

Dersingham Centre Committee
Report for the Annual Parish Council Meeting
May 14th 2018

General

When the Annual Parish Council Meeting was held last year, in May 2017, the Dersingham Centre Committee was still focused on the overwhelming task of obtaining funding for the new Centre. The Big Lottery had awarded the Parish Council a grant of £550,000 towards the cost of the new Centre and grants had been awarded from other organisations, namely Chiplow Wind Farm Community Benefit Trust, Shelroy Charitable Trust Fund and the Geoffrey Watling Trust. The Council had some funds in the reserves towards the building and a decision was made to apply for a Public Works loan for part of the costs. After tenders from prospective contractors were evaluated, the Council agreed to appoint a preferred contractor and engineering modifications were introduced to ensure that the total costs of the Centre were within the budget funds available.

The Dersingham Centre Committee continues to meet regularly each month, with its focus on all the various elements which need to be resolved as part of the development of the Centre.

Progress on Dersingham Village Centre

Although the contract to start construction of the Centre was only awarded in October 2017, our contractor has made very good progress. This is despite some weeks of extremely poor weather conditions. Actual excavations for the foundations commenced on 21st November 2017, and before Christmas the concrete foundations were complete. The steel rafters were erected early in January and since then the works on site have proceeded at a very steady pace. Now the external walls of the new Centre are complete, including new zinc roof on the new parts of the Centre and the polyethylene on the flat roofed section. The original roof has been replaced on the central part of the new Centre and even the turret has been repainted and replaced on the roof.

An application to WREN for additional funding for the Centre was successful. WREN will fund the complete installation of a catering standard kitchen in the Centre, the extra meeting room suite on the first floor, with access by lift as well as stairs, and top-quality floor covering throughout. WREN will also provide funds for a Solar PV system which will be installed on the flat roof so that the Centre will use self-generated power to heat the building;

Although it is still too soon to predict when the building work will be completed, the original program aimed for everything to be done by mid-September 2018. At this stage there appears to be a good possibility that this will be achieved.

Other Dersingham Centre Activities

Although the main focus of the Committee has been the construction work, other issues related to the Centre also required work:

- Overflow Car Park – the landowner and tenant have agreed the principle of using the area surrounding the Bowling Club for an overflow car park, work is ongoing.
- Footpath Diversion – the problem of diverting the fictional foot path has eventually been resolved, at a much lower cost than had been anticipated.

Conclusion

The Dersingham Centre Committee will continue to function during the construction period of the Centre. When the Centre opens, other activities of this Committee including the drawing up of leases and the running of the Centre can be carried out under the Full Council.

I would like to thank all the Dersingham Centre Committee Members, many of whom have been associated with this final successful drive to build the new Dersingham Centre for a number of years. I am sure that parishioners will thank you for finally achieving that objective – a Centre of which the village can be proud.

Chris Davey
Chairman