8.75	
B	Base	Lower (30%)	Lower	£8.00	£12.50	£9.00	£7.00	£57,000
			Upper	£10.00	£15.50	£11.25	£8.75	
C	Base +12.5%	Base (35%)	Lower	£9.00	£14.00	£10.00	£8.00	£85,000
			Upper	£11.25	£17.50	£12.50	£10.00	
D	Base +12.5%	Lower (30%)	Lower	£9.00	£14.00	£10.00	£8.00	£64,000
			Upper	£11.25	£17.50	£12.50	£10.00	

In practice a utilisation of 35% across all rooms would require a near doubling of booked hours from current levels of around 100 hours a week to 175 hours. We believe this demand is there and have discussed our plans with a number of potential new users. These would include:

- Weddings and other celebration events (where potential premium charging could apply)
- Drama groups – including regular classes and productions
- Exhibitions and Conferences
- Increased sports activity (such as badminton and dance)
- Increased youth groups such as brownies and toddler groups

In projecting our future cashflow we have assumed that at day one, our bookings would not increase much above our current hours of 100, but would steadily increase from 60% of target to 100% over 5 years. After a small loss in year one our central scenario would see us in positive cash flow terms for each year thereafter, with annual income sufficient to cover full accrual for the amortisation reserve by year 6. A 6-year cashflow projection is shown in the Appendices.

7.4 Resilience

There is no certainty that we will be able to expand our bookings to the level assumed or that all existing renters will continue. However there are a number of margins built in that would help ensure cashflow on an annual basis is sufficient:

1. We have assumed no income from the Foyer area or the kitchens. In practice these would be rented out for large events, with income additional to that assumed above.
2. In the first few years, we would not expect to accrue the amortisation reserve, providing a buffer against our target income. This recognises that it may take time to build up usage to target utilization, and that any surplus funds would likely be used initially for fitting out the new spaces.
3. Assumed booking charges have been compared with facilities in other similar facilities across North Somerset and are very competitive. We believe there would therefore be scope to increase rates if needed to cover costs as illustrated in scenarios C and D.
4. We are currently turning away bookings, due to unsuitable available accommodation, so demand is there and the proposed further expansion of population will further increase this.
5. We have only assumed usage for 39 weeks a year. In practice we would expect some bookings outside these times, particularly for weddings etc in the summer months.
6. If demand did reduce over a longer period, we would have the flexibility with the design of the facilities to retract solely into the new build and reimagine the old school build for other usage, such as office space or therapy rooms.
7. We believe there would be potential to increase utilisation beyond 35% over time

8 Continuity of usage during development

It is important to maintain continuity for users of the current Winscombe Community Association buildings during the construction of the new building.

The main building will largely be expected to continue in use, but there is less certainty on the outbuildings due to closer proximity to the new build. Timing of the sale of the former headmaster house and garage is also not certain as cash will be needed as the project develops. (Due to its location at the side of the site, the sale price is not expected to be impacted by development works on the new build).

Every effort will be made to relocate existing users if needed, including fuller use of the main build and any remaining temporary buildings. However, some users may require alternative accommodation for the duration of the build.

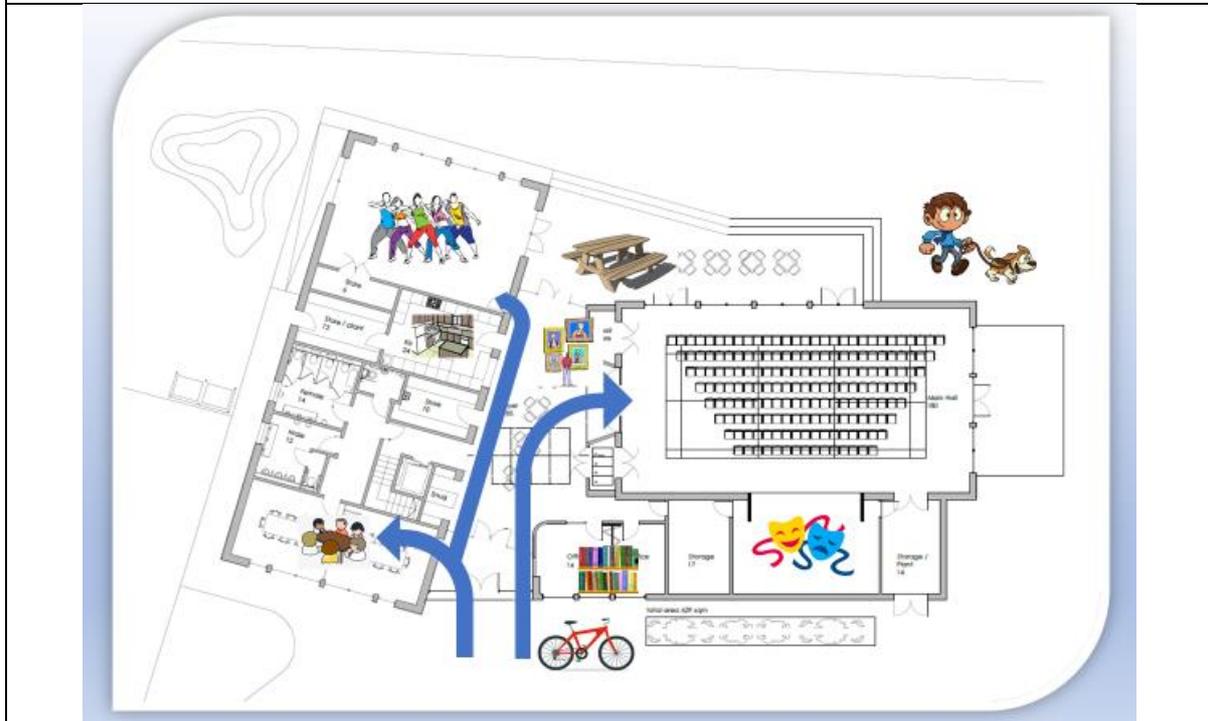
Consideration will also be given to vehicular access for construction traffic and the impact this may have on existing car parking space. We may be able to consider temporary parking on some of the field. We are also looking at construction methods to allow for off-site build of some components prior to arrival on site. This would hopefully shorten the build and disruption time.

The Parish Council currently rent the former headmaster house. This income has been excluded from the projections as they have indicated they may want to find alternate accommodation. If housed in the new build we anticipate this would require an expansion in the upstairs area. This would increase the cost of build but equally there would be additional annual rental income from them. This has not been included in the business plan at this stage.

9 Proposed site plan, new building layout and external views



Site Layout showing position and proposed use



New Building layout showing proposed usage



Artistic impression for the new building

10 Appendices

The appendix booklet which is provided separately presents further details to support the main body of the Business Plan.

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