

Grindon Parish Hall

Registered Charity Number: 1187353 Company Number CE020293

Trustee Meeting 15 April 2024	
Report Title:	Proposed Strategy 2024/25
Author:	Chris Chapman
Action Required:	The Trustees are asked to approve the Strategy 2024/25 and to monitor its implementation at Trustee meetings.

Background

In accordance with the GPH Constitution, as approved by the Charity Commission, the objective of Grindon Parish Hall ("GPH") as a charitable incorporated organisation ("CIO") is:

- i. to promote for the benefit of the inhabitants of Thorpe Thewles and the surrounding district without distinction of sex, sexual orientation, race or of political, religious or other opinions, by associating together the said inhabitants and the local authorities, voluntary and other organisations in a common effort to advance education and to provide facilities in the interests of social welfare for recreation and other leisure time occupations with the objects of improving the conditions of life of the said inhabitants.
- ii. to establish or secure the establishment of a community hall and to maintain and manage the same in furtherance of these objects.

The purpose of the proposed Strategy is to define specific activities and outcomes to help achieve the CIO objective and for which the Chair and Trustees will be accountable to users and other stakeholders.

Proposed Strategy 2024/25

The proposed strategy has five (5) activities. The activities are not discreet and have an element of dependency and overlap between them.

The **5 Strategic activities proposed are:**

1. Invest in the fabric of the building;
2. Secure grant funding;
3. Promote the Hall;
4. Attract volunteers; and
5. Hold prices at current levels.

Invest in the Fabric of the Building

Purpose: to ensure the community Hall continues to be well maintained to serve the needs of the community.

Strategic Objectives: A number of investments have already taken place and have been reported to Trustees. The specific objectives identified (to date) as part of this Strategy proposal are:

1. To have a **roof survey undertaken**. At the time of the major refurbishment of GPH in 2020, the roof was assessed as not needing replacement. The roof is original and therefore 100 years old, and if needing replacement would be costly as well as disruptive to users. A survey would inform if any work was required to the roof.
2. To **install Solar Panels**. A business case was completed by the Chair and reported to the Management Committee on 28 Nov 2023. The business case identified a payback from the investment and approval to proceed with the case was obtained from the Management Committee. After the seasonal break the case is planned to be finalized with information due from contractors to enable the case to proceed.
3. To **install an access ramp** to the left hand side door. Entry and exit for this door are currently via a concrete step. This side door is not one of the two main entrances/exits; however, it is an identified emergency exit and the step outside is on the exit route for those needing to evacuate from the kitchen door. In the case of an evacuation, where users need to exit from this door or the kitchen the step could become a barrier for those in wheelchairs, pushchairs or who are less mobile.
4. To **replace facias and soffits** where needed. The visual appearance of these, particularly the soffits above the entrance porch, which have peeling paint, is not in keeping with the desired image for the Hall. They need repainting or replacing as appropriate.
5. To **repair gaps in render**. The outside of the Hall needs a refresh. The render has cracks / gaps in some places which have been assessed as cosmetic not structural. These should be properly stripped back and render repaired, if possible, not just filled as that would only be a very short-term fix.
6. To **repaint the external walls**. The walls are looking a bit tired and in need of a refresh to ensure the hall looks its best and attracts users. This applies to the walls and the black paint at the foot of the walls.
7. To **decorate the meeting room**. The room is little used, other than for storage. A reason may be the poor state of the room. The carpet has been shampooed and its appearance improved. The room could be more attractive to users if walls are replastered, the room decorated and perhaps new furniture installed.
8. To **install wall buffers**. The walls are constantly being chipped and dented by tables and chairs, and patched repairs are highly visible. If not addressed the main Hall walls could end up looking like those in the meeting room. Wall buffers would help mitigate this damage.

9. To **re-varnish the main Hall floor**. The main Hall floor would benefit from re-varnishing, particularly as the deep clean has stripped some of the finish.

How will we measure success: success will be measured by the number of identified objectives above being completed and by the amount of investment spent on the Hall.

Secure Grant Funding

Purpose: to secure funding from external bodies which, along with GPH Reserves, can be utilised to fund investment / maintenance works

Strategic Objectives: the specific objectives identified are:

1. To **identify external bodies** which may be able to provide grant funding for works identified.
2. To **produce a schedule** of all such bodies for future reference.
3. To **submit specific funding requests**, tailored to specific grant body requirements, so seek to secure as much funding as possible for works to proceed.

How will we measure success: success will be measured by the amount of grant funding secured, and indirectly by the achievement of the identified investment objectives completed.

Promote the Hall

Purpose: to promote GPH wider to enhance its profile with current and potential users, residents and other stakeholders.

Strategic Objectives: Investment has already been made in developing the GPH website which went live in October 2023 and is having a steady and increasing number of 'hits'. The specific objectives identified as part of this Strategy proposal are:

1. To complete a **utilisation review** and report findings, and recommendations, to Trustees.
2. To undertake at least two, **targeted campaigns**, in 2024/25 to seek to increase utilisation of the Hall.
3. To **post updates** from each Trustee meeting on Facebook, highlighting the achievements, successes and future events at the Hall.
4. To **use the Annual General Meeting ("AGM")** to seek feedback and encourage a user group / regular information exchange.
5. To complete a review of the **Parish Hall Facebook** presence. The site is currently private and cannot be made public. Target audience is therefore limited and those

seeking to find venues to hire will not readily come across our page. This may impact the ability to attract new clientele.

6. To engage, subject to costs, **specialist PR support** and advice to refine our approach in enhancing the halls profile and usage. Where possible some initial support from volunteers from a PR background will be sought.

How will we measure success: success will be measured by the completion of the above activities and ultimately be evidenced by an increase in the number of people attending events and the overall utilisation of the hall.

Attract Volunteers

Purpose: to increase the number and diversity of volunteers who provide regular support to the Hall. At present there are only a few individuals outside Trustees who volunteer to support Hall activities. We aim to increase this number.

Strategic Objectives: the specific objectives identified are:

1. To use the **AGM** as a forum to 'recruit' volunteers.
2. To post on the Hall and Village **Facebook** sites asking for volunteers.
3. To assess the potential of an '**open event**' where anyone interested can visit the Hall, be shown around and gain an understanding of what we do so they can assess if and how they could volunteer.
4. To ask regular **coffee morning attendees** if they would like to volunteer.
5. To produce a **volunteer register**, identifying who, what availability and what specific skills they may also offer – eg DIY skills.

How will we measure success: success will be measured by the number of volunteers who regularly provide support. At present, outside of Trustees, we only have 3 individuals providing regular support (NS, JG, RM).

Hold Prices at Current Levels

Purpose: to hold prices at existing (2023/24) prices for as long as possible.

Strategic Objectives: A Fees and Charges proposal was presented to the 15 January 2024 Trustee meeting, which recommended holding charges at 2023/24 levels for 2024/25. This was approved subject to review in 6-months to ensure bank balances were stable.

The specific objectives identified are:

1. For other activities identified in this Strategy to **increase utilisation**, therefore providing additional revenue for the Hall to continue to operate and meet its costs and remain financially viable. Increased revenue from utilisation would reduce the need for price increases to users.

2. To undertake a further **comparison exercise** during 2024/25 across local Halls to determine how comparatively our prices remain at least as 'relatively competitive as currently.

How will we measure success: success will be measured by the retention of Hall rental prices at current levels.

Next Steps

- The GPH Trustees agree the Strategy 2024/25.
- The Chair to lead implementation with support from other Trustees, as required.
- The Chair to present the strategy at the AGM, and seek to encourage attendance at the AGM.
- The Chair to report progress at each Trustee meeting.