

THE ARMSTRONG HALL TRUST

CHARITY NUMBER 272883

PRESS RELEASE 26.07.24

The Armstrong Hall Trust are happy to announce that following a year long options appraisal, it has made a decision to facilitate the refurbishment and renewal of the existing Armstrong Hall & Cossham Hall site.

The 'Option C' involves three phases of work to reinstate the town's main arts asset as quickly as possible. The trust felt that against 'Option T', which was to create a brand new theatre space to the side of Turnberries, this was the right option for the town given the current economic climate.

The rigorous options appraisal over the last year, which involved both public & user group consultations, alongside inviting user groups in to the process has been challenging, emotive & complicated throughout. Thanks must go to Danny Bonnett for being the brains behind this process & keeping it on track.

At the outset, following local elections in May 2023, a new Trust not only needed to be brought up to speed on the work done previously but plan ahead for a much different 'post-Covid' world. This process involved various teams bringing previous professional services work up to date and also exploring new possibilities that may be available.

We are confident that the chosen option will provide the best facility for the town, in the shortest space of time.

The next step involves the trust completing due diligence on 'Option C', ensuring that it will not only be affordable but comply with modern legislation, be fully accessible and have appropriate safeguarding facilities and procedures in place.

Once this due diligence is complete, our hope is to sign a lease with a user group led charitable organisation who can take the facility to new heights.

We are fortunate to have been promised a generous donation to the tune of £350,000 to help facilitate this phase of work. This money, alongside previously raised donations & the sale of a small trust asset means that we are in a good place to bring the tired building back in to community use.

We remain confident that a Turnberries based theatre would have been a viable facility for the town and it will remain a strong 'plan B' if the next few months do not go as hoped.

As chair, I would like to thank not only the user group representatives involved in the process but the trust members for their hard work. As a Town Councillor, you immediately become an Armstrong Hall Trust member, sometimes without a great deal of previous knowledge. The hundreds of hours they have given to this role over the last year should not go unnoticed and deserve great thanks.

We look forward to re-instating a much missed arts facility in the town as quickly and as effectively as possible.

James Murray

Chair Armstrong Hall trust

