

The Tollbooth Group – Questions and Answers

1. What is wrong with selling it? It would be listed building so little would change if renovated?

Response: Nothing is wrong with selling it but given that 90% of survey respondents are in favour of it being saved then we owe it to them to complete our due diligence to see if it can be utilised for the sake of the Topcliffe villagers (and people beyond). We would need to have complete justification that it can not be made viable. At this time, the due diligence has not been completed sufficiently. We believe that the avenues for use and for funding should be fully explored first.

2. What is your next stage?

Response: We want to work with the Parish Council to continue a review of the repair work in greater detail and understand the costs of short, medium and long term repair and maintenance.

3. What support is needed from the people of Topcliffe to complete the plan?

Response: At this time, nothing is needed from the people of Topcliffe other than their input and feedback into any surveys we send out. In that respect, we would thank you for your engagement and feedback so far.

4. If the village kept it what would it be used for?

Response: A number of great ideas have been suggested and we now need to fully understand the rectification work to the building in order to ascertain the financial implications and viability of each of the ideas. Once we know this, we can then see what the best viable options would be.

5. Are you planning on having a survey carried out to show what needs to be done and the cost of it?

Response: Yes. A detailed survey along with quotations for work is now needed. This will need to be discussed with the Parish Council.

6. When will the tollbooth group be speaking with associations regarding the funding?

Response: This will happen once the cost of rectification work has been defined. Then we can look to the funding possibilities.

7. How many residents currently use it as a snooker club?

Response: The Snooker Club is a separately run function so actual numbers would need to be obtained from the Snooker Club chairperson however, our understanding is that there have been approx. 106 users of the snooker club over the last 8 months. This is made up from members and guests. In addition, from the first questionnaire, a further 22 people have expressed an interest in becoming a member.

8. Where will the money come from?

Response: The Tollbooth Group will look into funding raising for the renovation costs first before any consideration would be made from Council Tax contributions.

9. If the village kept it, should it by law have disabled access to the upstairs - even if kept as a snooker club?

Response: We are not aware of this requirement, but it can certainly be looked into. We will consider this in any future questionnaires to understand the requirement for disabled facilities.

10. Why should villagers foot the bill until it is clear whatever it is used for can benefit all villagers?

Response: They shouldn't. This is exactly why the Tollbooth Group was formulated so we can explore all the options of usage and how the building can benefit as many villagers as possible.

11. Why not just leave it as it is? Probably if nothing was done at all it would stand for another 100 years at least - who is asking for it to be repaired and why - the few residents who play snooker?

Response: It is the Parish Council that have requested the property to be reviewed as the burden of repair would fall upon them if there were any issues. Ultimately you could well be right about the building staying in place for a long time, but that still needs to be investigated to understand it's true state.

12. Have you seen the full survey of the repairs needed?

Response: As per the Savills report, we have only seen a 'Summary List of (likely) Repair/Remedial Works' based on the anticipated requirements over 10-15 years however, this is not itemised with costs. Unfortunately, we are unable to share this list at this time.

13. What works/improvements would be needed in the medium to long term to enable the building to be put to an alternative use, and do you have a budget in mind?

Response: This is what we need to find out. In order to do so, we would need to have a further assessment completed. Ideally we need to find a cheaper solution to this. We would need the Parish Council to give us unrestricted access to the building to do so.

14. Where do you see the funding coming from for such a project?

Response: There are a number of options available to us when looking to fund raise. We have yet to look into this topic as it depends on a number of factors such as: 1. How much do we need to raise? 2. What do we want the building to be used for? 3. What grants could be available for the work? 4. What localised support can we find to reduce the overall cost of the work etc.

15. Does anyone on the committee have experience in applying for grants, fundraising etc?

Response: Just to clarify, we are not a committee. In answer to the question, Yes, to some degree.

16. Do you have enough committee members with the time and capability to manage the project without putting residents under undue pressure to contribute?

Response: We (the Tollbooth Group) are merely a group of individuals looking to understand the implications of keeping the building. We are not a committee as such. We have no intention (nor remit) to put residents under undue pressure to contribute anything.

17. Have you progressed finance options

Response: It is too early to look into this until we know how much is needed which still remains unclear.

18. Has a survey been conducted so that a true and accurate quote is available to see what funds are required and when.

Response: No, not yet. This is the next key point to allow us to progress in this project.

19. Can we actually save it?

Response: We believe so and it is clear that 90% of residents want this too but until we have all the facts and costings worked out, we will not be able to answer this question accurately.

20. I am finding it difficult to understand how the Toll Booth Group can launch a sustainable future for this building. The volunteers would be taking on a huge risk if they were to become responsible as custodians. And why let the PC off the hook: it is their responsibility

Response: This is correct. As the Tollbooth Group, we are not going to be taking custodianship of the building. It will remain the responsibility of the Parish Council as it is within their mandate to look after this property.

21. Will the Toll Booth Group demand that an independent referendum is held to ascertain resident's views on the future of the Toll Booth?

Response: At this time, we have a clear understanding of the views of the residents (prior to the detailed cost analysis). Once we have the financials and a plan for this then we can see what the people of Topcliffe think with all of the facts laid out for them.

22. How much would each council tax bill increase by if the toll booth group had their way?

Response: Ideally we think the money should be fundraised but until we know the full cost, this question can not be answered.

23. Would the council tax bill come down once the work completed?

Response: Until the work has been costed and the options for funding have been investigated, this is impossible to answer at this time.