The Leintwardine Centre Business Plan 2024-26

22 January 2024

A Message from the Chair

Leintwardine is most fortunate to have the superb facility of the recently renovated Centre as a hub for leisure activities for people with a variety of interests to meet and use. We provide a programme of events and social activities each month and are always looking for ways to extend these to attract as much involvement from the village as possible. Many community groups and clubs also use the Centre and its facilities are also available for everyone in the community to use for their own events.

A Committee of Trustees, all volunteers, is responsible for the Centre's management and ensuring it remains financially viable, is maintained to a high standard, provides a safe environment and adheres to all relevant rules and regulations. The Committee is constantly looking for ways to improve the Centre's facilities and to provide a vibrant, relevant and connected establishment.

We set out in this new Business Plan our expectations for the next three years 2024-2026 and a specific framework for the Committee's work in those years. It provides a formula for maintenance, operating costs, development, compliance, marketing, fund-raising and risk management that will ensure we comply with all legal responsibilities. This last item discharges our legal responsibilities if all correct procedures have been followed. The plan will be reviewed and updated regularly and our efforts will be reflected within it.

We aim to be transparent about our plans and transactions, available for comment and eager to receive feedback from all users of the Community Centre, who can do this either in person or via our website, the address of which is www.leintwardinecentre.co.uk.

I am pleased to have taken up the position of Chair in September 2023 and am really keen to ensure that the Leintwardine Centre continues to be an inclusive and inviting environment, well used by all members of our community.

I hope that you will all enjoy using the Leintwardine Centre.

Martin Vincent Chair 1 January 2024

1. Leintwardine Centre – Context

1.1. Location and Context

The village of Leintwardine is at the centre of a busy and popular rural community of some 2,000 people from Leintwardine and surrounding villages and hamlets, located in North West Herefordshire, on the main road linking the market towns of Ludlow and Knighton, and close to the borders with Shropshire and Wales. This is a beautiful, deeply rural area, remote from urban centres and popular with visitors. However, as so often in such places, resources, services, employment opportunities, retail outlets, entertainment, and recreation facilities are thin on the ground. Nevertheless, there is a strong community spirit here, and several significant groups of volunteers work hard in various spheres to make life as vibrant and enjoyable as possible.



1.2. Charitable Status

The Leintwardine Centre was registered as a charity by the Charity Commission in 1988. It was formed by bringing together two separate charities relating to what were, at that time, the Community Centre and the Village Hall respectively. The details of the charity, to which this Business Plan relates, are as follows:

Charity name: The Leintwardine Village Hall and Community Centre Address:

High Street, Leintwardine

Craven Arms

SY7 OLB

Registered charity number: 516248

Date registered: 1988

Trustees: The Leintwardine Village Hall and Community Centre

Committee (referred to as "The Committee")

Custodian Trustee Leintwardine Group Parish Council

1.3. Charitable Object

The 1988 charity founding document describes our object as a charity as follows:

"... the provision and maintenance of a village hall and community centre for the use of the inhabitants of the parish of Leintwardine and the neighbourhood thereof [...] without distinction of political, religious or of other opinions, including use for meetings, lectures and classes, and for other forms of recreation and leisure-time occupation, with the object of improving the conditions of life for the said inhabitants."

2. Centre Facilities

2.1. Current Situation

The Leintwardine Centre sits on the main road at the heart of the village. The site comprises three main buildings of great character and distinctiveness: the Community Centre housed in the former primary school; the Reading Room (the former "village hall" also known as the Jubilee Hall¹) next door; and the Old School Room, formerly the Infants School, behind the Community Centre.

• The Community Centre contains the Community Hall, the largest general-purpose public meeting and performance space in the village, as well as a well-equipped kitchen, several small rooms used as offices by paying tenants2, storage spaces (including a dry cellar), and toilets (ladies, gents and disabled). Until COVID the toilets were open to the public during daylight hours; they are accessible from outside and when open to the public internal doors into the rest of the Centre were locked when the Centre was not in use.





• The rear half of the Reading Room is let to Herefordshire County Council for use as the local public library staffed by community volunteers. It also serves as a Herefordshire Talk Community Hub. The front half of the building is occupied by the Leintwardine History Society and Museum. There is also a small kitchen and toilets.

¹ Recognising its establishment at the time of Queen Victoria's Jubilee

² There are three rooms to let on the Ground Floor and three on the First Floor (one with an adjacent storage cupboard). There are two further rooms on the Ground Floor, one used for storage and providing access to the cellar, and the second kept for use on an ad hoc basis and as a quiet space.

 The Old School Room is currently let as a studio to a single tenant but other options may exist for its future use. It has a small kitchen but no other facilities.

Outside there is an open courtyard immediately behind the Main Hall and a large garden area around the Old School Room, both of which offer considerable scope for outdoor events and activities.



The garden and Old School Room are at a higher level than the Main Hall and courtyard and access is currently restricted to a narrow flight of old steps. There is a small car park for Centre users in the front.





The buildings are all in a reasonable state of repair although some of the facilities are becoming dated and worn. The buildings' age means that significant liabilities may arise in the future. All have modern and serviceable utilities (with the exception of mains sewerage in the Old School Room) and good wi-fi broadband connections.

Together these facilities are of considerable importance in the village and comprise a principal hub for many community activities.

2.2. Historic and Recent Improvements

Major works that have been done over past years include:

- Extension of the Community Centre to provide toilets and additional space to the rear in the early 1990s;
- A very significant programme of works to upgrade the Community Centre, modernising, refitting, and rationalising the spaces and installing ground source heating, completed in March 2011.
- Division of the old Village Hall to provide the two spaces within the new Reading Room, and creation of a side path and disabled access to the rear in about 2012;
- Substantial refurbishment of the Old School Room in 2018 to provide an attractive and useable space.

More recently we have undertaken significant refurbishment of the Main Hall in 2021/22, including redecorating, renovation of the wooden floor, upgrading the electricity supply, and new lighting and audiovisual equipment. New chairs and tables were purchased and new curtains made by volunteers. Relocation of the History Society to the Reading Room freed up more lettable office space. A start has also been made on creating a community garden within the rear garden. All these works were made possible by grants received from Herefordshire Council and others.

There is now a wide range of facilities available, all of which are very flexible, and can be used for a wide range of activities from dance and exercise classes, to consultations and meetings.

2.3. The Future

For the future, the Centre is currently hopeful of receiving funding to enable creation of full disabled access to the Old School Room and the garden, upgrading the courtyard to make it a more attractive and usable space, and fully refurbishing the ladies, gents and disabled toilets which are all becoming very outdated. The hope is to also further upgrade the Audio-Visual equipment to permit effective live-streaming and to complete some final fire safety improvements recommended following our last inspection.

Beyond this we are conscious that large repair and maintenance bills could be just over the horizon, for example for external decoration and roof repairs. We need to consider these more carefully and plan for them.

2.4. Objectives and Actions

Our objective for the physical assets of the Centre is that they should be secured in good order for the medium to long term. To this end we will maintain the buildings, surroundings, facilities and equipment and improve and enhance them as funds allow and as priorities determine.

We will take the following actions over the period of this Plan to achieve these aims.

• We will establish an Inspection and Maintenance Calendar to include buildings and facilities, grounds, access, utilities, health and safety, fire and food hygiene.

- We will set up a Feedback Book where users of the Centre can report any issues and suggestions, and ensure they are made aware of this during booking.
- The Maintenance Officer and the H&S Officer will undertake inspections and take prompt action to deal with any matters arising according to their priority.
- The Maintenance Officer and the H&S Officer will report back to the Committee on the results of inspections and planned and completed actions.
- We will take all necessary actions to maintain our certification for fire, electrical and food safety.
- We will use the results of a recently completed Building Condition Survey to inform our future work plan and develop a shortlist of possible major repair and maintenance items and develop outline costs so these can be factored into future grant applications and planning for budgets and reserves.

3. Management

3.1. Current Situation

The Centre is managed by a Committee of local unpaid volunteers – the Leintwardine Village Hall and Community Centre Committee – who are also trustees of the charity. Under a resolution passed in 2015, the Committee shall comprise 6 elected and 6 representative members. The representative members shall be nominated by certain named organisations in the village including the Parish Council and the Church. If any of the named organisations do not nominate a representative the remaining committee members can co-opt an additional member to replace them.

At present (October 2023) the Committee has twelve members but only the Parish Council has a nominated representative. The other nominations have faded away over time as groups have disbanded, changed or lost connection with the Committee.

There are four officers - the Chair, Deputy Chair, Treasurer and Secretary. Nominated individuals or subcommittees are charged with looking after:

- Finance the Treasurer;
- Event Planning and Promotion –the Events SC;
- Health and safety and fire the H&S Officer;
- Maintenance and Repairs the Maintenance Officer;
- Coordination of Volunteers the Volunteer Coordinator;
- Safeguarding the Safeguarding Officer.

The responsibilities of these individuals and subcommittees are variably well-defined and there are some gaps in scope, for example kitchen safety and access, and the Centre would benefit from clarifying some of these.

The Volunteer Coordinator maintains a list of residents who are willing to help with Centre events and this provides a very useful resource to the Committee and event organisers.

3.2. The Future

The Trustees of the Centre have done a wonderful job over some difficult years, keeping the Centre running, well-maintained and well-used. The management of the Centre has become more structured which has contributed greatly to this, however, we consider further clarity about the membership and responsibilities of the various officers and subcommittees would help ensure they cover **all** the key areas needed for effective operation. In addition we see the need for an additional Business Planning Subcommittee charged with monitoring progress against the objectives and actions set out in this plan, working with others to ensure it is implemented, and keeping it up to date.

3.3. Objectives and Actions

Our objective for the management of the Centre is for the Trustees to work together to provide excellent stewardship and management of this vital community resource.

We will take the following actions over the period of this Plan to achieve these aims:

- We will update our Constitution with regard to the appointment of Trustees.
- We will establish and clearly define the responsibilities of each named officer/sub-committee
- We will create a Business Plan Subcommittee specifically charged with regularly reviewing progress against this Business Plan and working to keep it up to date and renew it in the future.
- All members of the Committee will work as a team with openness, transparency, respect and without prejudice to deliver the Centre's Charity Object (see Section 1) and our agreed Business Plan objectives.
- All members of the Committee will carry out our duties in a reasonable, orderly and professional manner, treating one another, our users and tenants, and the wider public, with courtesy, with respect, and without discrimination.
- We will keep a careful eye on the future membership of the Committee to ensure we recruit new and replacement members with the requisite skills and experience to maintain an effective team.

Responsibility for these actions will rest with the Chair and once appointed with the Business Planning SC.

4. Use and Marketing of the Centre

4.1. Current Situation

The current use of the Centre falls into six main categories:

- Events organised by the Committee as fundraisers for the Centre regular 1st Saturday sales, Flicks in the Sticks, quizzes, shows, etc;
- Events organised by other groups (e.g. the Players) where all or part of the profits are donated to

the Centre;

- Events and activities organised to meet identified needs in the community which are not intended
 to raise funds for the Centre these include Children's Holiday Clubs with funding from the
 Holiday Activity Fund, the Warm Spaces initiative over the winter months in partnership with our
 Parish Council, and a young families' film and video club using our facilities; in the past the Centre
 also hosted the Leintwardine Youth Group weekly meetings but these sadly stopped during Covid
 and have not re-started;
- Regular (weekly or monthly) hires of the main hall these include among others, exercise classes, the History Society, Lazy Lunches, the Leintwardine Social Group, the Singers, the Players, the Art Club;
- One-off and occasional private hires for children's parties, weddings, funerals, etc, and occasional commercial and public sector hires for business events, workshops, shows, theatre, etc;
- Long and short term letting of offices and other spaces (six offices in the Community Centre, the Old School Room and two rooms in the Reading Room):
 - o Good occupancy of the offices in the main building has been maintained over recent years;
 - o The Old School Room is let on an annual basis to a single tenant as a workshop/studio;
 - The two rooms in the Reading Room are let on a long term basis to the History Society and Herefordshire Library Service.

At present our accounts provide some breakdown of our sources of income but not at this level of detail (see Section 5).

To promote the Centre we have our own website, Facebook and Instagram pages which are all used to advertise activities and events. We also fund the monthly What's On Newsletter distributed to all households in the village and nearby and we advertise our own events using posters and leaflets, the quarterly magazine Leintwardine Life, the Parish Magazine, and occasionally local press and radio.

4.2. The Future

Whilst the Centre is well-used, there are many times when the Main Hall is empty and present access to the garden means this receives very little use. It is clear from reviewing the booking calendar that there are some parts of the community we don't reach and potentially many users who are not aware of what we have to offer.

The Committee is conscious that we could do better in offering more events ourselves, focussed on meeting the needs of, and attractive to those members and groups in the wider community who make little or no use of the Centre at present.

Finding out who these potential users are, what their needs and wishes are, and working to meet them would help improve our financial situation but, more importantly, allow the Centre to play a much more significant role in our community. It is also possible that new categories of user could be identified, for example businesses, public sector bodies or other organisations, who could use our facilities for training, conferences and other events.

Improving the range and quality of our facilities would also make the Centre more attractive to potential users. We could also publicise what is on offer more effectively, including the services available to hirers (e.g. the bar, catering, advertising, etc), to encourage private and commercial hires of our facilities.

4.3. Objectives and Actions

Our objective for use of the Centre is to increase the level of use of all of our facilities including events and activities organised by the Centre and private and commercial hires, by promoting and improving what we have to offer and reaching new customers and sections of the community

We will take the following actions over the period of this Plan to achieve these aims:

- We will work to obtain a better understanding of who in our community wants what from the Centre using surveys, user feedback and community engagement.
- We will then work to meet those needs by:
 - o improving the facilities and services we offer to meet identified needs;
 - organising events ourselves;
 - working in partnership with other groups and organisations to encourage their use of the Centre and to coordinate our activities with theirs to our mutual benefit (including avoiding clashes);
 - promoting the Centre to private and commercial users especially in sectors which are under-represented and under catered-for;
 - o improving our advertising of the facilities and services available to users.
- We will use all available means including our website and social media presences to promote the Centre and events and activities held there, including working with other organisers to promote their events.

5. Finance

5.1. Current Situation

The last four years have included the disruption to normal operations caused by Covid-19 and useful data on patterns and trends are hard to determine from those years. We have therefore focussed on the last pre-pandemic year 2019-20³ and the most recent years 2022-23, when restrictions were eased, and 2023-24 when we started to return to a more typical pattern of activity. The results for these three years are summarised below. These exclude one-off grants for specific purposes which are held in separate accounts.

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³ The Centre operates on a Financial Year from April to March.

OPERATING INCOME	2019-20	2022-23	2023-24
Office rental	£6,975	£12,002	
Private Hires (regular and occasional)	£5,895	£5,636	
LVHCC Event Income	£10,710	£7,181	
Donations	£701	£2,111	
Total Income	£24,281	£26,930	
OPERATING EXPENDITURE			
Cleaning and other regular services	£4,862	£2,793	
Utilities	£10,057	£4,669	
Maintenance and repairs	£2,862	£13,534	
Administration	£989	£1,332	
LVHCC Event Costs	£5,658	£3,063	
Insurances	£2,110		
Total expenditure	£26,538	£25,391	
OPERATING BALANCE	-£2,257	£1,539	

Comparing our accounts for 2019-20 with the financial year 2022-23 shows that we:

- maintained our operating income (£24,281 in 2019-20 and £26,930 in 2022-23);
- increased our rental income from £6,975 in 2019-20 to £12,002 in 2022-23;
- more than halved our spend on utilities (electricity, water, sewage) from £10,057 in 2019-20 to £4,669 in 2022-23 through good housekeeping;
- reduced our cleaning and janitorial contractor costs from £4,862 in 2019-20 to £2,793 in 2022-23 (some of this saving will have come from closure of the public toilets).

However, our net income (income minus costs) from our own events has not returned to prepandemic levels, being £5.052 in 2019-20 but only £4,118 in 2022-23. Maintenance costs increased nearly fivefold over that period from £2,868 in 2029-20 to £13,534 in 2022-23 although much of the increase was related to one-off actions (e.g. refurbishing the hall floors and fitting new curtains) rather than regular maintenance).2023-24????.......

Current holdings in our current account and on deposit total just over £46,000. £6,850 of this is grant monies ring-fenced for specific projects (disabled access to the garden and the community garden project).

5.2. The Future

We believe there remains great potential to consolidate and increase our income by increasing use of the hall. The actions identified under Sections 2 and 4 are directed at this aim. In addition we believe there is potential for more structured and targeted giving and fundraising. To this end we held a fund-raising workshop in October 2023 and came up with various ideas including:

- further research to maximise Trust and community fund income sources;
- better communication with our hirers to enhance feedback and repeat bookings and to promote recommendations;

- exploring new fundraising initiatives such as 'Just Give' and a 100 Club;
- improving communication with our tenants to explore opportunities for joint working and income generation through their networks;
- ensuring that the Leintwardine Village Welcome Pack includes up to date information on the Community Centre and opportunities to get involved.

Despite these efforts the Centre cannot raise all the funds we need to service the needs of our community through our own fundraising activities and income streams. To meet social needs and large capital costs beyond our regular income and running costs we need to seek external funding for those projects. In the last year volunteers and trustees from the Centre have successfully implemented Children's Holiday Clubs with funding from the Holiday Activity Fund, implemented a successful Warm Spaces initiative over the winter months in partnership with our Parish Council, and set up a young families' film and video club using our facilities. We have also obtained grants and are in the process of pursuing others to support major projects to improve the Centre. We expect to continue to need external funding for major works and special projects in future.

5.3. Objectives and Actions

Our objectives are to ensure the financial security of the Centre by generating enough income to be able to cover the day-to-day costs of running the Centre, achieving an operating surplus to fund essential repairs, and maintaining a healthy reserve, and to fund essential non-profit making social and community activities, where there is a demand for them.

We will take the following actions over the period of this Plan to achieve these aims:

- We will review our costs and income streams with a view to focussing our efforts on minimising the one and maximising the other;
- We will maintain a high standard of financial control and reporting so that the Committee is able to take well-informed decisions about the day-to-day running and long-term future of the Centre;
- We will implement the actions agreed by the Fund-raising Workshop:
 - further research to maximise Trust and community fund income sources;
 - better communication with our hirers to enhance feedback and repeat bookings and to promote recommendations;
 - exploring new fundraising initiatives such as 'Just Give' and a 100 Club;
 - improving communication with our tenants to explore opportunities for joint working and income generation through their networks;
 - ensuring that the Leintwardine Village Welcome Pack includes up to date information on the Community Centre and opportunities to get involved.
- We will continue to monitor our costs with a view to making efficiency savings and negotiating better deals where possible;
- We will provide services and activities to meet identified needs in our community even though

these may not make money for the Centre, using external funding where available but providing support from our own funds where needed;

• We will continue to seek external funding for major projects needed to maintain and improve the range and quality of facilities available in the Centre.

6. Our 2024-26 Action Plan

Our objectives and actions for the next 3 years are brought together in the following table. This also includes Key Performance Indicators against which we will measure progress, deadlines for completion and responsibilities for leading on the each action. Progress will be tacked by the new Business Planning Sub-Committee using this summary.

2024-26 Action Plan

Objectives	Actions	KPI	Timing	Lead
<u>Facilities</u>	We will take the following actions over the period of this Plan to achieve this			
Our objective	objective.			
for the physical				
assets of the	We will establish an Inspection and Maintenance Calendar to include			
Centre is that	buildings and facilities, grounds, access, utilities, health and safety, fire and			
they should be	food hygiene.			
secured in	a Ma will set up a Foodback Book where users of the Centre can report any			
good order for	We will set up a Feedback Book where users of the Centre can report any issues and suggestions, and ensure they are made aware of this during			
the medium to	issues and suggestions, and ensure they are made aware of this during			
long term. To	booking.			
this end we	The Maintenance Officer and the H&S Officer will undertake inspections and			
will maintain	take prompt action to deal with any matters arising according to their			
the buildings,	priority.			
surroundings,	The Metalescence Officer and the USC Officer III count head to the			
facilities and	The Maintenance Officer and the H&S Officer will report back to the			
equipment and	Committee on the results of inspections and planned and completed actions.			
improve and	We will take all necessary actions to maintain our certification for fire,			
enhance them	electrical and food safety.			
as funds allow				
and as	We will commission a Building Condition Survey to inform our future work			
priorities	plan and develop a shortlist of possible major repair and maintenance items			
determine.	and develop outline costs so these can be factored into future grant			
	applications and planning for budgets and reserves.			
Management	We will take the following actions over the period of this Plan to achieve this			
Our objective for	objective:			
the management				

of the Centre is for the Trustees to work together to provide excellent stewardship and management of this vital community resource.	 We will update our Constitution with regard to the appointment of Trustees. We will establish and clearly define the responsibilities of each named officer/sub-committee We will create a Business Plan Subcommittee specifically charged with regularly reviewing progress against this Business Plan and working to keep it up to date and renew it in the future. All members of the Committee will work as a team with openness, transparency, respect and without prejudice to deliver the Centre's Charity Object (see Section 1) and our agreed Business Plan objectives. All members of the Committee will carry out our duties in a reasonable, orderly and professional manner, treating one another, our users and tenants, and the wider public, with courtesy, with respect, and without discrimination. We will keep a careful eye on the future membership of the Committee to ensure we recruit new and replacement members with the requisite skills and experience to maintain an effective team. Responsibility for these actions will rest with the Chair and once appointed with the Business Planning SC. 		
Use and Marketing of the Centre Our objective for use of the Centre is to increase the level of use of all of our facilities	 We will take the following actions over the period of this Plan to achieve this objective: We will work to obtain a better understanding of who in our community wants what from the Centre using surveys, user feedback and community engagement. 		

including events	We will then work to meet those needs by:		
and activities	incompains the facilities and comings we offen to most identified		
organised by the	o improving the facilities and services we offer to meet identified		
Centre and private	needs;		
and commercial	 o organising events ourselves; 		
hires, by promoting			
and improving	o working with other groups and organisations to encourage their		
what we have to	use of the Centre and to coordinate our activities with theirs to our		
offer and reaching	mutual benefit (including avoiding clashes);		
new customers and sections of the	o promoting the Centre to private and commercial users especially		
community	in sectors which are under-represented and under catered-for;		
Community			
	o improving our advertising of the facilities and services available to		
	users.		
	We will use all available means including our website and social media		
	presences to promote the Centre and events and activities held there,		
	including working with other organisers to promote their events.		
Finance	We will take the following actions over the period of this Plan to achieve this		
Our objectives are	objective:		
to ensure the			
financial security of	We will review our costs and income streams with a view to focussing our		
the Centre by	efforts on minimising the one and maximising the other		
generating enough			
income to be able	We will maintain a high standard of financial control and reporting so that		
to cover the day-	the Committee is able to take well-informed decisions about the day-to-day		
to-day costs of	running and long-term future of the Centre		
running the Centre,	We will implement the actions agreed by the Fund-raising Workshop:		
achieving an	- We will implement the actions agreed by the Fana raising Workshop.		
operating surplus	o further research to maximise Trust and community fund income		
to fund essential			

repairs, and	sources;		
maintaining a	better communication with our hirers to enhance feedback and		
healthy reserve,	repeat bookings and to promote recommendations;		
and to fund	repeat bookings and to promote recommendations,		
essential non-profit	 exploring new fundraising initiatives such as 'Just Give' and a 100 		
making social and community	Club;		
activities, where	o improving communication with our tenants to explore		
there is a demand	opportunities for joint working and income generation through		
for them.	their networks;		
	 ensuring that the Leintwardine Village Welcome Pack includes up to date information on the Community Centre and opportunities to get involved 		
	We will continue to monitor our costs with a view to making efficiency savings and negotiating better deals where possible		
	 We will provide services and activities to meet identified needs in our community even though these may not make money for the Centre, using external funding where available but providing support from our own funds where needed 		
	 We will continue to seek external funding for major projects needed to maintain and improve the range and quality of facilities available in the Centre. 		