



## VILLAGE HALL REFURBISHMENT PROJECTS **TOP TIPS** from St Boswells Village Hall Committee

- Clearly identify what works is needed to be carried out; questionnaires / surveys of users very useful; some works may be very obvious but other needs may be hidden.
- The Energy Saving Trust can provide building surveys to look at ways of improving energy efficiency
- Consider the works identified as a “shopping list” and try to prioritise what works must be carried out; perhaps grouping the works as; immediate; urgent, necessary, desirable; at this stage try to look at the big picture – where you want to be in say five years time.
- Identify if possible local residents, especially those with building or fund raising skills who can (and are willing to!) contribute their skills and knowledge in the early stage of the project. At St Boswells, we set up a separate Refurbishment Sub-Committee and a separate Fundraising Sub-Committee which proved to be invaluable.
- Seek professional advice (which will normally have to be paid for) from architects, surveyors to develop options / feasibility studies for the works – this should identify any major barriers and also provide cost advice (normally from a quantity surveyor); the works can be broken down in possible phases. Seek competitive tenders for this work. Some funders will provide specific grant for project development works as a first stage. DO NOT forget to add VAT to any cost projections nor to allow for “contingencies”; we consistently added VAT at the full rate of 20% and a 10% contingency to all projected costs (and an allowance for inflation)
- Find out if planning permission is required for works – for example replacement windows in a conservation area; this can initially be done as “pre-application” advice without a fee! Many potential funders want to know if you have obtained all necessary consents and this preliminary check can be very useful.
- Fundraising is hard work; seek advice from The Bridge, SBC External Funding Officer etc; but there is funding out there; this is more likely to be successful if it is clear that you know what you want and you have at least cost estimates for the work – specific funders may be able to help with certain aspects of the works.
- Ensure you get competitive estimates for the work from experienced builders, preferably having appointed a design team to provide all the necessary drawings, specifications, bills of quantity and obtain any necessary consents for you – this means that you can truly compare tenders knowing that the builders have all priced on the same basis. Appointing the contractor commits you to pay him!
- Review what works can actually be afforded, you may have to phase works and then consider CASH FLOW; as distinct from grant offers – you will need to be able to finance the project as it carried out on site, remember you may lose income if the hall has to be closed whilst works are carried out.
- Ensure that you have met any specific conditions of grant aid from funders and keep them informed of any changes as well as submitting regular reports.
- Review insurance issues whilst the works are big carried out.
- DO NOT make changes to the project if at all possible once you have a contractor on site and ensure that you are kept up to date with any problems / issues on site; but try not to interfere.

GOOD LUCK