

Detailed Business Plan for the Kirkcolm Church Road Car Park

Overview;

As a Dumfries and Galloway Council asset the car park has been neglected over a number of years, the edges are overgrown with weeds, the surface has potholes and many imperfections, the garages are largely in a state of disrepair and in some cases dangerous with the council not even sure who is paying rental on them and there has never been any rent collected on the telephone exchange. As a community trust we feel we can manage this asset for the village much more efficiently.

Telephone Exchange

We will open negotiations with Openreach and we are anticipating a rental income of [REDACTED] PA which for the first few years will be ploughed back into maintenance of the car park. Initially clearing the site of vegetation and addressing the more serious surface defects and in the longer term resurfacing the whole car park.

(The rental figure is based on informal discussion with council officers who have been in discussion with Openreach. More complete records of valuations will be available once we are given council permission to discuss them with Openreach.)

Garages

From our investigations it would appear that tenants are paying ground rent but own the structures although many of them have simply been abandoned. Council records regarding site rental have been woefully inadequate in our search but we have identified some details from local knowledge. Formal notice would need to be given in case former tenants want to reclaim their structures, but this is doubtful given they would fear back ground rent being applied. The garages need making safe then the best ones bought back into use immediately, following refurbishment, with others being brought back up to standard as funds allow.

We believe we need to look beyond their use as garages and some could be marketed as storage units once made weather tight. There is also the possibility of removing some of them and replacing them with a small workshop or two to attract small businesses. If the small business workshop idea takes off there is ample space to build some more units. Another potential for income would be a secure caravan/boat storage area.

Currently it seems only two units are generating income the rest are just an eyesore. With all units let there is potential for an income of some [REDACTED] PA.

Charging points

Provide two or three electric car charging points. With the ever increasing number of electric vehicles on the road this is a 'must do' item. The points would not generate a huge income but would draw tourists into the heart of the village who would hopefully spend money in our soon to be developed café and shop whilst they wait on their vehicle charging. We could enhance income by placing PV solar panels on the garage roofs to power the chargers.

Electric Minibus

We will seek funding to provide an electric minibus for the use of the community, following research there is the potential to bid for the bus route.

Community Resilience Area

With the closing of the old village hall the community council will need somewhere to store their equipment, this includes the winter resilience equipment. This could be one of the garages or we have agreed, subject to planning permission, they could store a portacabin style building on the car park.

Car Park

There are no plans for the majority of the car park to be any other than what it is, a car park.

The Trusts intent has always been to maintain community and public access to the car park, we have made this clear verbally and in writing to the council this has not and will not change. Moreover we would accept and encourage that this be represented in any transfer documents. The only caveat we would desire is that we have the option to redevelop the bottom third for any afore mentioned workshops, secure storage or other use which the residents of the the village desire, vehicular and pedestrian access to Main Street properties being maintained.

The car park is an essential asset to the village and is needed for the benefit of our new community hub, shop and café. Also a number of residents use it as an alternative to street parking.

We have also been in communication with the local estate landowner who has opened up new walking paths through the estate and desires to use the car park as a start/end point for these walks to avoid any congestion from visitors parking on the already full village streets. We are fully behind this plan as it will be a symbiotic relationship bringing visitors into our shop and café.

In the past the car park has also served the old village hall, the future of this building is in doubt. The Trust ran it on a two year lease but with its many problems decided it was not a viable proposition, a point borne out by the council surveyor who described it as a liability and not an asset that could be transferred to the village. What ever the future of this building the car park is there for its use, we would even be happy to guarantee a specified number of parking spaces for the hall use.

The income from the telephone exchange and garages will initially be ploughed back into the car park making it safe once again and a pleasing space in the village rather than the eyesore it is now. Beyond that, income would be used to further other community trust projects enabling us to give the village what the residents desire not what may be forced upon us.

This business plan forms part of our larger business plan which has been driven by our 'Community Action Plan' commissioned in August 2017 and carried out by the Creetown Initiative.