

6. 2003/04 NORTH NEW BRIGHTON COMMUNITY CENTRE USE

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The purpose of this report is to inform the Board of the consideration of arrangements for usage by current and potential user groups of the North New Brighton Community Centre after its pending refurbishment, and to seek the Board's approval of the proposed course of action.

BACKGROUND

At the meeting of the Board's North New Brighton Community Centre Working Party on 10 December 2002, it was proposed that Advocacy Team staff continue to carry out management roles and negotiate access with prospective users during renovations and improvements.

Discussions with the project manager have ascertained that because of the nature of the work to be undertaken in the refurbishment all user groups and activities will have to be relocated during the refurbishment period. This is hoped to be from February to the end of August of 2004. Given weather and building project unpredictability, user groups have been asked to make arrangements with their alternative accommodation for up to a year to allow for any unforeseen circumstances.

The other area of interest and concern to current user groups is the possible impact and effect the proposal of a new user group may have on their use of the premises after refurbishment. The new user group, the Community Connection Nga Ngaru Trust, has been instrumental in securing Council funding and support for the more complete refurbishment of the premises. The Trust hopes to be involved in and use the community centre extensively for the local community.

User groups have met individually with staff to discuss relocation during refurbishment and their own use of the Centre, including possible effects if the Trust's proposal were to proceed.

RELOCATION OF USER GROUPS

With regards to relocation, most groups have a holiday break over Christmas so were happy to start 2004 programmes in other premises. They appreciated having sufficient notice to find alternative accommodation, were pleased to see work finally start on the building and were looking forward to coming back to a revamped Centre.

The main concern was the cost of alternative accommodation compared to the current fee for hall rental and their inability to afford this. Quite a few groups are looking at relocating to the Parklands Community Centre during refurbishment.

EXISTING USER GROUPS' NEEDS

Specific concerns and issues raised by groups around their own use of the Centre currently were lighting, heating, floor surfaces, the stage and storage space. The details of these issues were passed on to the project manager and his response was an assurance that these areas will all be improved on in the refurbished Centre. Staff will check in with the project manager once the tender has been contracted and particulars are discussed and finalised.

When it came to the possible effect of the Trust's proposal on their use, all but one group indicated that they were open to negotiations and were generally supportive of the community café concept. The other group was supportive of the café concept but did not want to lose their space in the hall as the group uses the entire upstairs area. Other issues were the need for running water and facilities to make their own tea, coffee and suppers, etc.

PRESENTATION OF REFURBISHMENT PLANS TO COMMUNITY

A public meeting was held on 9 October 2003 to show the wider New Brighton community the plans for the refurbishment of the Centre and to inform them of the proposed timeframe involved for the refurbishment. User groups were informed of the meeting and that the use of the hall and relocation issues were separate ongoing processes that staff would continue to be in touch with them about.

Five user groups attended the meeting. At the meeting user groups and local residents asked for plenty of notice of the timing of removal of asbestos in the roof of the Centre. User groups also raised the need for funding for furniture and storage at the Centre. They accepted there would be a likely increase in fees after refurbishment. Concern was also raised about the viability of the Trust's community café proposal, given the local competition and the needs of existing users.

CONSIDERATION OF FUTURE USE OF CENTRE AND COMMUNITY CONNECTION NGA NGARU TRUST'S PROPOSAL

On 17 September 2003 a meeting was held between staff and Board members to clarify issues around the refurbishment and subsequent future use of the Centre.

Discussion focused mainly on the proposed use of the facility by the Trust. The Trust's proposal at this time was explained as:

A community cafe to be held in the linoleum part of the upstairs part of the building from 9am – 5pm Tuesday to Saturday with exclusive use of the kitchen. The exclusive use of the kitchen was to include all other hours as well, due to health regulations etc and for equipment security. Any groups wanting to use the kitchen area would be asked to use the Trust's café staff as a catering service.

For regular/current hall users, reserve seating space in the cafe would be made available to not exclude them from using the section of the hall with a sea view. The Trust would set up tea and coffee making facilities for user groups (free) and café staff could do the user groups' dishes.

The exclusive use of the downstairs "kitchen" area would be for the healthy lunches programme. This is again for health and safety regulations and makes sense to be located downstairs for ease of delivery. The idea for the additional use of the downstairs space is believed to have arisen from discussions with councillors.

The downstairs meeting space was also seen as a future movie theatre for the community.

Discussion and concerns raised at this meeting included:

- The need of the Trust for a second kitchen area downstairs and to have exclusive use of both kitchen areas.
- The Trust's original presentation was not suitable for the Property Unit to glean the necessary information from, noting that in the original proposal the café project was not considered feasible by the Trust's own consultant. A sheet of information that the Property Unit request from tenants was tabled and it was generally agreed that the Trust should be asked to provide this information for future discussions/negotiations.
- As a result of the hours and needs of the Trust in operating the café it was felt that the interpretation of commercial versus community needed to be clarified and agreed to by all parties.
- The Property Unit's preferred type of agreement for usage of the premises by the Trust was a licence. This would outline the areas of usage and responsibilities but not give exclusive use of hall areas to the group outside of their hireage hours.
- A suggested proposal by Board members was to offer the Trust the downstairs area as a lease. This would enable the Trust to establish the healthy lunches programme and possibly run a café or movie theatre there. Whatever the Trust used the space for would be at their discretion. If the Trust wanted to use the space upstairs it could be hired in the same way as by other user groups.
- North Wai Boardriders Club toilet upgrade was now included in the budget and plans. No additional "construction/renovations" could be undertaken by the Club (without the prior written approval of the Property Unit).

From this meeting, Board members decided that Alister James be invited to join the group as his involvement would help clarify Council and Trust expectations and "understandings" to date. Board members also requested probable costings for rentals for the Trust and the North Wai Boardriders after refurbishment, the number of members of current user groups and any other information relevant for the Board to consider proposals.

At a subsequent meeting of staff the following information was established:

Council approval has been given for the project to proceed based on plans held by the project manager and the budget presented. Along with the seismic and building code upgrade this budget includes:

- The cost of a dividing door on the upstairs floor of the building.
- A standard kitchen upstairs (stove, rangehood, dishwasher, microwave, sink, etc).

- Downstairs “kitchen” area is a basic servery with hot water and a sink – not a kitchen as such as it is currently a storage room.

In considering the future use of the building two decisions were needed in relation to the building refurbishment: whether to include the dividing doors in the main hall on the upstairs floor and to what standard the kitchen areas will be upgraded, if at all. Any upgrades of either kitchen area will have to be funded separately by the Board, user groups themselves or other funding sources. If the dividing doors are not in place at the close of the project then any remaining funds will be consumed within unit budgets and the doors may not be able to be funded at a later date.

There were many variables that needed to be answered before any proposals could be further investigated to offer some guidance. These essentially involved the role of the facility in the community, where the Trust and their proposal could fit in with this and what effect/benefits the Trust’s proposal would have on user groups, the local community and citywide.

A further meeting of Board members of the working party agreed that the dividing doors were important for present and future users alike and to develop the potential for hireage of the Centre. Further discussions with regards to the kitchen space were deferred until the Trust’s proposal could be clarified.

On 20 October 2003 a meeting was held between Board members of the North New Brighton Community Centre Working Party, Alister James, the North New Brighton Residents’ Association and the Trust. Prior to the arrival of Trust members and the Residents’ Association representative, Board members discussed elements of a Board vision for use of the Centre, to provide direction for future usage. Suggestions from this session were taken away from the meeting and the following draft vision created:

North New Brighton War Memorial and Community Centre – Vision (Draft)

“To provide a well maintained, safe, user friendly, accessible and affordable facility that will involve the community and meet their needs.”

Priority use is local community non-profit groups. Space will be available to casual/small commercial ventures (servicing the local community), private functions and regional use, with a 75% usage target for the first year of operation after refurbishment.

Board members also considered that the following categories of use (in no particular order) should be encouraged at the Centre:

- Beach/watersports related activity (a key venue for the wider beach area).
- Holiday and after school programmes.
- Residents’ group.
- Community/public meetings.
- Private functions.
- Dancing groups, to utilise the wooden floor.
- Youth activities.
- Conferences, including Council seminars.
- Passive recreation (cards, housie, etc.).

No need was seen for a general liquor licence for the Centre and it was noted that the Centre is not suitable for more dynamic sports or activities.

The Trust’s proposal was then discussed with members of the Trust and the Residents’ Association representative. The Trust had made the decision that its proposal to operate two exclusive kitchens (for a café and the healthy lunches project) would not work well with other user groups. The community café proposal is the prime interest of the Trust in the Centre and an alternative site for its healthy lunches project had been found at the former Blaze site in Shortland Street for a year (with the possibility of this becoming a permanent arrangement). The Trust proposed that the upstairs kitchen at the Centre be exclusively for a community café (with the hall divider) and a downstairs kitchen be available to other users.

The Trust clarified that the exclusive use of the kitchen was a requirement of health regulations and that other users would have the option of hiring the hall and using the Trust as caterers. It was understood that the refurbishment involves the provision of a good quality residential-standard kitchen (sink, stove, dishwasher, and microwave) and the Trust would provide funding for any upgrading of the standard of these facilities. This is in accordance with the Council resolution that the Board fund the costs of installing a commercially equipped kitchen or seek funding from other available sources.

The project manager indicated that a servery facility could be installed in the main hall to enable user groups to make refreshments and heat food if they did not wish to use the café or the café was not open.

The Trust clarified various other aspects of how the proposal would work:

- As a charitable trust, the Trust would return any café profits back into the Centre.
- For private functions there would be the option of using the downstairs kitchen (assuming one was provided in the refurbishment) or using the Trust as caterers at reasonable rates.
- A total clean up of the café kitchen would be required if it was used by others; the Trust would need further advice on whether this would be workable for special cases.
- The wall divider in the main hall would allow the two sides to be used at the same time but the whole area could be utilised by both the café and a user group without the divider.
- The hours of the proposed café are still to be determined as the Trust had an avenue it would explore regarding the operation of the café that requires agreement in principle before committing more resources to an updated business plan. The previous business plan had been based on a worst case scenario and the operating environment had also changed considerably since it was prepared.
- Further community consultation would also be undertaken before completing the business plan.

Issues raised in discussion after the Trust members and Residents' Association representative left the meeting included:

- A desire to retain the option for self-catering of functions at the Centre, possibly through a first floor servery.
- The level of any lease/licence cost for the Trust, which would depend on the extent of its usage.
- A need for clarity in the conditions of the lease/licence on how revenue, maintenance and access to the Centre would be handled if the Trust proposal proceeds.

The meeting supported staff proceeding with the tender process for the refurbishment work, with any decisions on tenders to be deferred until a decision is made on the Trust's proposal. It was also made clear that project tenders, given the present building climate, may very well come in over budget and no more Council funding is available.

Another issue raised was the need for the community café proposal to be considered in light of the commercial lease being paid by the café in the New Brighton Pier/Library building.

The meeting agreed:

That it be recommended to the Community Board that further consideration be given to the Community Connection Nga Ngaru Trust having the exclusive use of the first floor kitchen of the North New Brighton Community Centre to enable the community cafe proposal to proceed, subject to:

1. The Trust providing a business plan to be approved by the Community Board.
2. The business plan including community utilisation of the first floor.
3. Further consultation with the community following receipt of the business plan.

From here staff are arranging meetings with user groups to update them on negotiations with the Trust and current options for accommodating the Trust's proposal in conjunction with the user groups' needs.

Staff

- Recommendations:**
1. That the Board support the concept and intent of the Community Connection Nga Ngaru Trust proposal for the North New Brighton Community Centre and that further consideration be given to the Trust having the exclusive use of the first floor kitchen of the Centre to enable the community cafe proposal to proceed, subject to:
 - (a) The Trust providing a business plan to be approved by the Community Board.
 - (b) The business plan including community utilisation of the first floor.
 - (c) Further consultation with the community following receipt of the business plan.

2. That staff continue to negotiate use between current and potential user groups of the North New Brighton Community Centre towards settlement, in particular settling kitchen provision issues to enable the tender to be awarded.
3. That Board members of the North New Brighton Community Centre Working Party continue to meet to develop a policy or guidelines for staff with regards to setting rental/lease rates to charge community groups operating a business in a community facility.

**Chairperson's
Recommendations:**

1. That recommendations 1 and 2 be adopted.
2. That staff only form a working party to develop a policy or guidelines with regards to setting rental/lease rates to charge community groups operating a business in a community facility.