

Carron Valley + District Community Hall

Project Statement July 2024

Valley renewables group



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Project Statement

Status of this Statement

This document is the Project Statement for the Community Hall. It is a position statement setting out the work of the Community Hall Subgroup at April 2024. The draft Project Plan will be revised, developed and expanded to reflect the needs of the project as it progresses. The decision to proceed to Planning, Building Warrant and Tender was made at a joint meeting of the Community Council (CC) and Valley Renewables Group (VRG) at a joint meeting on Monday 4th March 2024. A full Design Team is now in place and working towards a planning application in April and Building Warrant application in June. Policies on Volunteers, Health and Safety, Safeguarding vulnerable people, letting and financial control will be developed and tailored by an expanded Management Team who will operate the facility. This team is now being recruited.

Introduction and Background

VRG has worked hard over a number of years to develop a proposal for a Community Hall which could provide a focus for Community activities in our area. Initial plans have been re-worked to produce a modest and cost effective plan for an accessible space at the Community Woodland. A working group of eight community members has taken this project forward and the Project Statement summarises how the project would be delivered and run sustainably by and for the Community.

Community consultation

Broad support has been expressed for a Community Space at the Community Woodland in the Carron Valley, with 75% of original survey respondents in 2017 being positive. This re-worked, smaller scale Community Hall has addressed concerns at that time - cost, security and the likely amount of use. Recent discussions confirm there is Community support for a space to be used for a range of social, health, education and well-being activities. In Autumn 2021 a Community Consultation took place to confirm if the community of the Carron Valley + District area is in favour of proceeding with a Community Meeting Room at the Community Woodland site, or not. 31% of households responded to the survey with 81% of those in favour of proceeding with the project, 19% against. The conclusion drawn by the independent consultants managing the surveys for us was that there is a clear majority of community households in favour of proceeding with the project.

The Community's need

Carron Valley + District is a dispersed rural community with a population of about 350 people in 145 households. There is no central meeting place, shop, school, church or pub, and therefore no opportunity for the Community to gather locally. Recently, more young families have moved into the district, with at least 15 families with young children now being active here. Many of these have expressed a desire to meet regularly, run children's activities and socialise together, although there is currently no facility that would enable this.

The Location

For over eight years VRG has been seeking a suitable location for a Community Meeting Place. A joint project with Stirling University at Howietoun Fishery did not proceed. Nor did our more ambitious plan for a Community Hub. We have concluded our 52 acre Community Woodland is the only serious option as a location for a Community facility. We own the site, it is serviced with power, water and drainage, we already have community activities and events taking place there, and there is ample space for parking, outdoor events and children's play facilities. The site for the community

building is 'brownfield', having been formerly occupied by a Scottish Forestry deer larder and portacabin style offices.

The Current Proposal

The building will be located at the Community Woodland in the Carron Valley facing south with views across the pond and native woodland. The design provides a hall/meeting room of 40m² - enough space for 40 people to sit comfortably. Opening off the hall is a furniture store for tables and chairs.

There is a large entrance lobby with benches and coat hooks also giving entry to an accessible toilet with baby changing space, and a separate unisex toilet. The kitchen was the subject of much discussion during the community consultation. It is now a separate room of 10m² with an external door, a store cupboard and access from the hall. The kitchen and its equipment will be to catering hygiene standards.

The current scheme is based on a well insulated timber frame with a pitched roof, double glazed windows and doors with steel roller shutters. External cladding for the walls is coloured profile metal sheet with a profile metal sheet roof. This construction will provide us with a quick build, much can be prefabricated offsite. With a well insulated building we can consider an air source heat pump for space heating with over-sink hot water heaters. External lighting and CCTV security are included. There is an option for Solar PV on the roof. Externally, there are 16 porous car parking spaces and two surfaced accessible spaces, with a surfaced footpath from the car park to the main entrance.

The Project

The Aims of the Community Hall are to:

- provide a multipurpose meeting space for the Carron Valley + District community
- create a catalyst for new groups and activities to set up in the community
- support existing Community groups
- reduce social isolation and improve mental health
- be sustainable environmentally, socially and financially.
- support community cohesion and resilience

Use and Activities

This meeting space would seat approximately 40 people in rows, 24 around tables, or be suitable for an activity class of 15 to 20 people. Activities including fitness classes, yoga, toddler groups, older people's lunches, craft afternoons, community group meetings and young people's activities are all expected to take place in the Community Hall on a regular basis. Forest classrooms for local schools operated by Scottish Forestry could utilise the space in unsuitable weather. The cost for use of the Hall will be set at a relatively low level of £1 per person per visit from the outset, to contribute towards running costs, mainly servicing and cleaning, whilst maximising use and ensuring that everyone is able to access activities.

Governance and Operation

An operational Business Plan will be developed by the Management Team to set out the working arrangements for the management and maintenance of the Community Hall, led by VRG. These will include governance, staff and volunteer management, policies and procedures, cleaning and maintenance, bookings, access and security, promotion and charging policy.

Project Outputs and Outcomes

Activity	Expected Outputs	Expected Outcomes
Creation of Community Meeting Room	Community ownership and management of an asset	Warm and safe community space created at a reasonable cost. Value for money achieved from the investment for the community.
Delivery of increased activities for the Community of Carron Valley + District	Once opened, the Community Meeting Room is projected to have over 2,000 entries per year, equating to approximately 80 people benefitting. This is likely to increase over time.	Increased social opportunities for the community Reduced social isolation Improved health and well-being
Part time caretaker (self employed)	One 0.1 fte post equivalent	Increased employment opportunities
Volunteer recruitment and training	Approximately 15 volunteers regularly engaged with VRG	Increased social opportunities

Financial Estimates

Annual Running costs (2024 prices)	
Estimated annual expenditure	
Insurances building & contents	1,800
Electricity charges	2,200
Water treatment maintenance	1,800
Septic tank maintenance	250
Exterior and interior maintenance/repairs	1,150
Cleaning	1,150
Fire protection inspection	175
Admin support/caretaking	1,440
TOTAL	9,965

Capital Cost

An outline specification has been prepared by the Architect with contributions from the working group. This has been used by the building cost consultant to prepare the probable cost. We have tried to remove any uncertainties from our requirements. The probable cost will become a firm cost when the project is tendered to contractors. The probable costs at February 2024 are:

Capital Cost	
Building and Fit out	242,020
Contingencies	24,200
Professional fees and expenses (including VAT)	34,890
Total project Cost	301,110

A Community Hall new build project is zero rated for VAT. VAT is non recoverable on professional fees and expenses. If the planning application is made in the joint name of the Community Council half the planning fee is payable. VRG would be act as Client, Employer and Operator for the project.

Running Costs

The financial estimates for income and expenditure show that the Community Hall can cover its running costs with a modest contribution from VRG each year (£9,000 to £10,000). This enables the Community Hall to be accessed by everyone in the community for no more than a £1 contribution towards running costs per person per visit, making it an affordable and sustainable option for all. At this stage no forecast has been made of the potential income from users; this will be for the incoming Management Team to agree.

Conclusion

Our vision is to create a Community Hall for the Carron Valley + District community that is open and accessible to all. VRG has a strong Board and committed sub-group, is well supported by the local community and is in an excellent position to deliver this project. The capital costs indicate that this project can be delivered within a budget of £300,000 including VAT (where applicable) and contingencies, making it affordable for our community from the Restricted Funds in our Investment Account. The facility can be run sustainably with a manageable amount of annual grant funding from VRG, to provide subsidised meeting room facilities for local people. It is fully expected that once available to the community, further opportunities for activities and use will be developed, and use of the Hall will increase well beyond these initial expectations.

Developing the Plan

An operational Business Plan will be revised, developed and expanded to reflect the needs of the project as it progresses. We would propose to recruit a Management Team of additional community members with an interest in contributing to the project, and in having a conversation with anyone in

the community who has advice or concerns about any aspect of its operation. At the conclusion of the construction process, the Business Plan will provide a template for operation of the facility

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09/04/24