



St Georges & Priorslee Parish Council

The Gower **Business Plan**

August 2020

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Foreword

The Gower has a proud history and with the Parish Council's support it would have a bright future. It has been the venue for many celebrations and gatherings of the local community since it was built in 1873. The building has a prominent position in the parish of St Georges & Priorslee. The Gower is a venue that holds very fond memories for many members of the local community. We aim to bring the building back to life and create positive experiences for current and future generations. The Parish Council are proud to be involved and will work with partners to secure funding and gather support to see the project come to fruition.

The Parish Council now play a vital role in the development of the building; despite being a relatively small council we are both progressive and dynamic in ensuring we deliver the needs of our electorate. The Council's current facilities have been well maintained over the years providing us with an office and a meeting room, but we recognise that we have outgrown the building now and require more space to make us more accessible to the public. The Parish Council will relocate to the building, taking on ownership, sublet offices to potential businesses, and, most importantly, provide residents and visitors with a fantastic community facility that ensures The Gower reclaims its community status.

We aspire to see The Gower fully reopened during early 2022. This will be a credit to the all those involved, particularly members and volunteers of the Gower Heritage Enterprise Group who have been such a committed team of people in planning, fund raising and delivering great work to keep the building alive. I personally thank every one of them and look forward to the Parish Council building on their work and see the much loved building bought back in to use at the very heart of the community.



Cllr Richard Overton

Chairman of St Georges & Priorslee Parish Council

Executive Summary

The Gower will be a thriving and multi-functional venue in the heart of its community managed by St Georges & Priorslee Parish Council and supported by community and business partners and local volunteers. The Parish Council want to build on the work of the many dedicated volunteers who have strived to maintain and promote this historic and iconic building and create a contemporary space for community, enterprise and recreational use.

Using our heritage to shape the future, The Gower will be a place for people to come together and enjoy a varied range of activities across a range of themes including arts and culture, education and skills, employment and volunteering, fitness and wellbeing, holiday clubs, healthy eating and social events. It will also provide access to key support services through the Parish Council and partners and include managed office space and meeting areas to support the local economy and businesses.

The Business Plan is based on average income generation and supplemented by small grant funding income. These income streams could change or be affected by unknown external influences, such as the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The projected financial forecast currently shows a large loss and deficit every year, highlighting a significant risk to the Parish Council. To address this challenge, the Parish Council may be able to increase revenue income and lever in significant grant funding from numerous organisations, as mentioned in the Business Plan, alongside future precept increases. Extra financial support and funds could also be leveraged in by creating alternative management and support groups. Another alternative would be to rescale the project and look to draw on other income streams into the wider development of the site.

By taking on responsibility for The Gower, the Parish Council has an exciting opportunity to diversify and expand the services, activities and events it can offer to the local population. We will be able to create an attractive and accessible public space and venue for local people and organisations.

History

Built in 1873 as a cottage hospital but converted for use as a school until 1961, then a youth club for many years, The Gower is situated in the parish of St Georges & Priorslee in North Telford. The building is intrinsically linked to the wider heritage of the area and holds fond memories for many local people who attended The Gower when it was a school and Youth Club. It closed in 2006, earmarked for demolition, then planning permission was granted for housing development. Following a successful campaign from residents to save the historic building, the planning permission was revoked and despite great efforts from a local community group, the Gower Heritage & Enterprise Foundation, funding to restore The Gower was not secured and the building continues to be in a state of disrepair.

The current owners, Telford & Wrekin Council, approached the Parish Council to work co-operatively to make the re-opening of the building a reality for the community of St Georges & Priorslee and surrounding areas. Volunteers have already contributed time and expertise to support the project and it is anticipated the re-opening will take place in early 2022.

Consultation

Having consulted local people and potential users, we are keen to ensure that the building has a strong community focus and delivers services which are relevant for and of value to the communities of St Georges and Priorslee. The Parish Council will ensure a wide range of themes underpin our focus on community cohesion – arts and culture, health and leisure, education, employability skills and social events. This will be supported by providing opportunities for organisations and community groups to deliver activities and events and the provision of a community café. A varied timetable of activities for people of all ages will ensure that The Gower creates memories for future generations.

Funding and Design

The Capital Plan has involved funding of £565,000 from Telford & Wrekin Council, an additional £60,000 for the exiting of the current parish centre and £700,000 from the Parish Council through a public loan. The funding will provide a high-quality refurbishment of the building providing:

- Parish Council Office
- Storage space
- 2 x Large Community Halls accommodating up to 80 people
- 1 x Community Room accommodating up to 45 people
- Kitchen
- Bar/Café Facility
- Additional office space available on a 'To Let' basis to tenants
- Outdoor grassed area and play park
- Secure car parking

A Sustainable Future

The building is long and narrow, measuring 200ft in length and 20ft in width, providing one of the largest spaces available for community and private hire in North Telford. The Parish Council intends to employ a Building Manager to ensure maximum occupancy is achieved and a strong management committee will be crucial in overseeing the future organisation and ensuring involvement of the local community.

The re-opening of The Gower in 2022 will be a special and exciting time for many local people and the Parish Council envisage the project will be a catalyst for positive change both socially and economically.

Vision

Using our heritage.....to shape the future!

A 'diamond' in the heart of the parish, The Gower will be a vibrant business and community centre, with people and ideas growing together. Set in the Grade II-listed building, 'one of the best-preserved Victorian buildings of its kind', the unique and flexible space will be used by people who want a place to come together, do things, access services, volunteer and celebrate social events. It will provide facilities for local groups, third sector, social enterprises, businesses and public agencies to deliver and promote their work and support services, from arts to tai-chi classes to community meetings. All of this will be set in a building with local heritage and a strong commitment to community use.

The Gower will create and sustain opportunities for social enterprise and community use, it will be accessible, user friendly and provide users with a high-quality venue. The Steering Group will work with the Parish Council to ensure a programme of activities and events is run to engage all members of the community and to generate support from specialist providers and partner organisations to fulfil our aims and objectives.

The Gower will increase footfall to the local area, supporting local businesses and encouraging more visitors to the parish.

Our Aims are to:

- Refurbish and re-open The Gower as a community venue, to accommodate and provide a wide range of events and activities for the local community, groups, private hire and businesses.
- Retain a strong and positive community focus and complement existing provision at other local venues.
- Create a programme of activities designed to bring in people both locally and outside the area.
- Create employment and training opportunities for local people.
- Develop existing and establish new partnerships across all sectors, voluntary, statutory and private.
- Ensure all members of the community can access the facilities, particularly our most vulnerable parishioners.



The Gower building currently stands empty and in a poor condition

Reasons why we want to get The Gower open again

The Gower will be the largest venue in the parish and provide an important focus for the community. The transformation will create an inspiring and functional community building in an enviable location that we can be proud of. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 and subsequent months of isolation, there is an urgent need to increase support to our communities, local businesses and vulnerable residents. The long-term impacts on society are unknown, but there are likely to be changes in work, shopping and travel patterns such as more remote working, e-commerce, video-conferencing and demand for local entertainment and less personal interaction in business and labour markets and reduced travel. Attitudes towards social distancing as the norm will also affect how public spaces are used.

The Gower has the potential to act as a catalyst for social and economic recovery and provide a resilient hub to support local people and businesses. It will:

- Invest in and stimulate local economic and community regeneration.
- Raise aspirations by providing employment and volunteering opportunities, work placements, learning and skills qualifications. St Georges has households in the bottom 10-20% of social deprivation.
- Provide access to advice services, exercise activities and a community garden, helping improve the health and wellbeing of users. Death from cancers, circulatory disease and heart disease is higher in St Georges compared to other wards in Telford.
- Offer high-quality furnished office and work space to let to support local businesses and entrepreneurs.
- Provide a communal space to accommodate support and community groups and volunteers to help address the issue of loneliness and isolation. Over a third of households in the parish are one-person households.
- Be a great social space for young people to meet, have fun, come together and engage them into playing an active part of the community. There is a newly refurbished play area and large outdoor space for them to use.
- Address the issues of social isolation and loneliness, a reoccurring theme council staff hear when talking to residents of Priorslee, particularly those who no longer have their long-term partners alive. The building will offer them an opportunity to take part in a wide variety of activities.
- Offer broadband and Wi-Fi access to support a range of community activities and enhance the facilities offered as a venue for hire.
- Provide a safe and secure venue, well served with parking spaces enclosed behind a brick wall and securely gated.

After years of neglect causing the building to fall into disrepair, the renovation of the building will ensure that The Gower is cared for once again and create a greater sense of civic pride.

Working in Partnership

The Parish Council's key partner to date is Telford & Wrekin Council, but this is not exclusive. We aim to engage with a wider range of organisations as the project develops in the months ahead for the benefit and sustainable future of The Gower and the community it serves. Partnerships can be hugely beneficial, bringing added value to the organisations involved. The Parish Council will seek specialist input and support as when required.

The Gower Steering Group

The Steering Group will consist of representatives from:

- St Georges & Priorslee Parish Council
- Telford & Wrekin Council
- Gower Heritage & Enterprise Foundation

We envisage the development of the 'Friends of The Gower' community group to ensure we engage and involve local people and businesses and who will play a key role in helping to sustain the building by making grant applications, fund raising, running local projects and being an essential volunteer workforce to support the activities in the building. In 2018 there were over 100 local volunteers who were instrumental in starting to clear and clean the site, renovate the play park and record memories of local people.

Community Consultation

Parish Council staff delivered a six week consultation programme, including the delivery of a freepost survey to 5,500 households, weekly drop-in information sessions, attendance at local community centre/halls and community events, School Council workshop, parish newsletter and information posted on 9 parish noticeboards and the parish website.

The key finding of the survey revealed that out of 449 responses received:

- 66% of residents supported the proposal for the Parish Council to take on the responsibility of The Gower and raise its precept to pay for the repayments of a public loan
- 32% of residents did not support the proposal
- 2% were unsure.



UPDATE ON THE GOWER BUILDING

ST GEORGE'S & PRIORSLEE PARISH COUNCIL

Your views matter!!!!!!

Dear Resident of St Georges & Priorslee,

The Gower building is situated in the parish of St Georges & Priorslee, the building was once used as a miner's hospital, a school and later a youth club. The building is in a poor condition and community volunteers have worked hard in recent years to secure some community use. It is evident when speaking to residents and their families the building holds fond memories for local people. The community group, The Gower Group, have put in many hours of work to make the building partially usable but more investment is needed if the building is to be sustainable in the longer term.

The building and land is owned by Telford & Wrekin Borough Council who have pledged £650,000 towards renovation of the building. The parish council held initial discussions with the Borough Council earlier this year and we are considering moving into to the Gower and managing the premises with the community, members recognised the current parish centre is small and offers limited space and we know we are rapidly outgrowing it and decided to pursue the suggestion. We would want to work with the community, especially The Gower Group, to make this happen.

A feasibility study has been carried out to cost out the refurbishment of the building, it will provide space for a new parish council office and chamber, 3 large community rooms to hire, with kitchen/Café & Bar facilities and outdoor space, all for community use.



The parish council are seriously considering this option and we need to know our residents views on the matter, we want to get a better understanding of the level of support for the project and help us with the decision to take on the responsibility for the project. **We are carrying out a programme of consultation with residents over the next few weeks, including the survey on the back of this letter, and kindly ask you to complete and return it in the freepost envelope provided with your comments.**

You can also contact the parish office by emailing us at clerk@stgeorgesandpriorslee-pc.gov.uk or telephone 01952 567700 if you would like to speak to us. You can also access the survey online by going to our website www.stgeorgesandpriorslee-pc.gov.uk

To refurbish the building an estimated budget of just over £1.2 million will be required, if the parish council were to take on the responsibility of the building we would need to apply for a public board loan of £700,000 for the refurbishment of the building and also need to increase our annual income (our precept) from collection of Community Tax, to help pay for the running costs. This will mean to a local household currently on a Band D an additional increase of approximately 35p a week to help fund the project.

Thank you for your support, your views really do matter.

Please note - the consultation will close on Friday 13th December 2019

Copy of the Parish Council's consultation insert that went out to our residents in the parish newsletter in November and December 2019

Potential Partners

Within the parish and local area we have primary schools, GP practices, local churches, a cricket club, public houses and a range of businesses and community facilities. We will engage with these organisations to assess and agree how we can establish mutually beneficial relationships, what they want to get from The Gower and what positive results can be achieved through collaboration. A major opportunity will be to work with the Gower Heritage & Enterprise Foundation and other partners in the voluntary and community sector to attract significant grant funding. We hope that this will result in support, sponsorship, shared resources, service development and local supply.

Programme, Facilities and Marketing

The use of The Gower fits into a range of themes which have been developed following our consultation programme with residents when we asked what they would like the building to be used for. Since this consultation, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought about unprecedented societal changes and challenges. Community buildings in Telford and across the UK play a vital role in supporting communities and especially marginalised groups and vulnerable people by distributing essential food and medical supplies, providing education and activity guides and advice on how to keep positive and stay healthy.

The services and activities that we aspire The Gower to be used for are outlined below.

Community Use. The building will provide the space and facilities to hold events and run activities and provide services and opportunities that meet the needs and aspirations of all members of the parish. The large space will enable safe social distances and provide new ways to bring connections. The Parish Council's current centre currently offers residents opportunities for small social gatherings, but due to the size of the room, the number of people able to use the room is limited. Residents and community groups have already expressed an interest and desire to get involved in establishing local groups and delivering activities. The café will promote healthy eating and use food to make a difference to the community. The FareShare scheme redistributes good quality surplus food to supply meals for vulnerable people, older people's lunches and community cafes.

Arts & Culture. The local area has never been able to offer people access to local arts and culture opportunities. As a large venue with flexible meeting space, a community café, outdoor space and parking, The Gower has great potential to become a centre for arts/crafts/culture of all types and a venue to suit a wide range of interests. A strong arts and cultural offer will support positive personal wellbeing and bring communities together to share experiences such as singing, telling stories and knitting. It could also help to attract and retain people to live and work through a better work/life balance and support small businesses and entrepreneurs in the creative industries. Our aim is to find out what opportunities are of interest and develop these for the benefit of the community.

Learning & Skills Development. A range of learning opportunities will be developed and delivered in association with key local education and training providers including the local colleges and the Marches Skills Providers Network. Lots of people are moving onto Universal Credit and this trend is likely to continue so support to help people move back into employment and reskill will be critical. The Community Learning Team in Telford & Wrekin Council has indicated an interest in running courses and with the need for larger rooms to deliver classes Telford College is seeking outreach venues. The Gower will provide Wi-Fi and longer term our aim is to provide access to on-site computers which will lead to enterprise opportunities and assist with job searching.

Leisure & Social Activities. A wide range of activities will take place in The Gower. Currently there are very few local places to go to enjoy and take part in leisure activities so the large indoor and outdoor space will create a great opportunity for exercise classes (dance, yoga, martial arts), indoor bowling and other group fitness sessions. The café will provide an informal space to meet up and the kitchen facilities could run cookery and healthy eating sessions as well as providing themed food events. The outside area will offer

activities for a small skate park area, community gardening, outdoor fitness programme and community events.

Children & Young People. Both the indoor and outdoor facilities will offer great opportunities to provide children and families with support and fun recreational and educational activities, such as homework clubs, weekly sports / activity sessions specifically for young people, birthday parties and a children's disco delivered by local service providers and the voluntary sector. Other suggestions are to provide holiday activity clubs for young people and a Hungry Kids Summer Lunch Scheme.

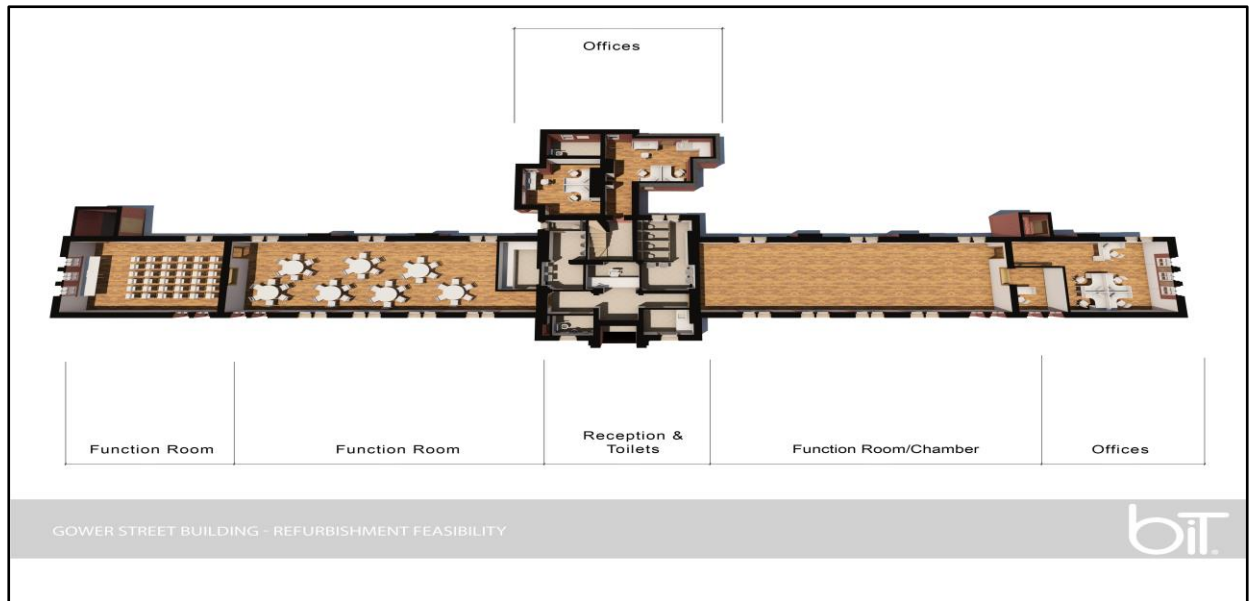
Business Use. There is considerable interest in small serviced office space and the opportunity for business networking and hot desking facilities. The Gower is also well placed being near to the main road and rail networks. The offices will be available to rent, preferably on a 12 month let basis. To ensure that the maximum income is generated, we propose that the offices are furnished and serviced and broadband is ready for businesses to move in. Access to outside space, a café and free on site car parking together with good security all make it an ideal location for businesses.

Administration Services. Many smaller charities and businesses are interested in buying services and support to help them run their organisations. Payroll, printing and other business services could be offered to potential customers and promoted through the Federation of Small Businesses, Shropshire Chamber of Commerce and the Telford Chief Officers Group who engage with third sector organisations.

Description of facilities

As the proposed floorplan shows below, The Gower will provide:

- 2 large halls available for hire, both able to accommodate up to 80 people. It will offer a programme of activities from local providers determined by the community and will also be available for private hire.
- 1 smaller function room available for hire and to deliver training, accommodating up to 45 people.
- Kitchen/Café area seating 20 people, open to the public and available for hire. It will also be used as an informal meeting space and a bar area for social gatherings.
- Hot desking available for use on an ad-hoc or regular booking basis.
- Office space available to let on a long/short term lease.
- Play park, communal garden and outside space.
- Large secure parking area, with parking for disabled people close to the front entrance.



Marketing Overview

Marketing is an on-going process and we will identify the resources and skills needed to manage marketing over a long period. One idea is to set up a small sub-committee to be the 'marketing team'. They don't have to be from the Steering Group; there may be individuals and local businesses within the community who are keen to be involved and have the professional skills. These people will be worth seeking out.

The types of skills required:

- Management experience
- Editing and Copy writing
- Graphic Design
- Promotion/ PR
- Website and Social Media platforms
- Networking
- Co-ordinating resources, people and venues
- Fundraising

Our marketing objectives are to:

- Promote 'Using our heritage – to shape the future'
- Increase usage of The Gower and participation in activities and events
- Increase awareness of events and activities running at The Gower and ensure good levels of participation and a sustainable business model.

For long term sustainability and income generation, the range of services and activities and unique venue offering must be of value to the community and potential users. To achieve success and monitor our progress, we will produce a marketing plan which details:

- the resources and services we will be selling and providing

- how this matches who wants to use them now and in the future
- the advantages of the location and features of the building
- our skills and where we could get additional help and resources for marketing
- the pricing structure
- how we will promote and sell our services using different media platforms and for different customers and organisations.

Marketing Strategy

Our approach will be collaborative and we will work with other organisations where possible to improve local provision and support the local economy and supply chain. We will:

- Engage the community and encourage development of new ideas for and participation in events and activities
- Engage with other local hall/facility providers and identify how the building can complement and add to the current community offering by working co-operatively
- Focus on developing activities and events in the first year and generating income to sustain activities.

Building and Programme Management

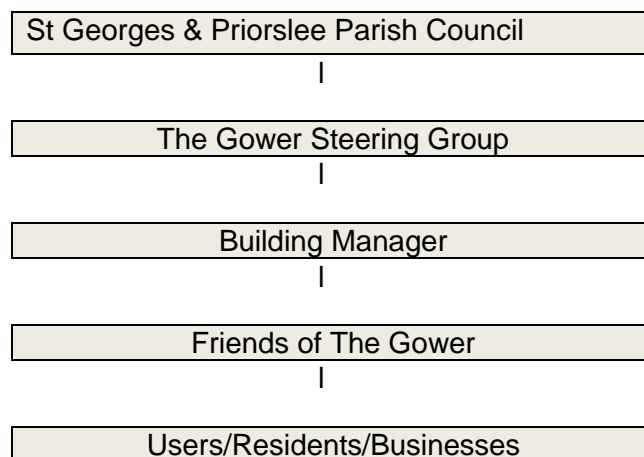
Overview

The management and governance structure will remain the responsibility of St Georges & Priorslee Parish Council.

The building will be leased on a peppercorn rent for 99 years from Telford & Wrekin Council (the terms of which are to be agreed) by St Georges & Priorslee Parish Council and move its offices to The Gower. The Parish Council will employ a Building Manager to manage the building and to promote events plus Caretaking/Cleaning/Keyholder staff.

Note: Telford & Wrekin Council would be willing to transfer the freehold of the Gower to the Parish Council subject to restrictions on transfer and a clawback arrangement to protect Telford & Wrekin Council's financial investment in the event of sale.

Governance Model



Governance Roles

St Georges & Priorslee Parish Council responsibilities

The Parish Council meets every 3rd Tuesday of the month except in August and January (normally held the last Tuesday of the month) The Gower will be a standing Agenda item at every meeting until it becomes established and sustainable. Responsibilities will include:

- Ensure the financial stability and sustainability of the building
- Approve and ensure the implementation of policies and procedures
- Approve and ensure the delivery of action and implementation plans that meet the needs of the whole community
- Approve and ensure implementation of health & safety and building management
- Approve and ensure implementation of marketing and promotional plans
- Approve and sign off all statutory duties and obligations
- Address any issues that will affect the smooth running of the building
- Identify new partners and develop sustainable relationships.

Steering Group responsibilities

The Steering Group will meet six times a year and responsibilities will include:

- Monitor financial budgets
- Monitor activities and progress made by Building Manager
- Report to the Parish Council on any issues which require attention
- Support the Building Manager in identifying new opportunities for business
- Approve events and activities where required
- Ensure the highest level of service is delivered.

Staffing Structure

The Building Manager will be employed by St Georges & Priorslee Parish Council, initially on a part time basis, and responsibilities will include:

- Secure, manage and promote events, activities and bookings
- Support all events and activities taking place in the building at all times
- Supervise cleaning and caretaking staff
- Manage keyholding
- Support and mentor volunteers who will help play a crucial role in the sustainability of the building.

We will use volunteers wherever possible to undertake tasks such as running the café, customer service, assisting with administration, helping to support events and with maintenance of the building and grounds.

Capital Plan

The design plans produced by the Telford & Wrekin Council biT Group are all to English Heritage/Listed Building Consent/approval. The detailed breakdown of the refurbishment costs (dated 17th April 2020) for the external and internal works includes:

External

- Roof repairs
- Chimney repairs
- Rainwater goods
- External brickwork
- External windows
- External doors
- Drainage
- Resurfacing tarmac and car parking area

Internal

- Minor repairs to roof trusses
- Mechanical and electrical works including heating system
- Plaster walls and ceilings
- Flooring
- Fit out of kitchen, toilets, offices, reception area
- Painting and decorating throughout

The biT Group will be appointed to oversee the project management of the capital programme, including the procurement and management of the construction contract.

Where practical and possible, the Parish Council is keen to explore renewable energy solutions such as biomass, solar panels and electricity charging points for cars. In an average building space heating accounts for the vast majority of energy use, up to 70%, so ensuring that the way the building is heated is energy efficient is likely to have a far bigger impact than changes made to lighting, appliances or water heating. A survey has been conducted by Microgen Energy Ltd and a quote has been provided to install a biomass boiler under the ESCO system. Based on this quote, there would be a reduction to the capital costs of reinstating the gas supply and boiler system of £23,440.

Funding to support the Capital costs:

Telford & Wrekin Council	£565,000
Telford & Wrekin Council (payment for exiting parish centre)	£60,000
St Georges & Priorslee Parish Council (Public loan)	£700,000
Total	£1,325,000.00

Financial Forecast

The Parish Council will need to secure funding from a variety of sources to ensure that The Gower is sustainable. The current precept has been increased by an additional £41,000 to support the repayments of the £700,000 public loan. Further increases to the community tax precept in future years to support the ongoing running costs of the building and staffing will need to be considered. Around 1,000 new homes are being built in the parish which will increase the amount of community tax precept the Parish Council receives. It is envisaged that by year 2 some of these costs will be met through successful funding bids and from room hire and letting of the office space.

Projected Forecast

A projected financial forecast, attached in Appendix 1, has been produced over a period of 30 years - December 2021 – March 2052, with assistance from an external consultant, detailing a predicted prudent income supplemented by grant funding and significant expenditure for The Gower and the Parish Council. It is a guide only, based on assumptions detailed within the spreadsheet and hypothetical inflation rates of 3% which could go up or down. Also, the income streams could change or be affected by unknown external influences, such as the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

The projected financial forecast currently shows a large loss and deficit every year, highlighting a significant risk to the Parish Council. To address this challenge, the Parish Council may be able to increase revenue income and lever in significant grant funding from numerous organisations, as outlined below, alongside future precept increases.

In the first 16 months (December 2021 – March 2023):

- Predicted income is £476,366. This includes the precept, new income generation through the room hire, café, managed office space, ticketed events and administration services and grant funding. These are outlined below.
- Predicted expenditure is £514,507. The expenditure includes the Parish Council business, staff salaries and the operational running costs for The Gower plus a £4,000 contingency fund. It excludes any Parish Council reserves.

There are additional capital costs of £43,200 included in the first year to cover furniture, kitchen equipment, crockery and ICT equipment. Asda or other local companies may be willing to offer support to cover these costs. Equipment and other capital costs can be included in bids for grant funding if they are provided for community benefit.

It is important to note that the research for this work was carried out whilst the COVID-19 restrictions were in place which limited, for example, obtaining quotes from smaller local businesses to supply services to the building. The significant expenditure costs relate to the running and maintenance of the building and maintenance checks to meet statutory compliance and health and safety legislation. These costs have been based on similar building usage types with guidance from the Telford & Wrekin Council biT Group, online research and obtaining quotes for heating and ICT services. It is strongly recommended that services such as insurance, ICT, CCTV, waste collection, fire and safety checks and statutory maintenance go through a robust procurement process to obtain competitive rates

and be fixed over a longer period of 3 to 5 years, where possible, to reduce costs and negotiate high quality service level agreements.

New Income Generation

The Parish Council has a great opportunity to generate new income streams through The Gower, by hiring out the 3 rooms, attracting people into the café and ensuring occupancy of the managed office space from day one of opening. A Building Manager will be recruited before The Gower opens to develop and promote this new business and manage a programme of diverse activities, of value and interest to a wide range of people and organisations. Through the community consultation we know what people want now, but we will ensure that ideas for new activities and service provision are generated through ongoing consultation and research. The more varied, innovative and different the programme is, the more likely people will use and promote the facilities and keep returning.



Proposed outside view of The Gower

The room hire and office rates have been based on the current market rates for similar facilities in Telford. The predicted income over the period is cautious and speculative and based on average demand. We hope to secure an anchor tenant for the serviced office space starting at an annual rate of £7,200 and income from bookings for events and activities in the first 16 months (December 2021 – March 2023) of £70,300 so that The Gower makes an income as soon as it opens. A special opening event will be planned with

the help of the community and volunteers and potentially local businesses to ensure its opening is well publicised and there is already interest from local clubs and organisations to hire rooms to run fitness and arts based sessions and adult training courses. In addition, clubs and groups may be interested in paying for storage space for equipment and for services such as printing and photo copying.

The café and bar licence together with free Wi-Fi and accessible car parking will be attractive and we predict an annual income of £10,000. Informal meetings can take place here and activities such as coffee and cake mornings, a monthly dementia café, knit and natter, special lunches and themed evenings. During the evenings and at weekends, having catering facilities will make it more likely for people and families to hire the large function rooms for parties and special family events. As more people work from home or flexibly, having a venue to use for hot desking or co-working is convenient, as well as providing refreshments for office based staff or people attending training events. To minimise salary costs we will offer volunteer and work placement opportunities to run the café.

In partnership with the Gower Heritage & Enterprise Foundation and voluntary and community enterprises interested in using The Gower as a venue to deliver support services, we envisage applying for grant funds and available investment grants. Our target is to receive £60,000 between December 2021-March 2022 and £60,000 between April 2022 and March 2023 by submitting multiple applications. We have not included funding income from April 2023, but our intention is to successfully apply for grant funds to cover the running costs. We will also create a fundraising plan to include setting up a fundraising scheme, organising fundraising events and seeking business sponsorship and in kind support.

Funding Opportunities

Due to COVID-19 many of the grants in the table below are being directed towards applications for services to support communities and people adversely affected by the coronavirus pandemic and social restrictions or currently closed to new applications. The amounts are indicative and the lead or accountable organisation applying will need to discuss any project with the funding body.

Funding Source	Amount	Support For
Asda Foundation	£30,000	Community benefit
Awards for All, National Lottery	£10,000	Community benefit
Bernard Sunley Foundation	£5,000	Supporting the disadvantaged
Crowd Funding – Spacehive/Kickstarter	£10,000	Community projects
Esmee Fairbairn Foundation	£100,000	Wide ranging
Garfield Weston Foundation	£100,000	Wide ranging
Idverde Community Investment Fund	£40,000	Community spaces
People’s Postcode Trust	£20,000	Combatting discrimination and poverty
Sport England Small Grants	£10,000	Helping people become active

The National Lottery Community Fund	£150,000	People and communities
The National Lottery Heritage Fund	£10,000	Cultural and heritage projects
Tudor Trust	£50,000	Positive change in communities
Veolia Environmental Trust	£75,000	Community buildings and spaces

There are many more grant funds available from small trusts and foundations to support community activities. These can be found through a directory such as The Directory of Grant Making Trusts published by Directory of Social Change, online research or with help from Telford & Wrekin Council's Community Support team.

Social Value

In addition to these extensive funding opportunities and the new income streams, under the provision of the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012, the Parish Council will be able to score contractors and suppliers on their social value contribution during the procurement process. This will secure wider social, economic and environmental benefits which will result in further funding for local community projects and developing more opportunities.

We will also ensure that small local businesses have opportunities to supply products and services to The Gower further supporting the local economy and spending our money locally.

Overall, we understand the challenges we face in generating sufficient and sustainable income streams to cover the running and staffing costs of The Gower. However, we feel confident that with well-prepared plans, collaborative working and innovative ideas for grant funding applications, we can secure sufficient funding to renovate and maintain The Gower as a vibrant centre in the heart of the community.

Risk Analysis

Once the project has full approval to proceed, the Steering Group will produce a detailed Risk and Mitigation Plan to list potential risks with their ranking and priority, identify the preventative and contingent actions to prevent them from occurring and reduce their impact should they eventuate, along with a process for tracking them.

The Telford & Wrekin Council biT Group will be appointed to oversee the project management of the capital programme, including the procurement and management of the construction contract.

SWOT analysis of The Gower

STRENGTHS

- Saving and preserving a unique Grade-II listed building of historical significance
- The project has the support of the majority of the local community as discovered by the comprehensive consultation undertaken
- There is no other community space of this size in the locality with large external grounds
- The Parish Council has funds from Telford & Wrekin Council and its own reserves to supplement the loan
- The building will enable the Parish Council to build on and expand its current programme of events and activities
- The community will have improved access to the Parish Council offices
- The building will offer the community a wide range of opportunities and activities, including business and enterprise, and address the current problem of social isolation and lack of provision for children and young people.

WEAKNESSES

- The project is dependent on a large public works loan
- Funding the predicted costs of maintaining and operating a newly opened building
- The challenges and additional work that the Parish Council face in generating the required running costs
- Additional finance will be needed to cover the costs of internal equipment and furnishings
- The shape of the building may make storage space difficult
- The view that Telford & Wrekin Council has got rid of the majority of its community buildings as it recognised that the running and repair costs far outweighed any income from room hire and other income streams.

OPPORTUNITIES

- To create a thriving and well used community facility
- To develop and support community and voluntary groups who will help alleviate social isolation and support vulnerable people and marginalised groups
- To create a space that other agencies, community groups and businesses will want to use and support

- To maximise use of the external grounds to extend services and storage space
- To attract funding for sustainable solutions such as solar panels and electrical car charging points
- To improve the environment, replacing an 'eyesore' with a building and grounds that are restored and pleasing to the eye
- Be part of a growing number of successful town and parish councils who have saved local community buildings and transformed them into a thriving community asset.

THREATS

- The building and refurbishment costs could escalate depending on what is found during the refurbishment
- Interest rates could rise and therefore the loan repayments could become considerably higher – a generous contingency fund has been allocated
- The demand for space and room hire may be much less than anticipated
- Having sufficient committed volunteers who have the right skills for the work they are carrying out
- The success rate for grant funding applications is lower than predicted
- If unable to raise the required running costs the building could become a financial liability for the Parish Council and threaten current projects and staff.

Success Factors

The Parish Council will ensure that the Steering Group has sufficient capacity to oversee the building, monitor and address any shortfalls and mitigate the identified weaknesses and risks. Full council will work closely with the Group to develop new strategies that address the identified weaknesses. There will be a continuous reviewing and development of target audiences and ongoing consultation on the wants and needs of the building from the local community, community and voluntary groups, businesses and wider potential customers. We will create a strong identity for The Gower and high quality marketing material which will be used to promote the facilities and programme of events and highlight key assets such as the large on site secure car parking and outside space.

Next Steps

The most important next step is for the Parish Council to agree a way forward and decide whether to invest in the future of The Gower or not at the next Extraordinary Meeting scheduled in September 2020.

If the Parish Council approve to proceed with the refurbishment plans and project, we will need to carry out the following actions before work can begin:

- Appoint the Telford & Wrekin Council biT Group to oversee the project management of the capital programme and begin the procurement process
- Agree the supplier for the biomass heating system and the heads of terms
- Obtain Planning and Listed Building Consents
- Notify NALC, the National Association of Local Councils, of the Parish Council's intention to apply for a public works loan
- Submit the application to the Public Works Loan Board
- Agree the transfer of ownership of the building and land with Telford & Wrekin Council, including who will be responsible for the play area
- Ensure that the building plans are compliant with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010
- Seek independent legal advice on all matters relating to the project
- Specify the ICT requirements for the building and start the procurement process
- Establish the Gower Steering Group
- Start to draft an Action Plan and Marketing Plan.

Appendix 1 – List of Organisations

Below is a list of the organisations contacted and consulted to assist in the production of the predicted financial forecast and business plan.

Biomass system: Microgen Energy Ltd (quote provided); SER Technologies (unable to quote due to COVID-19)

Building maintenance: Telford & Wrekin Council biT Group; JCW Energy Services Ltd (statutory compliance checks); MrPATtastic Telford (PAT testing); Telford Washrooms (quote provided); Unicorn Fire & Safety Solutions Ltd

Community buildings and café: Centre for Sustainable Energy; Development Trusts Association; Gower Heritage & Enterprise Foundation; Locality; NALC publications; Plunkett Foundation; The National Lottery

Education and training: Marches Skills Providers Network; Telford College, Telford & Wrekin Council Community Learning Team

ICT services: Bespoke Computing Ltd; Priority Managed Services (quote provided); Tuzungo (website design)

Office space: Telford Business Centre, Telford & Wrekin Council Regeneration and Investment Team; Telford & Wrekin Growth Hub

Room hire: community centres in Telford including Anstice, Brookside Central, Jubilee House, Ketley, Meeting Point House, Park Lane Centre

Waste collection: Veolia