

2017-19

The Leintwardine Centre Business Plan



The Committee
The Leintwardine Centre



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Chairman's personal message

After an extensive refurbishment, the village is blessed with two fine halls which are much admired and envied. It is the responsibility of the Committee to maintain these halls to a high standard, improve the facilities over time, and extend their use by seeking to cater for even wider numbers in the village and beyond.

However, the days of running a voluntary organisation such as a village hall on the back of an envelope are long gone. The plethora of rules and regulations have made change essential in order to comply with accountability, increased seriousness, and the huge increase in expectations of all users.

That is why I asked for this business plan to be produced. It sets out a specific framework for the Committee's efforts in the years ahead, and a formula for maintenance, costs, development, compliance, marketing, fund raising and risk management. We want to comply with all legal responsibilities and this will ensure that we do so. This last item discharges our legal responsibilities, if all correct procedures have been followed.

This plan will be regularly reviewed and updated and our efforts will be reflected within it; initially, it will run for three years. We aim to be open about our transactions, available for comment and willing to deal with criticism. You can do this either in person or via our website which is leintwardinecentre.co.uk.

We hope that you all will enjoy using the Centre and we ask for the support of the community.

Harvey Vallis
Acting Chairman

Part 1 – Executive Summary

- ✚ The first Business Plan covered the period 2013 to 2016. Consequently, it is time to review the plan and prepare for the coming three-year period.
It is now three years since the Leintwardine Centre reopened following its refurbishment. During this time, the centre has made significant progress and has generated sufficient funds to be able not only to maintain the existing structures and equipment but also to improve the facilities on offer. However, the continuing global economic difficulties, as well as the potential impact of the Brexit vote, mean that the Centre will face tough challenges in the years ahead
- ✚ Nevertheless, the Centre has great potential, and we are keen to secure it for future generations as a thriving village asset, at the heart of a living rural community. Our aim is that local people should feel that it is *their* Centre, and cherish it, and we will work with key community groups to achieve this.
- ✚ We believe the Centre should be relevant to and support as wide a cross-section of the local community as possible. We want to know more about what people think the Centre should provide in terms of activities, events and services, so that we can develop our offering accordingly.
- ✚ Although former chairman Richard Sudworth conducted a successful fundraising campaign among local residents, this is not an operation which can be repeated regularly. That said, we believe that, despite the difficult times, there is untapped goodwill in the community to provide support for the Centre through what we are calling “structured giving” – that is, through donation schemes such as endowments, covenants, subscriptions, patronage, and sponsorship. We will take steps to encourage more regular support of this kind, to help place the Centre on a firmer long-term financial footing.
- ✚ We intend to improve the general marketing and advocacy of the Centre, to promote it more effectively, and increase its use.
- ✚ The future will be challenging. Therefore, this Business Plan covers the three financial years from 2017 to 2019. We will review progress at the end of each year, and update the Plan accordingly, rolling it into the future as necessary.

Part 2 – Leintwardine Centre: background

Charitable Status

2.1 The Leintwardine Centre was registered as a charity by the Charity Commission in 1988. It was formed by bringing together two separate charities relating to the community centre and the village hall respectively. The details of the new charity, to which this business plan relates, are as follows:

Charity name:	The Leintwardine Village Hall and Community Centre
Address:	High Street Leintwardine Craven Arms SY7 0LQ
Registered charity number:	516248
Date registered:	1988
Trustees:	The Leintwardine Village Hall and Community Centre Committee (referred to as “The Committee”)

Charitable Object

2.2 The 1988 charity founding document describes our object as a charity as follows:

“... the provision and maintenance of a village hall and community centre for the use of the inhabitants of the parish of Leintwardine and the neighbourhood thereof [...] without distinction of political, religious or of other opinions, including use for meetings, lectures and classes, and for other forms of recreation and leisure-time occupation, with the object of improving the conditions of life for the said inhabitants.”

Location and context

- 2.3** The village of Leintwardine is at the centre of a busy and popular rural community of some 2000 souls in North West Herefordshire, on the main road linking the market towns of Ludlow and Knighton, close to the borders with Shropshire, and Wales. This is a beautiful, deeply rural area, remote from urban centres and popular with visitors. However, as so often in such places, resources, services, employment opportunities, retail outlets, entertainment, and recreation facilities are thin on the ground. Nevertheless, there is a strong community spirit here, and a significant cadre of volunteers who work hard in various spheres to make life as vibrant and enjoyable as possible.



Description of the Centre

- 2.4** The Leintwardine Centre sits in pole position at the heart of the village, on the main road. The site comprises two main public buildings of great character and distinctiveness: the Community Centre (pictured), housed in the former primary school; and the Reading Room



(the former “village hall”), next door. The Community Centre contains the Community Hall, the largest general-purpose public meeting and performance space in the village, as well as smaller rooms housing the local history museum, well equipped kitchens, offices (some to let), storage spaces, and the village’s only public toilets. There is a public car park in front. The front half of the Reading Room is let out to Herefordshire County Council for use as the local public library. The rear half of the building contains a further large general purpose space, with modern kitchen

facilities, and toilets. These buildings, both of which have wi-fi broadband connections are of considerable importance in the village, and together comprise a principle hub for community activities. Full details of the current facilities of the Leintwardine Centre can be found on our website leintwardinecentre.co.uk.

We have recently retaken possession of a third building – the former infants’ school behind the main building, which has until recently been on long-term rental. A surveyor’s report has been commission and on the basis of its findings and costing, the Committee will decide how best to proceed to turn the building into a useful space without impacting excessively on the centre’s finances.



The Community Hall



The Reading Room

Recent improvements

- 2.5** A major programme of works to upgrade both buildings, and modernise, refit, and rationalise the spaces they contain, was successfully completed in March 2011. What was once a dingy, dark and cold building, is now light, airy and, thanks to a state-of-the-art ground source heat pump, always warm. It means that people can use Centre at all times of the year, for all sorts of activities, and be comfortable.
- 2.6** There is now a clear choice of a smaller or larger space, both of which are very flexible, and can be used for a wide range of activities from dance and exercise classes, to consultation meetings.

Part 3 – Vision, and objectives

Our vision for the Leintwardine Centre

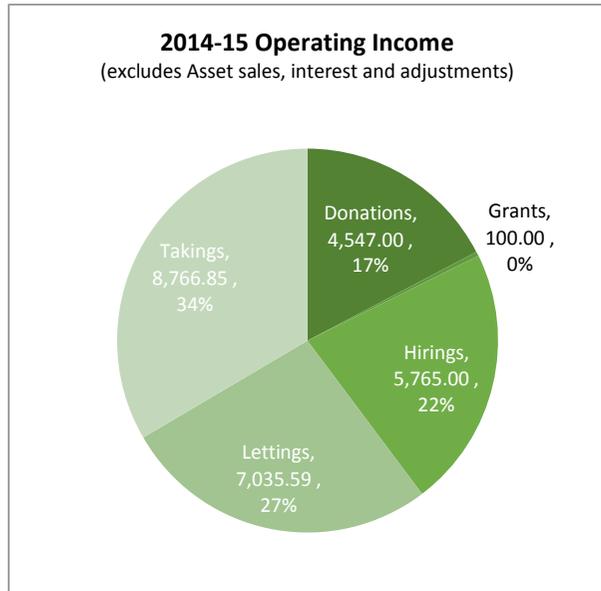
- 3.1** The Centre was re-launched in 2011 following major refurbishments to its two main buildings. Income and use have been steady over the intervening years but the global downturn, as well as the unforeseeable impact of the UK's decision to leave the EU, means that local village economies like ours face tough challenges. Nevertheless, the generally positive trend gives us a good base on which to achieve a long-term stable future for the Centre, in pride of place at the heart of our community.
- 3.2** In particular, we want to achieve the following outcomes in the medium-to-long term:
- The Centre will be secured in good order, and on a sound financial footing, for future generations. It will be well run, well maintained, and offer a diverse range of activities and services that support and are relevant to as broad a cross-section of the local community as possible.
 - The community will develop a strong sense of ownership of the Centre, and consider it a central asset to the area, and a key contributor to quality of life.
 - Visitors will feel welcome at the Centre, enjoy what is on offer there, and recommend it to others.
 - Customers, tenants and hirers of the Centre will feel valued, and think the services on offer are appropriate and represent good value for money.

Our objectives – what we will do to achieve our vision

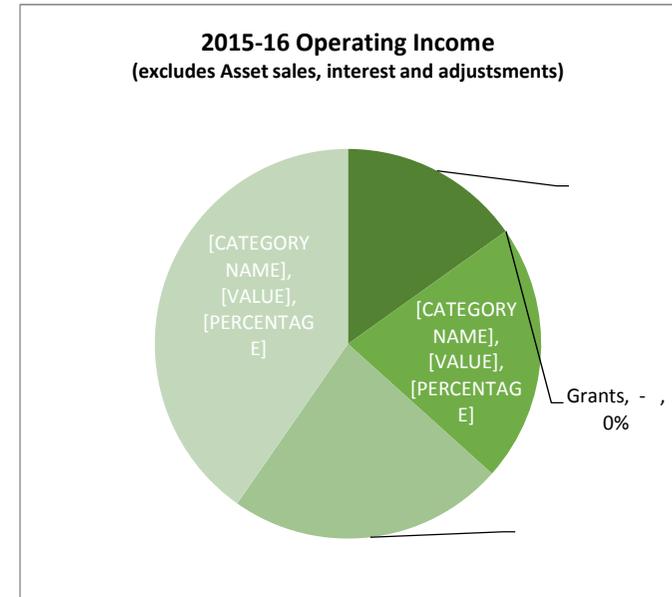
3.3 We will:

- Work together to provide excellent stewardship and management, ensuring the Centre’s charitable status is protected
- Work in partnership with others, especially local church communities, local groups and businesses, to ensure good community relations are maintained
- Maintain the buildings, surrounding areas, facilities and equipment in good order; and improve and enhance them as funds allow, to an agreed strategy and priority order, and informed by feedback
- Take steps to ensure the continued financial security of the Centre into the medium to long term, by increasing our overall income; increasing the role played by structured long-term giving in the overall support effort; and continuing to secure efficiency savings
- Reach new customers, new sections of the community, and new visitors by ensuring activities and services are relevant and better informed by local preferences and feedback
- Improve our general marketing and advocacy of the Centre, particularly to potential new users and patrons
- Seek ways to use the Centre to create employment and help stimulate the local economy

Part 4 – Financial section



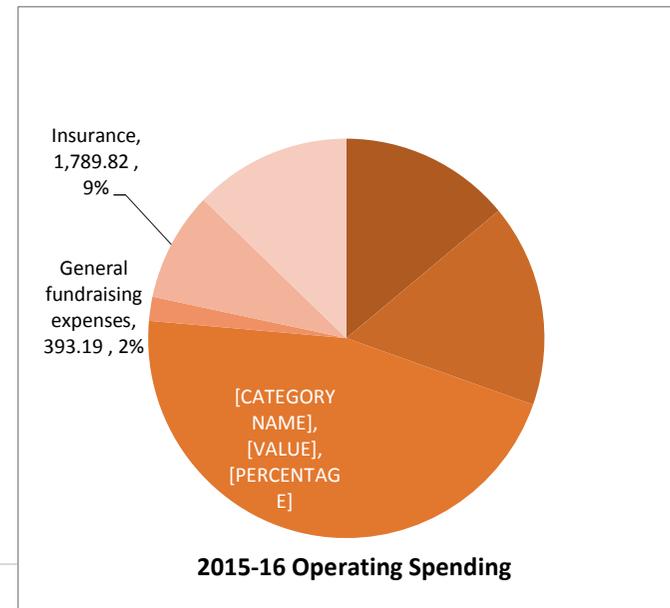
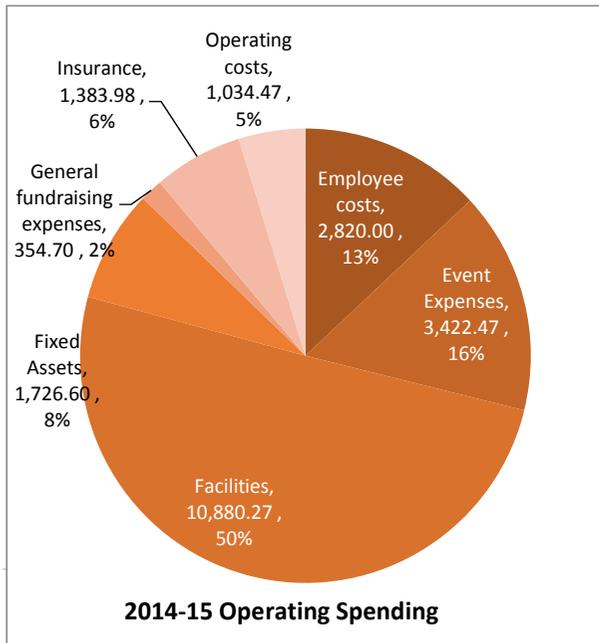
Over the last 4 years we have:



- Maintained our income from operating sources (£26,268 in 2014-15 and £25,835 in 2015-16).
- Reduced our historical reliance on grants to virtually nil.
- Increased our income from donations to around £4,000 for the last two years.

However:

- The biggest share of our income still comes from fundraising (“Takings” in the chart).
- Operating spending grows with inflation and there is little further scope for efficiency savings.



4.1 The table below sets out a summary of the last two years' spend and income (adjusted to exclude asset income and other costs or income which are unlikely to be repeated in normal operations), and a projection of the likely outcome if we continue on our current course for 2016-17, without any unforeseen exceptional spending:

Table: financial projection 2016-17

Year	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Regular Spend	£21,649	£20,790	£23,998
Regular Income	£26,269	£25,835	£21,187
Net Surplus/(Shortfall)	£4,620	£5,045	(£2,812)

4.2 This shows that, after several years when we finished each year with a small surplus, we anticipate ending this year on a small deficit. However, the previous surpluses and a substantial capital receipt mean that we have been able to accumulate a healthy level of reserves over the last few years, in line with the Reserves Policy adopted in 2014. Current cash holdings at the bank and on deposit total £31,410, so the Centre can cope with the occasional deficit year. Nonetheless, the aim must be to cover costs each year and achieve a small operating surplus so that we continue to be able to maintain and improve the Community Centre facilities.

4.3 Analysis of the sources of income since the Centre was refurbished in 2011 show that the difference between barely breaking even and growing the reserves which we have managed to accumulate is grant and donation income. The table below sets this out. Income from hiring out the Community Centre facilities for local use has been tailing down over recent years, despite the fact that hire charges have remained largely static. Similarly, tenant occupancy rates have also started to soften, with a resultant reduction in annual rental income. This continues to put pressure on event takings as a key income source, which is the one area requiring greatest effort from the volunteers and trustees running the Centre.

Table: Operating surpluses since March 2011

Financial Year End	Total Income	Total Spending	Surplus/(Shortfall)	Parish Council Grants	Surplus net of Grant	Other Grants, Donations and capital receipts	Operating Surplus (Surplus net of grants, donations and capital receipts)
31/03/2017*	£ 21,187.00	£ 23,998.00	-£ 2,811.00	£ -	-£ 2,811.00	£ 770.00	-£ 3,581.00
31/03/2016	£ 33,335.74	£ 20,790.68	£ 12,545.06	£ -	£ 12,545.06	£ 11,411.00	£ 1,134.06
31/03/2015	£ 26,268.85	£ 21,649.84	£ 4,619.01	£ -	£ 4,619.01	£ 4,647.00	-£ 27.99
31/03/2014	£ 26,049.98	£ 20,359.96	£ 5,690.02	£ 2,000.00	£ 3,690.02	£ 1,009.99	£ 2,680.03
31/03/2013	£ 27,681.00	£ 22,711.00	£ 4,970.00	£ 3,000.00	£ 1,970.00	£ 431.92	£ 1,538.08
31/03/2012	£ 15,997.48	£ 12,717.49	£ 3,279.99	£ 3,000.00	£ 279.99	£ 214.90	£ 65.09
31/03/2011	£ 12,187.00	£ 9,788.00	£ 2,399.00	£ 3,150.00	-£ 751.00	£ 250.00	-£ 1,001.00
01/04/2010							£ -
TOTALS	£ 162,707.05	£ 132,014.97	£ 30,692.08	£ 11,150.00	£ 19,542.08	£ 11,234.81	£ 807.27

Notes:

- 1 * projected outturn at year-end
- 2 2015/16 surplus includes £7,500 capital receipt
- 3 The total surplus over the 7 years net of the £7,500 capital receipt and grants and donations is just £807.27

4.4 What is clear from recent experience, and is apparent from the figures above, is that donations will remain a key and vital element of the income mix if the Centre is to remain viable. We achieved excellent support from local donors in 2015, when the then Chair

headed a campaign to encourage one-off and structured giving donations. However, we believe there remains great potential to consolidate and increase overall income through more structured giving. Without this it will remain difficult to place the Centre on a firm financial footing unless we resort to seeking regular annual grant support from the parish council. This is something which the trustees have made a point of avoiding wherever possible.

- 4.5 Our ambition remains to provide services and activities which appeal to a wide cross-section of the local community. Not all of these will make money for the Centre, but we believe it is right to provide what the community needs and wants. We aim to secure enough in the way of income to be able to cover the costs of providing essential non-profit-making activities, where there is a demand for them.

- 4.6 We also have the Infants' School Room (which recently came back into our possession when the tenant vacated) to deal with. This building is a significant part of the overall assets of the Centre, and one which we must maintain to preserve its value and to comply with our legal obligations. It currently requires in the order of £30,000 worth of renovation work, and we are taking action to get this work carried out. We hope to be able to secure grant funding for all or a significant part of this cost. It also represents an opportunity, either as a facility to be added to the existing facilities available to the wider community, or as a means to generate income to support the operation of the existing facilities. We aim to complete the renovation and bring this building back into beneficial use during the life of this updated Plan.

Part 5 – Management organisation

- 5.1 The Centre is managed by a committee of local unpaid volunteers – the Leintwardine Village Hall and Community Centre Committee. There are three officers - the Chairman, the Treasurer and the Secretary.

In 2014, the Committee decided to amend the Charity's statutes in order to better reflect the functioning and practice of appointing Committee members and to update the list of local organisations and bodies represented on the committee. On the advice of the Charity Commission, these modifications were set out in a Resolution, which was adopted at the Committee's 2015 Annual General Meeting.

During the period of the previous Business Plan, the Committee has sought to place the management of the centre on a more professional footing in accordance with the objectives of the plan. This has inevitably led to more formality, especially in decision-making, which has discouraged some Committee members who have since left the Committee. The officers (chairman, treasurer and secretary) appreciate that the more business-like approach is not for everyone and is therefore considering ways of focussing the day to day running of the Centre on the officers, leaving the other Committee members and volunteers to concentrate on organising events, fundraising and maintenance.

Part 6 – Marketing

Current position

6.1 Since re-opening after refurbishment, the Centre has developed its own website to promote itself and its events and now has a presence on Facebook and Twitter. The Committee also devised, and now produces the monthly *What's On* leaflet, delivered to every home in or near the village. The leaflet, which lists all activities at the Centre, has proved very popular, and we have now expanded it to include other events in the village as well. Events at the Centre are also advertised by poster, sometimes they are promoted in *Leintwardine Life*, in local press and radio, and in the Parish Magazine.

6.2 The Committee has recently taken stock of the Centre's marketing and has concluded that a new strategy is needed. The diagram sets out what we consider to be the four main levels of potential support for the Centre:

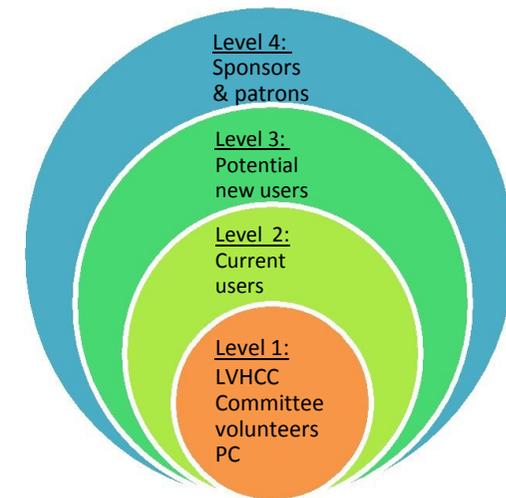
Level 1 – the Committee, our volunteers and the Parish Council

Level 2 – the current users of the Centre

Level 3 – potential new users of the Centre

Level 4 – sponsors and patrons

6.3 We are very grateful to all those who have supported the Centre since re-opening. Effort has, so far, been greatest at Levels 1 and 2. This has produced good results, and has enabled us to develop the sound financial footing for the Centre that we believe is needed in the longer-term. It has involved sustained fundraising activities on the part of the Committee and volunteers, throughout the year.



For the future

6.4 Despite these good results, we believe there are sections of the community that we are not yet reaching, and we intend to make greater efforts to do so in the future. We also believe there is untapped potential for greater use of the Centre by the business community, other public sector organisations, and public services. Attracting new users will require better, more targeted marketing, and different types of events and activities. In the years ahead we will take steps to seek out the views of potential new users, and build them into our planning. We have so far identified the following potential new users and new activities and services:

- The wider village/community eg the young; families with children
- Businesses – eg for training events, conferences, workshops, meetings, functions
- Other local groups and clubs – eg book groups, gardening clubs, sports clubs
- Private individuals – eg for parties, weddings, dinners, and other family functions
- Public services – eg as a one-stop shop for the benefits agency, council, housing associations, advice centre

6.5 Our financial analysis shows a low level of support for the Centre from donations, either substantial one-off gifts, such as specific sponsorship and bequests, or from what we are calling “structured giving”, which means regular donations through subscriptions, endowments, covenants and so on. These feature strongly in the financing of large national charities, who rely in large part from such giving. We believe there is potential to garner more of this type of support, and that it would help greatly in creating a firmer financial footing for the Centre, making it easier to plan for the future.

6.6 We recognise that the economic environment in which we now operate is very uncertain, that public sector resources, in particular, are already scarce, and that the position is likely to worsen in the short-to-medium term. However, we also believe that doing nothing is not an option. Leintwardine has been identified as a “hub village” by Herefordshire County Council. We believe that, to make this a meaningful concept, services and facilities need to be concentrated here. The Centre is well placed to offer for public services such as housing, benefits, and advice to be delivered in the community. We will pursue these ideas in the years ahead.

- 6.7 One area of considerable concern is the loss of expertise within the Committee. Much of the day to day operation of the Centre is conducted by the three officers – the Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary – via e-mail and informal meetings. However, the three present incumbents will be stepping down by mid-2017 and at present, no replacements are in sight. The Committee as a whole will therefore have to make a particular effort in the coming months to recruit new members with the requisite expertise and experience.
- 6.8 A further key question is the future of the Infants’ school building, which will require considerable work before it can be re-let. It may be necessary to seek funding from outside sources in order not to place too great a burden on the Centre’s finances. Furthermore, it is imperative that we find a tenant to take it over: we cannot allow it to become a white elephant. Similarly, every effort must be made to increase the use of the Reading Room meeting room, whose main drawback – poor acoustics – has been effectively dealt with by the installation of thick curtains.

Part 7 – Action plan

Objective	Action – The Committee will:
<p>1. Stewardship and management</p> <p>Working together to provide excellent stewardship and management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work effectively as a team, with openness, transparency, and without prejudice, to deliver the Centre’s Charity objects, and our agreed business plan objectives • Regularly review our business plan and risks, and take action needed promptly • Carry out our duties in a reasonable, orderly, and professional manner, treating one another, employees and the public with courtesy and respect, and without discrimination
<p>2. Working in partnership</p> <p>With local church communities, local groups and businesses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise regularly with representatives of Church support groups, and other event managers in the village to try to avoid clashes • Work in collaboration with the Church and others on specific village-wide events, to ensure activities are complementary, and non-discriminatory • Form and/or maintain good relations with key local businesses, and other local groups , for example: The History Society; Leintwardine Youth Group; The Leintwardine Players; Leintwardine First Responders; The Evergreens.
<p>3. Maintenance and improvements</p> <p>Maintain the buildings, surrounding areas, facilities and equipment in good order. Improve and enhance them as funds allow, to an agreed strategy and priority order, and informed by customer feedback</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure regular inspections of the premises are carried out for fire safety, hygiene and general repairs, and take prompt action to deal with shortcomings. • Adopt clear, and reasonable criteria to ensure consistency in allocating resources for repairs/maintenance, and enhancements/improvements, giving precedence to high priority items. • Seek to improve the gathering of feedback from the Centre’s users, and take it into account more systematically in decision making.

Objective	Action – The Committee will:
<p>4. Finances</p> <p>Take steps to ensure the financial security of the Centre into the medium to long term, including: increasing our overall income; increasing the role played by structured long-term giving in the overall support effort; maintaining our efforts to secure efficiency savings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain its high-standard of financial control and regular reporting. • Take steps to protect the Centre from business rates liability • Develop and launch a pro-active campaign to secure more income through “structured long-term giving” eg endowments, covenants, regular donations, bequests and sponsorship • Continue to monitor our cost base, with a view to securing efficiency savings through better deals from suppliers, discounts, and special offers
<p>5. Customers and visitors</p> <p>Reach new customers, new sections of the community, and new visitors by ensuring activities and services are relevant and better informed by local preferences and feedback</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gain a better understanding of the wishes and needs of the community • Analyse our current/recent activities to determine which sections of the community are under-represented and under catered for
<p>6. Marketing and advocacy</p> <p>Improve our general marketing and advocacy of the Centre, particularly to potential new users and patrons</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act as advocates of the Centre at all times, taking advantage of situations where positive messages would be useful, and rebutting incorrect rumours and misinformation with facts • Develop a marketing pack for use by Committee members, to include: a ‘core advocacy brief’; a popular plain English version of the Business Plan; and a donation scheme, including a benefits package • Identify and approach potential patrons, and seek to persuade them to make regular donations to the Centre
<p>7. Supporting the local economy</p> <p>Seek ways to use the Centre to create employment and help stimulate the local economy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim to give our custom to local businesses where it is sensible to do so • Market the Centre more intensively for business-related events • Increase the use of the Centre as an education and training facility

Part 8 – Risk management

NATURE OF RISK	RISK ASSESSMENT		RISK OWNER	CONTROLS IN PLACE	ACTION PLANNED
	Likelihood	Impact			
	L/M/H	L/M/H			
Governance					
1) Lack of strategy and forward planning	M	H	Chair (and Cttee)	Regular financial reporting Events planning	Business Plan in development and to be agreed by Committee
2) Loss of charitable status	M	H	Chair (and Cttee)	Regular review of activities to ensure they are in line with the objects in our Charity Commission founding document	
3) Loss of key expertise in the Committee	H	H	Officers (and Cttee)	None	Preparation of key procedure notes, to ensure easy recovery from loss of expertise
Operational					
1) Failure to provide activities relevant to the needs of the whole community	H	H	Chair (and Cttee)	Preferences survey done as part of the renovations project New ideas being tried	Targeted with relevant sections of the community Implementation of marketing strategy
Financial					
1) Insufficient funds available to meet our commitments	M	H	Chair and Treasurer (and Cttee)	Monthly financial analysis with projections Contingency fund for repairs/maintenance	Decision making prioritisation exercise Monthly review of income and outgoings Fundraising activities planned a year ahead On-going action to seek efficiency savings
External					
1) Economic recession threatens long-term viability of the Centre	M	H	Chair and Treasurer (and Cttee)	Regular financial monitoring in place Actively seeking for new tenants	New marketing strategy to secure more regular donations and other “structured giving”
2) Loss of income from larger long-term lettings	H	H			
Compliance					
1) Failure to comply with fire, hygiene and health and safety requirements	M	H	Chair (and Cttee)	Fire/hygiene assessments recently completed. Action points identified	Action to implement recommendations Risk assessments to be done proportionate to the nature of the event.
2) Accident on the premises leading to injury or death				Public liability indemnity in place	

Part 9 – Monitoring and Evaluation

Financial monitoring

9.1 The Committee will continue its practice of reviewing our financial position monthly at our meeting, and on the basis of a detailed written report provided by the Treasurer. This report will include an assessment of trends in spending against the profile of all budgets, and sub-budgets, and will alert the Committee as a whole to any unexpected pressures that are emerging. It will also include an analysis of income from all sources. The Treasurer will recommend any action needed to address issues arising. The Treasurer will also keep under regular review the level of charges made for rent, and hire of premises and facilities, and the cost-effectiveness of contracts for telecoms, and fuel. Corrective action will be voted on by Committee members at their meeting, unless responsibility for deciding this is delegated to the Treasurer. In this way, we can also see the mix of income sources and whether we are increasing our funds from structured giving.

Bookings, and customer feedback

9.2 We will also keep under regular review the level of bookings, and feedback received from customers, and volunteers. We will consider garnering more structured feedback through questionnaires, a suggestion box, and comments on the Centre’s website and Facebook page. From the data already recorded, we have a good feel for the types of bookings we take. For example, whether the event is public or private, whether or not its main purpose is for fundraising, and the level of attendance, bar takings and so forth.
