

Nomination of a Community Asset – Mereworth Village Hall

1. Background

1.1 On 3 July 2023, Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council (“the Council”) received a nomination for a community asset from Mereworth Parish Council, in respect of Mereworth Village Hall (“the Property”).

1.2 The nomination describes the Property as follows:

“Two halls, kitchen, toilets, cloakroom and porch with car park. Covered area to rear. Situated on Butchers Lane, Mereworth”

1.3 The nomination indicates that it is currently in use as a Village Hall. Mereworth Parish Council is the Custodian Trustee and it is currently leased by Mereworth Village Hall Committee (MVH).

1.4 The Parish Council (the nominator) describes the property as follows:

“The village hall is regularly used by residents and visitors for parties, clubs, dance groups, lunches, etc. It is also used for Public Consultations, as a Polling Station and for Parish Council Meetings. This allows the local community to get together in a safe and warm environment. It facilitates Parish Council meetings to be held and attended by residents, and the regular lunches are vital for older residents to meet and socialise.”

The Parish Council also state:

“The village hall is run by the MVH Committee who ensure that it is suitable for public use.”

2. Legal Framework

2.1 Section 90 of the Localism Act 2011 (“the Act”) states:

“90 Procedure on community nominations

(1) This section applies if a local authority receives a community nomination.

(2) The authority must consider the nomination.

(3) The authority must accept the nomination if the land nominated—

(a) is in the authority's area, and

(b) is of community value.

(4) If the authority is required by subsection (3) to accept the nomination, the authority must cause the land to be included in the authority's list of assets of community value.

(5) The nomination is unsuccessful if subsection (3) does not require the authority to accept the nomination.

(6) If the nomination is unsuccessful, the authority must give, to the person who made the nomination, the authority's written reasons for its decision that the land could not be included in its list of assets of community value.”

2.2 By s.88 of the Act, land is of “community value” if:

“in the opinion of the [Council]—

(a) an actual current use of the building or other land that is not an ancillary use furthers the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community, and

(b) it is realistic to think that there can continue to be non-ancillary use of the building or other land which will further (whether or not in the same way) the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community.

*...
[or]*

in the opinion of the [Council]—

(a) there is a time in the recent past when an actual use of the building or other land that was not an ancillary use furthered the social wellbeing or interests of the local community, and

(b) it is realistic to think that there is a time in the next five years when there could be non-ancillary use of the building or other land that would further (whether or not in the same way as before) the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community.”

2.3 Land may only be listed in response to a community nomination (or in other prescribed circumstances which are not applicable here). A “community nomination” includes a nomination by a Parish Council.

3. Assessment of Nomination

Is it a “community nomination”?

The nomination has been made by a Parish Council in respect of land within its area, which meets the requirements of s.89(2) of the Act for a community nomination.

Is there an “actual current use” or “time in the recent past” where the land was in community use

The Property is currently in use as a village hall with car park.

Is there a realistic prospect in the next 5 years of a community use?

The property is currently in use as a village hall with car park, this is *capable* of use in a manner which furthers social interests and/or social wellbeing and there is a realistic prospect in the next 5 years of a community use.

4. Conclusion and Decision

- 4.1 The Council has received a valid community nomination for the Property.
- 4.2 The Property was, in the recent past, in a use or uses which furthered the social wellbeing of the local community.
- 4.3 It is realistic to think that the property could be put to such uses within the next 5 years.
- 4.4 The Property is in the Council’s area and is of community value. The Property should therefore be included in the Council’s list of assets of community value.