

Dated: 26<sup>th</sup> March 2016

**RE: Sterndale Moor Social Club Restoration**

Hartington Upper Quarter Parish Council,

We understand that Parish finances are under pressure and subject to public scrutiny – we also know that the budget has gone down this year and was hoping only for a small contribution in support of the project. For example a raffles prize - not the full Third Party Contribution. We would like to address the points raised in the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2016:

- 1) There was concern as to whether an upgraded social club on Sterndale Moor would actually be in the best interests of the residents. It was thought that only six or eight residents were regular users of the social club and that most of the patrons came from elsewhere.*

It is not an upgrade or new build; it is getting the building to a safe and acceptable standard. Some individuals may choose not to use or support the Club for many reasons, including personal choice and the current state of the building. However, the current committee and restoration project are working hard to improve this. We have seen a number of new and returning residents choosing to join us alongside longstanding paying and honorary members. We assure you this totals more than six or eight regular resident members and we wish to continue providing a welcoming space that all residents and guests are able and want to use more readily. The fact that the Club serves patrons from the surrounding villages is in our view a positive statement, especially if the Parish Council chooses to support the project in any way by using the public finances set aside for all Hartington Upper Quarter Residents. Stating such small user numbers in the March minutes is an unfair comment based on opinion. Last year we had 210 people connecting with us on Social Media and 103 Members, including 34 honorary (£0) and 69 full Members (£6 per year). This is alongside Temporary Members (£1 per visit), Members family including individuals who are under 16 and Bone-fide Guests. We had many more people visiting for the first time and hiring the Club.

- 2) A busier public house would increase traffic, noise and the usual problems associated with public houses which could prove detrimental to residents.*

This is misrepresentative: We are not a 'Business' or 'Public House' – please do not use these terms to describe us – instead we accept 'Not-For-Profit', 'Non-exclusive Members' and/or 'Social Club'. Sadly, some people complain about tractors, road sweepers, muck on the road, donkeys and the Village cockerel...the Social Club has ample grounds to support the fluctuation in traffic and/or parking. For example, despite owning and keeping the Club land, we do not currently prevent residents or their visitors from parking or using Club land for activities such as playing or dog walking etc. The Club has procedures to deal with troublesome patrons and we adhere to the Club licencing rules in terms of Temporary Events Notices, noise pollution and capacity to reduce the incidents which would be detrimental to residents. Similar to when the new houses were built at Peak View, the fear of change was more detrimental than the actual change itself and if anything these houses have improved the outlook of the village. If the Club fails the Title Deeds (not us) state that the land will go back to what is now Tarmac where there is no guarantee that the land would not be built upon thus increasing residential property and subsequent noise and

traffic to the whole village. The restoration project aims to guard against this to protect Club land. The field is part of Club land and belongs to the Members (not as some believe the residents). This again is all stated in the Title Deed agreement. The land and field is owned, used and maintained by the Club, and the Club Committee wants object to any attempts to take Club land or assets as part of the Village Green Application mentioned in the October 2015 minutes.

- 3) *The social club provides community events; however, almost all of these involve alcohol. Councillors could only identify one event, the “Easter Egg Hunt” on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2016, which would be suitable for families. It was thought that a social club with a bar in every room was inappropriate for community activities. Councillor's wondered whether the upgrade of the social club would involve making an alcohol free area which could be used as a youth club or for other family activities.*

As someone who has put on countless child and family friendly activities at the Club since 2011, this statement is unjust and we are very disheartened that these negative comments have been included as part of the Parish Council Minutes that are open for public scrutiny. We would like this rectifying. The Club relies on a small number of active committee and individual members who volunteer their time and effort to run these events. Any resident, member or individual is more than welcome to get involved and put on a community event or hire the Club at £0-low cost at any time – youth, family, adult or otherwise (after all the Club is meant for all ages – not just youth or adults). There was a time that Committee politics stood in the way of this; however this has changed for the better and the current committee wishes to encourage such activity. Both bars have shutters and boards that act as screens as and when required to provide a vast ‘alcohol free space’. Again to clarify we are not a ‘Public House’ or ‘Business’ – we are a Not-for-profit Social Club open to all who wish to join and support us. At present the bar is the number one source of income that keeps the Club standing – this includes non-alcohol and snack sales. To think the Club could survive or thrive as a Village Hall alone by taking away one of its key assets that attracts regular income and hire of the Club is optimistic at best. However this is one opinion and yes, the restoration has looked at ways to use the Club space and section off areas with better affect. We are also investigating alternate sources of income aside from alcohol sales for example introducing Parking Permits on Club land and renting storage space. We could look at so much; renewable energy, community kitchen and gardens, youth and children’s clubs – the list goes on. What we don’t have at present (and hope to build from the restoration) is community volunteers to run all these event ideas. For example, the Club stored a Table Tennis table for over 2 years in the hope a youth club would be forthcoming – there is nothing stopping this or any other community activity taking place (without the sale or presence of alcohol). The Club supports this type of use.

*The Bar is open 5 evenings per week from after 7:30/8pm – this leaves 7 days and 2 evening per week, 365 days a year for alternate non-bar activities. The following is a list of Club events:*

#### UPCOMING:

- 27/03/16 – Family Easter Egg Hunt & Bingo.
- 01/04/16 - Ladies Night – makeup & jewellery. The Club is also here for Ladies.
- 14/05/16 – 70s & 80s Night. The Club is for fun and adults.
- 27/08/16 – Sports Day – Family races & games. The Club has a vast outdoor space.
- 29/10/16 – Halloween – over 50 children and their families attended last year.
- 10/12/16 – Christmas Disco – another family friendly event with Santa.

#### PAST:

- 22/03/16 – Open Doubles & Presentation Night: We are part of the Flagg Moor Pool League with two Club teams of 12 members (and many honorary member supporters as the Club is here for mature and retired patrons too).
- 18/02/16 – Family Quiz – this was a popular evening for all ages including youth.

- 19/12/15 – Christmas Party with Santa for children and families.
- 15/12/15 – Pool League singles knock out.
- 13/11/15 – Village Bonfire and Firework Display – hundreds enjoyed this evening.
- 05/09/15 – Music with The Vermonts a local resident band that has led to private hire of the Club from residents for 40<sup>th</sup> and 60<sup>th</sup> Birthday parties.
- 26/07/15 – Family Doubles & Kids Pool Knockout for Village children who took the initiative to put on this event for themselves.
- 26/07/15 – Music Night with Thunderbird 6 (supporting another local resident band).
- 11/10/15 – Charity Fundraiser.
- 25/08/15 – Fundraising Rounders Match.
- Halloween 2015, Oktoberfest, Car Meets, Car Boots, other Ladies Nights, New Year's Eve, Disco's, Quiz and Bingo...Paint Party – to re-paint the Function room.
- The Club is used for local and general elections.
- The Club is used for private hire – popular for children's parties including inflatables. We also hosted the community Glassball project – a community event that looked at the history of the village. We made contact with Cora who has since provided pictures which are on display at the Club and were included in an exhibition fronted by Sterndale Moor residents. The bar was not part of this community activity and took place in the function room.
- We have held dance & exercise classes in the past and hope to do this again in the future.
- The Club is non-exclusive and Membership is open to anyone over 16 years old – we have several 16-17year olds that regularly use the Club to play darts and snooker.
- Supervised under 16s are welcomed.

*4) Some Parish Councillors recalled making a donation to the social club many years ago. The Parish Council would like to have a list of the names of the persons responsible for the social club, members of the committee and the Trustees*

Please let's look at the facts of this: In 2003/04 Hartington Upper Quarter Parish Council applied on behalf of Sterndale Moor Village to the Derbyshire Aggregates Levy Grant (DALG) Scheme who donated £43,000 to replace play equipment at Sterndale Moor play area – this again is Club land that we rent out at a yearly cost of £5 to HUQPC for the benefit of the whole Village. Please note that it was not the Parish Council who donated this sum and it was not a Parish Council donation towards the improvement or maintenance of the Club building. The DALG Scheme also donated £12,952 – to replace existing windows and external doors with double glazed units whilst also re-pebble dashing the exterior of the building to insulate against noise and dust from nearby quarries in 2004/05 – again this was not a donation via HUQPC...it does however guard the Village against unwanted noise pollution.

We are due to have our AGM (06/04/2016 at 7:30pm) so we can provide an updated list of Committee names after this date. Again we understand budgets are tight and do not seek a large sum from the Parish Council. We do hope this answers some questions about the Club and the restoration goals which justify a token gesture and warrants an effort to amend some of the negative statements in the March Parish Council minutes. We are very passionate about the future of the Club, if the Parish Council does wish to meet the Club Committee in person we are happy to arrange this at a mutually agreeable time and place to allow Councillors the chance to see what is being discussed from an alternate perspective.

Yours sincerely

**Sterndale Moor Social Club Committee.**