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Briefing Note

Court Bushes Storage Container

Introduction

Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) owns the freehold of Court Bushes Community Hub and the immediate surroundings within the wire fence line. In May 2019, the Parish Council agreed a Lease with MSDC for 35 years.

Prior to May 2019, the Parish Council worked with MSDC to redevelop the ex-servicemen's club building following a fire. When costs proved prohibitive, MSDC took the decision to remove certain specifications from the refurbishment project such as tarmacking the car park, providing external decking and additional storage provision.

Since then, the Parish Council has worked hard to complete the works that were omitted, with the assistance of some Section 106 funds from MSDC, these include installing the decking, resurfacing the access road, various lighting and Wi Fi improvements and most recently tarmacking and lining the main car park in April 2023.

The project now under consideration is to provide much needed additional storage for hirers of the building in order for them to carry out their activities efficiently and continue making best use of the building. The proposal is to use a 20 foot ex-shipping container. Additional external storage will free up internal space and existing storage cupboards allowing them to be less cluttered for those users. By storing heavy equipment in the external container e.g. gym mats, acrobatic frames, ballet bars, hirers such as Agnes Dance Classes will reduce their carbon footprint saving them from having to transport them backwards and forwards to the venue. Additional storage will mean utilising the building to its full potential with hirers not being turned away when they request storage as part of their bookings.

Hirers are currently charged £8.40 per month for a cage or £100.80 pa. There is currently space for a maximum of 4 cages in the Function Room cupboard as it also contains the Melting Pot café tables and trolley. The four-sided wheeled cages are 1700mm in height and 860 x 740mm (5'6" height, 2'8" x 2'4") and are £165 + VAT each. The cages have a capacity of 500kg. It is estimated that a maximum of 12 cages would fit comfortably in the container with space to move them in and out.

Justification

The use of ex-shipping containers is well established as a robust and secure solution to external storage provision. It is no longer considered a temporary solution either, with their use increasing due to the costs and ease of siting them etc.

The containers are required for much needed storage by the Parish Council for the hirers of the building at Court Bushes and also for the key community groups in the parish namely the annual St Lawrence Fair, the annual Hurst Arts Festival and the Hurstpierpoint Colts Football Club. Items of storage include road closure signs, road closure barriers, traffic cones, marquees, bins, tables and chairs and football pitch flags and nets.

There are no alternative storage solutions in the local area. The use of shipping containers is generally regarded as the most secure and cost effective means of keeping items protected in a location that is subject to minor vandalism.

Current Position

There are currently three shipping containers in the Court Bushes car park. These have all been given permission by the Parish Council (in consultation with MSDC as landlord). These are owned by Hurst Colts Football Club, the Hurst Festival (see Minute C22/23.061i) and the St Lawrence Fair (see Minute C22/23.031). The Parish Council agreed at its meeting on 28 July 2022 (see Minute C22/23.061ii) that Planning permission would be applied for as soon as possible to include a fourth container for the Court Bushes Community Hub Storage.

Planning Permission

In February 2023, the Parish Council applied for planning permission for four containers, the three existing ones and one to be added later. Due to the nature of the containers and the site being in the countryside, permanent planning permission was not recommended by the Case Officer.

However, temporary planning permission for four containers was granted on 16 June 2023, for five years, with the added comments that the Parish Council should look to replace the containers with a permanent building solution. When asked of the Planning Officer what they might recommend, the answer given was:

"I would suggest pursuing a building design which reflects the rural locality and the appearance of the existing community hub with a pitched roof form. In terms of materials metal claddings should be avoided and to instead seek materials which would reflect those within the immediate locality. "

The Parish Council will need to address this issue in due course.

Quotes

Containers

Two quotes have been requested from market leaders in the supply of new or used containers. In each case the quotes provide for the purchase of a new (only used for one trip) or used container.

	Supplier A	Supplier B
	Lead Time 5 weeks	Lead Time 6-8 weeks
New Container	£5,800	£2,150
Used Container	£4,700	£1,500*
Lining	£Included above	£1,895
Electrics	£Included above	£995
Padlock	£60	£65
Painting RAL6005 (Moss Green)	£650	£500
Delivery	£600	£180
TOTAL	£7,110 (new) or £6,010 (used)	£5,785 (new) or £5,135 (used*)

(*This company does not recommend using second hand containers for lining for modification work, due to them being 12-16 years old on average and a lot more dented/used.)

Ground Works

A quote to dig a trench at 45cm deep from the main building to the shipping container (approx. 35m) and re-fill, is £1,040 + VAT. Footings are required under each corner and these are usually standard paving slab which are held in stock.

Electrical Connection

A quote for connecting the electrical supply including a 3-point locking enclosure, with a 4 way consumer unit is £2,420.00 + VAT.

Purchase of Metal Cages

Using the same style metal cage as is used currently (see photo below) it is estimated approx. 12 cages could fit in the container at a cost of £165 + VAT each i.e. £165 x 12 = £1,980.

Existing Cages Used at Court Bushes Community Hub



The total cost of the project will therefore be as follows:

New Container		Second Hand Container	
New Container	£5,785 (Supplier B)	2 nd Hand Container	£6,010 (Supplier A)
Trench	£1,040	Trench	£1,040
Electrical Connection	£2,420	Electrical Connection	£2,420
Cages £165 x 12:	£1,980	Cages £165 x 12:	£1,980
TOTAL: £11,225 + VAT		TOTAL: £11,450 + VAT	

Court Bushes / Projects Budget Code

£5,000 was included in 2023/24 Budget code Court Bushes / Projects 211-5720 for this project. However, £35,975 has already been spent on the Court Bushes tarmacking project which was originally intended to be spent from 2022/23 funds. £23,165 has been received from Section 106 funds to off-set the car park tarmacking expenditure. An income of £8.40 per month (£100.80 pa) for an additional 12 containers could yield £1,209.60 per annum.

Options

The Committee can consider and agree one of the following options:

- To agree the purchase and installation of a “new” 20 foot ex-shipping container at Court Bushes including the ground works and electrical connection at a cost of £11,225;
- To agree the purchase and installation of a second hand 20 foot ex-shipping container at Court Bushes including the ground works and electrical connection at a cost of £11,450;
- To agree to not purchase an ex-shipping container and rely on existing storage provision for users.;
- To agree to not purchase an ex-shipping container and commence planning the long term solution for a permanent storage building onsite; or
- To agree an alternative solution.