

CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL
COMMITTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES

COMMITTEE:	Community & Environment		
MEETING DATE AND TIME	28 July 2022 7.00pm	LOCATION	Town Hall
REPORT FROM	David McGifford, Chief Officer		
AGENDA ITEM	17		
REPORT TITLE	Update on Chapel House – Known locally as Moody Hall		
Background	<p>After many years of neglect, Chapel House was acquired by a developer whose planning application 19/0400C was granted permission for the development of 14 living apartments, the original application was for a care home facility.</p> <p>Being a listed building there are conditions with regards to the renovation of such buildings and from what we understand there were quite a lot of discussions with the planning authority on this matter. The renovations eventually stalled, and the building started to fall into a state of disrepair even though the developer stated he was keen to progress.</p> <p>The site became unsecure and was being accessed for what could only be described as extreme anti-social behaviour. The building appeared to be at significant risk and as a result all windows and doors have now been boarded up and secured, as well as a perimeter fence being erected.</p> <p>There is a major concern about the future of this building and that it may deteriorate to such a degree that this listed building will be lost if there is no intervention. Cheshire East Council have advised that the building is secure and not currently at risk.</p>		
Further information	<p>The developer is not currently responding to telephone calls or messages from the Town Council and has no legal requirement to do so, however we are aware that there is a potential solution which may be of interest to the developer which has been brought forward by two respected community organisations as set out below:</p> <p>1. From Susan Munro, Chair of Elizabeth's Group <i>Elizabeth's Group is very interested in Moody Hall as it was the home of Elizabeth's School at one point in its chequered history. I am in contact with a potential buyer who wants to see the building saved and used by the community including Elizabeth's Group and the Museum.</i></p>		

	<p>2. From Ian Doughty, Director of Congleton Museum:</p> <p><i>Congleton museum would always be interested in exploring potential sites to establish an enhanced facility that would meet its aspirations and provide a showcase for Congleton and the wider area's heritage. The occupation of all or part of Moody Hall as a museum would be dependent upon the conditions, which would include a long term right to occupy in excess of 25 years to secure capital funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and at a peppercorn rent. There would certainly be grants available, not only for relocating the museum there, but also depending upon a rigorous architectural assessment, listed building grants for either the Georgian or Victorian Societies.</i></p> <p>With a potential buyer, these two organisations could provide a viable opportunity for the developer should he be interested, the challenge is the reluctance of the developer to enter into any discussions on this matter.</p>
Financial Considerations	<p>The interest that is being shown in buying Moody Hall is outside of the Town Council, on that basis there are no direct financial implications to the Town Council in terms of procurement. Should the museum become part of the project and relocate to Moody Hall, there will need to be capital expenditure in the area which they currently occupy at the Town hall to enable its future use.</p>
Environmental Considerations	<p>The development and occupation of Moody Hall will certainly enhance and protect the building itself whilst also eradicating the anti-social behaviour that has taken place at this location. It will also create a better all-round environment for local businesses and residents.</p>
Equality and Inclusivity considerations	<p>That the future use of the building encompasses the necessary legislation of equality and inclusivity</p>
Proposal	<p>Whilst this report is mainly for information to the Community and Environment Committee, it is proposed that the Chief Officer, on behalf of the Town Council, writes to the developer and formally requests a meeting with themselves and the potential buyer.</p>