

# Finance and Resources Committee

**10:00am, Thursday 20 May 2021**

## **Portobello Town Hall**

**Executive/routine**

**Ward**

**Council Commitments**

**Executive**

**17 – Portobello/Craigmillar**

### **1. Recommendations**

---

#### **1.1 That Committee:**

- 1.1.1 Notes the bids received for Portobello Town Hall following a marketing exercise; and,
- 1.1.2 Approves the bid, in principle, from Portobello Central Ltd subject to further discussions and engagement with the Council on the 20 Minute Neighbourhood proposals for Portobello.

**Stephen S Moir**

Executive Director of Resources

Contact: Allan Robertson, Senior Surveyor

Property and Facilities Management Division, Resources Directorate

E-mail: [allan.robertson@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:allan.robertson@edinburgh.gov.uk) Tel: 0131 529 5962

## Portobello Town Hall

### 2. Executive Summary

---

- 2.1 Portobello Town Hall has been vacant since July 2019 and requires significant capital investment due to its condition. The property has been marketed for lease as a restoration opportunity and this report outlines the bids received at the closing date.
- 2.2 The recommendation is to accept the proposals from Portobello Central Ltd, a not for profit company set up by the local community.

### 3. Background

---

- 3.1 Portobello Town Hall, built in 1914, is a Category B Listed Council owned building situated in a prominent location on Portobello High Street as shown outlined in red on the plan attached as Appendix 1.
- 3.2 The Hall was purpose built by the then Corporation as part of a commitment in the Edinburgh Expansion Act 1896, which annexed Portobello to Edinburgh. It comprises a main hall with ornate barrelled ceiling with surrounding balconies capable of hosting approximately 450 together with a lesser hall with capacity for a further approximately 60 people.
- 3.3 The most recent use of the hall was as a venue made available for hire through the Council's Libraries Service.
- 3.4 As part of business as usual, the Council updates condition surveys on 20% of its property estate each year on a rolling programme. The condition report for the Town Hall was updated, on 16 April 2019, and classified the asset overall as condition C – Poor -showing major defects and/or not operating adequately. The outcome indicated investment required of £1,001,385 (over a five-year period) to bring it up to Condition A/B standard.
- 3.5 As hair line cracks were emerging in the ceiling area above the stage and balcony, a separate specialist inspection of the ceiling was also carried out. Initially, as a precautionary measure, netting was erected above the stage to allow planned events to take place. That initial inspection recommended that a further closer

tactile specialist inspection was carried out, which, due to the height of the hall and need for scaffolding, required the closure of the hall for a period to allow the survey to take place. Based on the outcome of the specialist survey and as a result of health and safety concerns with the ornate vaulted ceiling, the decision was taken to close the venue in July 2019.

- 3.6 At the time of closure, the main use of the hall was for childcare purposes, martial arts classes and the occasional wedding reception. Assisted by the Council, all uses were relocated.
- 3.7 The Council has no allocated capital budget to meet the costs of repair and therefore engagement took place with local members and representatives of the local community to establish options moving forward. This included a workshop held in August 2019.
- 3.8 While there was general consensus on the aspiration for the further use of the building, it was agreed that the initial process would be to market the building for let, principally as a restoration opportunity. The initial bids would be assessed, and a second closing date held. The interest solicited would then inform the next phase of securing the building's future and, once complete, would provide the Council, in consultation with the wider community with options to assess.

## 4. Main report

---

- 4.1 The property was initially marketed as available for lease, in February 2020, on a full repairing (i.e. tenant responsible) basis. Additional information was made available to interested parties, including:-
- Building Condition report by Council – June 2019;
  - Detail ceiling inspection by Adams Napier Partnership (Building Surveyors and Heritage Consultants) – August 2019;
  - Estimated ceiling cost plan by Summers Inman (Construction and Property Consultants) – September 2019; and
  - Asbestos Management Survey – Omega Asbestos Consultancy – April 2019.
- 4.2 Several enquiries and viewings took place, however the main challenges on the level capital investment and the B listed status of the building were off-putting to many. The marketing process was significantly impacted by Covid lockdowns but first and second closing dates were set on 30 November 2020 and 19 March 2021 respectively. At the second closing date two bids were received as follows:-
- Portobello Central Limited**
- 4.3 Portobello Central Ltd (PCL) is a company limited by guarantee, a not-for-profit community organisation, formed by members of the Portobello community to prepare a proposal to the Council in response to its call for proposals for Portobello

Town Hall. The full bid, first and second closing date submissions, is attached as Appendix 2.

- 4.4 It is proposed that, in partnership with the Council, PCL progresses towards an asset transfer of the building to a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO), set up for the purpose, with a board of trustees elected by the community.
- 4.5 The documents details significant preparatory work that includes:-
- Community Consultation;
  - Legal Structure and Timetable;
  - Funding Strategy and Financial Plan;
  - Links and synergies with emerging Council strategies, e.g., 20 Minute Neighbourhood concept;
  - Assumptions and Risk Register with Mitigating actions.
- 4.6 The proposal seeks collaboration between the local community, the Council and private sector to deliver a project than ultimately leads to a Community Asset Transfer of the asset.

**Mr Valerio Lo Coco-Native Wines Ltd**

- 4.7 The proposed use is to create a food market, consisting of stalls for the sale of fresh local produce, street food, drinks, craft and natural products.
- 4.8 The proposal seeks a 20-year full repairing and insuring lease with 3-years rent free and a rent of £60,000 per annum subject to planning and building warrant consents. The bid refers to accessing public funds but is silent on whether that is a condition. The full bid material is attached as Appendix 3.

**Summary and Conclusions**

- 4.9 If the bid from Portobello Central Ltd was a formal Community Asset Transfer it would be considered, by the Council' assessment criterion, as excellent. Significant time and resource have been put into the bid, which does not underestimate the challenge of taking on a listed building in poor condition nor downplay the risks involved. It seeks empowerment from the Council to the local community which underpins the Community Empowerment Act and has strategically linked the proposals with emerging Council initiatives. The model proposed was successfully used for the former Council owned resource centre at Duncan Place, Leith
- 4.10 While the bid from Mr Lo Coco has some interesting financial figures, the bid lacks detail on their deliverability and there is also little detail on what grants would be accessed and how these relate to the restoration of the building. Given that several months were afforded to prepare submissions, with two closing date, it is not considered unreasonable to have expected a more substantive submission.

- 4.11 For the reasons above, it is recommended that the bid from Portobello Central Ltd is accepted. At this time, it is recommended that the bid is accepted “in principle” to afford time for further engagement on the emerging Council proposals for the 20 Minute Neighbourhood that will be reported to the Policy and Sustainability Committee in June 2021.

## 5. Next Steps

---

- 5.1 Subject to Committee approval, officers will carry out further engagement with Portobello Central Ltd to progress the proposals.

## 6. Financial impact

---

### Capital

- 6.1 As detailed in the main report, the building requires capital repairs of approx. £1m for which there is currently no allocation in the Council Capital Budget Strategy. While this expenditure could be incurred over time, no investment will result in the further deterioration of the building fabric. It should also be noted that the costs were estimated pre Covid-19 and its impact will result in the costs increasing.
- 6.2 Implementing the recommendations of this report will result in the required capital expenditure being sourced by the proposed tenant thereby removing the pressure from the Council.

### Revenue

- 6.3 An analysis of the last full financial year of the building being open in 2018/19 has been carried out. This covers the Library Service cost of managing the facility, offset by rental income from hire and the Property and Facility Management Divisional budget that has to cover the costs of utilities, NDR, Janitorial/Cleaning, compliance etc. The consolidated net outturn for that financial year was a cost of £113,795.
- 6.4 The proposed lease of the property should realise savings and efficiencies at the level indicated in paragraph 6.3.

## 7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

---

- 7.1 Local elected members have been advised and consulted prior to, and following, the marketing of the property.
- 7.2 Following the closure of the property, officers met with representatives of the local community that was arranged by the local members. In addition, a workshop was held in August 2019 to which the local community was invited.

- 7.3 Following the marketing of the property, Portobello Community Council were consulted who, in turn, held a virtual community engagement event.

## **8. Background reading/external references**

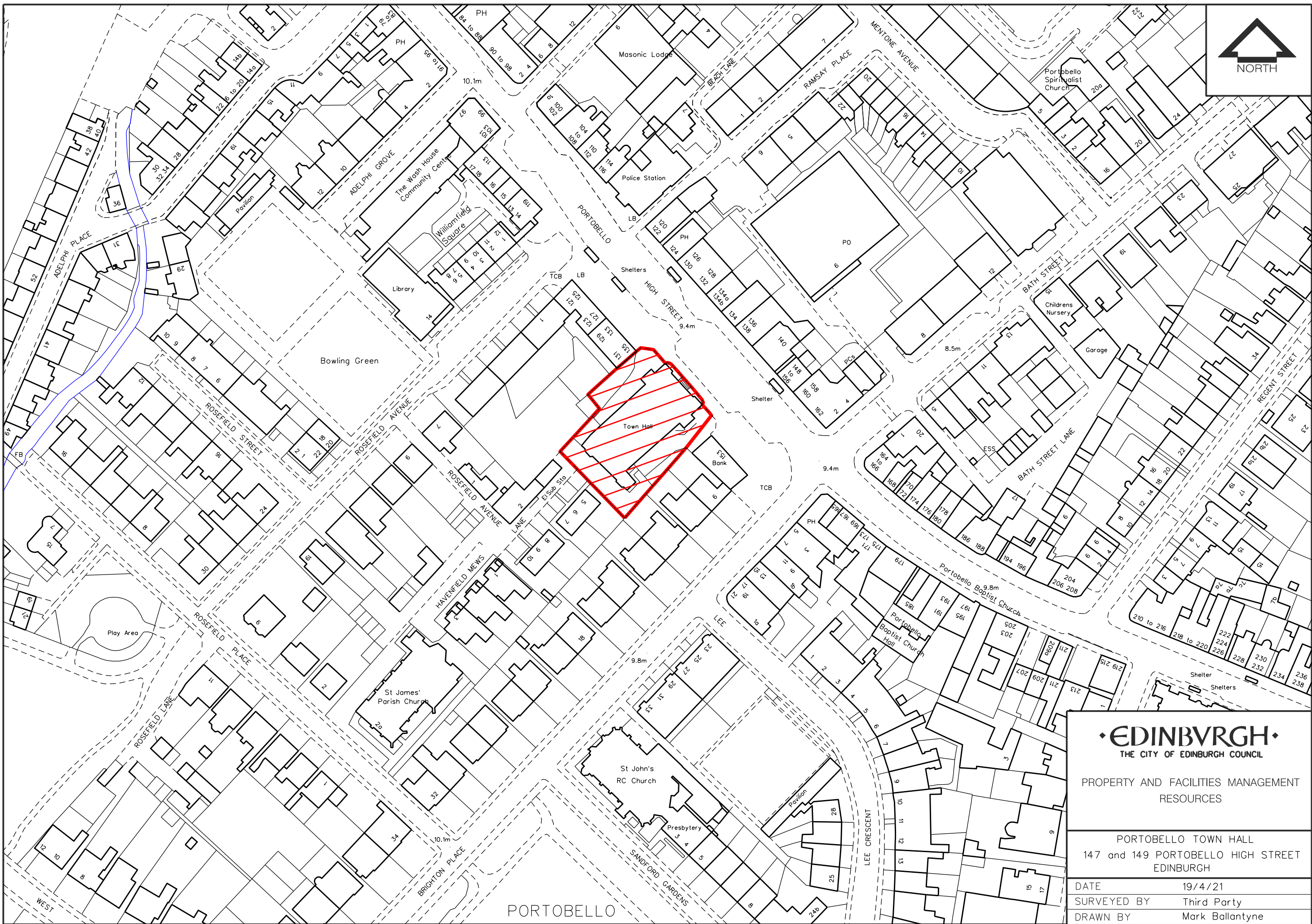
---

- 8.1 None.

## **9. Appendices**

---

- 9.1 Appendix 1 - Location Plan
- 9.2 Appendix 2 – Bid by Portobello Central Limited
- 9.3 Appendix 3 – Bid by Mr Valerio Lo Coco – Native Wines Limited



• EDINBURGH •  
THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

PROPERTY AND FACILITIES MANAGEMENT  
RESOURCES

PORTOBELLO TOWN HALL  
147 and 149 PORTOBELLO HIGH STREET  
EDINBURGH

DATE	19/4/21
SURVEYED BY	Third Party
DRAWN BY	Mark Ballantyne
SCALE	1:1250 @ A3 SIZE
NEG. NO.	A3/2346

SITE PLAN

SCALE 1:1250



# New Life for the Heart of Portobello

## The Community Proposal for Portobello Town Hall



Portobello Central Ltd  
*A not-for-profit  
community organisation*  
26 November 2020



# New Life for the Heart of Portobello

1. IN A NUTSHELL .....	2
2. WHERE WE START .....	3
The Working Group	
Who we are	
Legal structure	
Progress to date	
3. WHAT WE KNOW.....	5
300 Conversations	
The Building	
4. WHAT WE PROPOSE.....	7
Stepping forward	
Transfer to community management	
The longer term	
5. SUPPORTING THE CASE	
Annex 1 Community Engagement Report.....	9
Annex 2 Running the Community Business .....	24
Annex 3 Proposal by Munro Allison & Rob Robinson: Project Viability Study....	31
Annex 4 Who We Are .....	35



# In a Nutshell

1. Portobello Central Ltd is a company limited by guarantee, a not-for-profit community organisation, formed by members of the Portobello community to prepare a proposal to the City of Edinburgh Council in response to its call for proposals for Portobello Town Hall.
2. We propose that, in partnership with the Council, we progress towards an asset transfer of the building to a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO), set up for the purpose, with a board of trustees elected by the community, as required by the relevant legislation.
3. We conducted a wide-ranging public consultation, during the period of COVID-19 restrictions, which identified a clear wish from the community that:
  - the building re-open as soon as is practicable for a wide range of uses, traditional and new;
  - it should be managed by the community.
  - the building has capacity for more uses than just big events
4. We understand the reasons behind the 2019 closure and are grateful for sight of the various reports commissioned by the Council on the works needed and their likely cost. We believe that a phased programme of work is possible, enabling the building to re-open in the autumn of 2021.
5. Funding the work without a security over the building as a community-based organisation is difficult. We conclude that a straightforward, commercial-style lease is impractical. However, if the building were owned and operated by a community charitable body, such funds might be obtained from, for example, the Scottish Land Fund and the Lottery. Exploring these possibilities is difficult without a clear indication from the Council that our proposal should be pursued.
6. A community-owned and managed venue offering a wide range of activities would sit well with the growing population of Portobello, with the current developments in Portobello itself, and to come at Brunstane and Seafield, adding to demand. Independent architect and surveyor consultants are available and keen; first indications are that they see the building as viable and could be opened for limited use with 3-6 months work.
7. Currently, we assume that a Council decision, in principle, might take at least until the end of February 2021. Assuming that is favourable, the statutory steps for creation of a SCIO and to begin the asset transfer process could well run into late summer 2021. In parallel, the search for funds could continue.
8. Working in partnership with CEC, and considering the unique offer of the Town Hall in the broader local landscape of community, charity and Council-run venues, we intend to use the period while an asset transfer is under consideration to conduct further work to prepare for opening the building, safely but with limitations by 1 October 2021, as a venue complementary to, and not in competition with, other venues in Portobello. This will involve a contractual arrangement with CEC to be negotiated.

## Where we start

9. Councillors, Council officers and community representatives met in November 2019. An agreed note of that meeting concluded:

*“The initial process is to solicit interest, to inform the next phase of securing the building’s future with capital investment and, once complete, the Council, in consultation with the wider community, will assess all options.*

*In summary - the Town Hall needs serious investment, that the council can’t currently provide, and are looking to see if anyone (could be private business, social enterprise, charity or a community group) has a proposal for a sustainable use of the town hall. The community will then be involved in assessing the proposals and next steps.”*

10. An informal group of local people came together at the end of 2019, including members associated with Bellfield and The Wash House, to prepare a community-based proposal to take over management of the Town Hall.
11. The City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) advertised in late February 2020:
- “seeking a tenant to provide a sustainable future for this important historic building. Ideally the proposed future use should include community benefits and facilities.”*
12. This document is a proposal with which to open discussions with CEC.
13. This proposal cannot be regarded as a final, formal bid as might be expected in a normal contractual process - the COVID-19 disruption and uncertainties are too great. However, this is presented as an honest basis for discussion.
14. If another proposal is before the Council, the group feels that there should not be a competition but a discussion on the prospects for partnership working. The group concluded early on that the best outcome would be a coming together of commercial, community and Council interests.

## The Working Group

15. Although the group came together under a “Save Portobello Town Hall” banner, it was evident that the options for the building are limited, not least by its listed building status, and that the base position of the Council was an extended moth-balling of the building until its other priorities were settled. The key risk in this is a continuing degradation of the condition of the building and loss of a facility which is valued by the community and beyond.
16. We therefore decided that we needed a different approach, recognising that the Town Hall was built to be the centre of life in Portobello and has been the scene of many memorable events. The name “Portobello Central” is intended to put a name to the current process; if successful it will be for the community to decide how to name the building.

## Who we are

17. The Working Group is made up of people active in the community, including board members of complementary local organisations which have been involved in community buy-out, local business people, members with finance and IT skills, and community council and central government experience.
18. Members have worked on various projects involving third and public sector funds and are used to working with community issues.
19. Short biographies of each member form Annex 4.

## Legal Structure

20. The transition to a company limited by guarantee brings the discipline of company law and a framework of accounting and management.
21. In addition, the project will run at a high level of visibility and moral accountability to the Portobello community. If, as is under consideration, this becomes a project of formal asset transfer a further structural change will be needed to provide for formal community roles in management.
22. As a first step the company status enabled us to apply for a bank account.

## Progress to Date

23. The work to prepare this proposal had three main strands:
  - understand the extent and depth of interest in community management, and the ambitions of the community for the Town Hall
  - identify possible, likely and probable users in order to assess the financial viability of re-opening the building,
  - assess, as far as possible, what works are needed to re-open the building at all and what further works would be required in the early and mid-term.
24. In this work we have been encouraged by the willingness of CEC to permit access and to provide such technical information as it holds.
25. Since late 2019 we have run a successful community consultation; discussed potential with various users; held initial discussions with local and specialist architects and technical experts and completed a vast array of administrative tasks necessary for future success. There is a long way to go but with determination and the will of the community behind us, we are hopeful of success.



# What we know

26. The loss of the building provoked a strong reaction. Almost immediately, the community got to work with a petition calling for refurbishment attracting over 1,800 signatures.
27. Once Portobello Central was established we considered how to create a space where the community could come together to harness its capacity for optimism, creativity, and volunteering. We wanted to explore what the Town Hall could enable in the future.
28. An on-line engagement programme began in July 2020. We aimed to have 300 conversations in 30 days to gauge the strength of feeling within the community. In the end 532 engaged through a mix of survey results, Zoom meetings, social media and other means.

## 300 Conversations - what we found

29. The Town Hall is envisaged as a cross-generational, inclusive, and accessible community venue. It should meet gaps in existing provisions including a social space for all generations, particularly youth, while meeting the ambitions of Portobello as a home for a serious, up and coming, events space.
30. **Portobello wants to keep the Town Hall for Community use:**
  - Over 1,800 signatures to refurbish the Town Hall at time of closure.
  - Over 500 active participants in the engagement campaign, even during lockdown.
  - 90% of those surveyed want to keep the Hall within the community.
31. **The community have exciting ideas**
  - From cooking lessons to nerf gun battles, youth clubs to cinema, we were inundated with more than 100 intriguing ideas for how the community want to use the Town Hall.
32. **The community want to help**

There is evidence of a qualified and experienced volunteer force for refurbishment, maintenance and organisation of events. We recognise that translating on-line offers and excitement into action with mops and brushes is tricky; lockdown has made it difficult to assemble teams to come to clear conclusions, nonetheless the appetite is there and evidenced by Bellfield's track record of harnessing volunteers with a regular team of around 25.

  - 195 offers to donate time and expertise, 75 regularly.
  - 116 offers to donate money.
  - 65 offers to organise future events.
  - Support from our local sister community centres, from expertise to hall hire.
33. The Community Engagement Report with full results and methodology forms Annex 1.

## The Building



34. The Council's suite of reports and assessments is comprehensive and daunting. We note that the Council had been considering a refurbishment programme in 2022 but the priorities of the capital programme were re-assessed (rightly) to focus on the needs of school buildings.
35. We are grateful to have had two reconnaissance visits (28 February and 5 October) to get a real feel for the issues set out in the various documents produced by the Council. At the 5 October visit we were accompanied by architects from the local firm of Munro Allison, which has a strong record in similar projects.
36. We have not engaged consultants yet, pending the Council's decision, but informal discussions suggest that some works of moderate cost might enable the building to be re-opened. We recognise the longer term and substantial cost works which are needed to give the building a fresh future.
37. Accordingly, we applied to the Architectural Heritage Fund for a Project Viability Study grant - and received a grant offer of £6,500 on 17 November 2020.

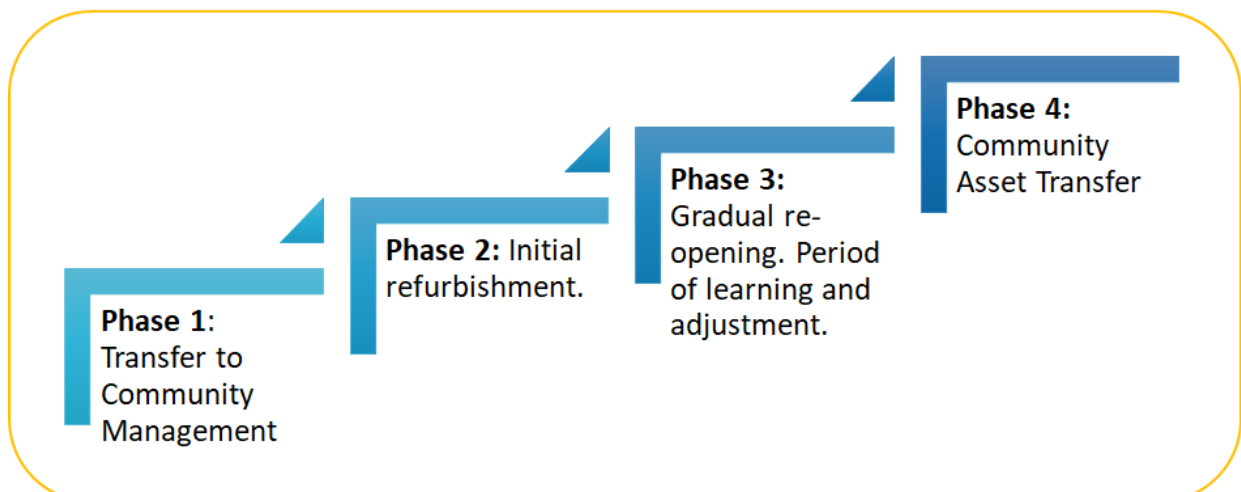


The First Reconnaissance: February 2020

# What We Propose

## Stepping Forward

38. The Town Hall is envisaged as a cross-generational, inclusive, and accessible community venue. It should meet gaps in existing provisions including a social space for all generations, particularly youth, while meeting the ambitions of Portobello as a home for a serious up and coming events space.
39. It must take its place alongside other community assets and businesses, contributing to growing the energy and capacity of the community and offering flexibility to meet changing demands and methods of delivery. We see no need for competition between the current community-based providers of space, as there is little overlap in the offers each make, and real scope for managing them as a comprehensive range of facilities: cousins not competitors. The venues are hard-pressed at the moment because of COVID-19 but we should be planning for the new normal, even if what that is may not yet be clear.
40. The Council requested proposals for a lease which implies a tenant with sufficient existing resources to fund and manage a significant project. We took the hint in the advertisement:
- "Ideally the proposed future use should include community benefits and facilities".*
41. No commercial operation can engage with the community better than the community itself and our 300 Conversations engagement exercise showed that the community wants community management of the Town Hall. However, raising funds for a new business (as that is what it will be) and a significant capital programme cannot be done on the basis of event income alone. We propose four stages:





## Transfer to Community Management

42. A contractual arrangement with a charitable business, which could be the existing Portobello Central company with a new associated charity or an altogether new SCIO. This would immediately eliminate the burden of rates and meet a qualification for funds from the Lottery and similar bodies. If agreed, we think the arrangement might start from 1 April 2021.

## The Longer Term

43. The arrangement might last until the end of the current Council capital programme but it is quite possible that the Town Hall would still face considerable competition for Council capital funding.
44. From our perspective, we should use the provisions of Part 5 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 to work with the Council to transfer the Town Hall to community ownership by asset transfer. If this is accepted by the Council we might set up, from the outset, a SCIO in a form suitable to meet the statutory needs of the community participation in the asset transfer.
45. As a first step the community would have use of the building under a simple contractual arrangement while the formal process of asset transfer is conducted.



# Portobello Town Hall

Community  
Engagement Report



**Annex 1**  
**Community Engagement Report**

# Portobello Town Hall

## Community Engagement Report



### 01 Introduction

### 02 What we found out

### 03 What we did

### 04 What we learned

#### **Portobello wants to keep the Town Hall for Community use**

- Over 1,800 signatures to refurbish the Town Hall at time of closure.
- Over 500 active participants in the engagement campaign, even during lockdown.
- 90% of those surveyed want to keep the Hall within the community.

#### **The community have exciting ideas**

- From cooking lessons to nerf gun battles, youth clubs to cinema we were inundated with more than 100 unique ideas for how the community want to use the Town Hall.

#### **The community want to help**

- 195 offers to donate time and expertise, 75 regularly.
- 116 offers to donate money.
- 65 offers to organise future events.
- Support from our local sister community centres, from expertise to hall hire.



# Introduction

Portobello Central is a small group based in the Portobello community working to bring Portobello Town Hall back to life.

Portobello Town Hall closed in July 2019 following a period of management by the City of Edinburgh Council through the Libraries department. Deemed financially non-viable and facing increasing repair costs, the Council closed the doors.

With 2 halls, including an impressive theatre arrangement with seats for almost 500 people, the venue was used for weddings, ceilidhs, theatre, concerts, festivals, dances, exhibitions, parties and keep fit classes. The sense of loss, as the heart of Portobello grew dark, was palpable.

“This is not just a building but something which means a lot to the community and the whole of Edinburgh. There isn’t anyone I don’t know who has not had a tie to this building.....

Refurbishing would bring life back into the building as well as being heavily used again.  
This building IS Portobello!

Almost immediately, the community got to work with a petition calling for refurbishment, attracting **over 1,800 signatures**. Following this successful petition, a community workshop was arranged to discuss options for the Town Hall using a ‘world café’ style.

A core group met at the workshop, and with the help of local Councillor, Mary Campbell, came together to make sure Portobello Town Hall remained a public space with community at its heart regardless of the ultimate leaseholder. From this group, Portobello Central was born.

Portobello Central set out to create a space where the community could come together to harness our capacity for optimism, creativity, and volunteering. We wanted to explore what the Town Hall could enable in the future.

We set out to create an ambitious community engagement programme in line with the National Standards for Community Engagement.

Due to start in March 2020, our original timetable and methodology was challenged by the necessary restrictions created by COVID-19. After a brief pause, the group reconvened. We agreed the purpose of the engagement and the desire to maintain a quality consistent with the National Standards had not changed. We adjusted our methodologies accordingly and our engagement began again in earnest in June 2020.

The remainder of this report details the outcome, purpose, methodology and lessons learned of our engagement plan.



## What we found out

### Petition to “Refurbish Portobello Town Hall

At the point of closure a petition was instigated on [change.org](https://change.org) calling on Edinburgh City Council to refurbish Portobello Town Hall and prevent its closure. Very quickly, 1,812 signatures were gathered.

The petition demonstrated the strength of feeling within the community for a well-loved and used building. A sense of frustration that the Hall had been allowed to fall into such disrepair, particularly as our community grew larger, was clear.

“Portobello would not be Portobello without this wonderful building! It is perfectly positioned right in the middle of the town centre and serves its community well. Every proper town needs its own town hall and none more so than this one.”

“It’s a beautiful building and it’s much needed by the ever-growing population of Portobello”

“Integral part of the community, overlooked and under-funded for years. Loss of this building would have so much impact.”

Many comments addressed the potential for the building and the variety of needs it had served at the past and could serve in the future.

“My wife is from Thailand and we travel from Hamilton to visit the town hall every time there is a Thai Festival there. So we can Celebrate with our other Thai Friends. This would be a Big Loss”

“I have (had) many a great night in this venue. Where can I meet up with friends from near & far who are attending the Northern Soul nights?”

### 300 Conversations in 30 Days

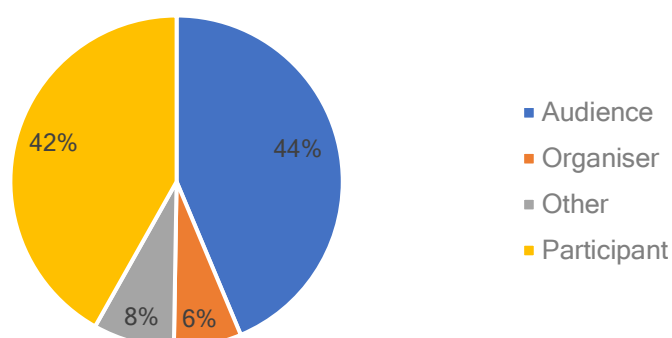
Using a variety of methods aimed at engaging as many and as diverse views as possible (full methodology in “what we did” section) Portobello Central created space within the restrictions of social distancing where the community could come together to harness our capacity for optimism, creativity and volunteering.

Over 30 days we broke our 300 conversations target and 532 different people engaged with us through surveys, online meetings, social media, email, and socially distanced chats. They shared their memories of the Town Hall, their excitement about its possible futures, what they needed from this community space, their ideas, and their offers of help.

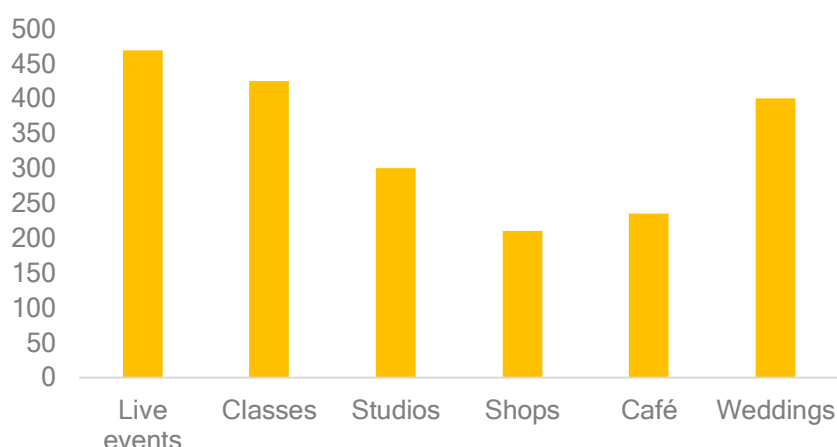
We found the community overwhelmingly wanted to keep the Town Hall under community control and were willing to help. They envisioned a space that filled the gaps in existing provision for all generations, particularly youth, while meeting the ambitions of Portobello as a home for a serious up and coming events space.

Of the 460 main community survey respondents, over 74% had used the Town Hall in the past and 90% wanted it to be managed by and for the community in the future. 100% of those asked (surveyed and other) believed more could happen in the Town Hall if it was community run. Difficulties encountered when trying to hire the hall from the Council were mentioned, one participant noted “I did try and hire it once but got nowhere”.

The Town Hall was previously used for a wide variety of purposes. When conducting the survey we asked how people had used the Town Hall but aimed for a sense of how much it was used for “events” (audience) and how much for more participatory purposes (e.g. classes):



We wanted to understand what the community of Portobello wanted to use Portobello Town Hall for now and in the future. Grouping the ideas into categories we asked across our different engagement methods which of the categories people would like to see, people could select more than one choice:



The real fun happened in the workshops, face to face conversations and free-form section of the surveys. With over 100 intriguing ideas (see appendix 1), Portobello really showed its creativity.

“The Portobello Town hall is a brilliant resource right in the heart of Portobello. It's time to think about re-engaging the communities we live in and the town hall can play a key part in this, providing lots of opportunities for people to access social connections, culture and goods under one roof”

The breadth of ideas was impressive and reflected the diversity of participants. Youth oriented ideas such as youth groups; youth council hub; gaming conventions; under 18 discos; laser quest; and nerf gun battles came predominantly from participants aged 18 and under. This perhaps reflects the lack of informal community spaces for the young within Portobello.

The lack of relaxed social meeting spaces for the older generation came up too with one participant noting “The cafe at Bellfield was a (local) meeting space for the elderly .. (they are) now meeting at Morrisons café”. This need was innate in ideas such as coffee mornings; community café; social bingo and tea dances.

Large, noisier public events such as live concerts and gigs, theatre, festival venue, “Party’s Queens Hall” often came up, recognising the unique possibilities offered by the Town Hall compared to Portobello’s other community spaces. It was clear that there were concerns about diverting demand from other community centres in Portobello.

Certain ideas came up multiple times, cinema, and childcare in particular. Wrap-around childcare was previously available at the Town Hall but has since moved to Duddingston. We produced “wordles” at various points of the campaign. A crude but effective tool, words are grouped in a shape with relative size reflecting frequency:





Themes started to emerge from these ideas. The Town Hall is envisaged as a cross-generational, inclusive, and accessible community venue. It should meet gaps in existing provisions including a social space for all generations, particularly youth, while meeting the ambitions of Portobello as a home for a serious up and coming events space:

“An events, meeting place, theatre, dance, performance space, a REAL hub of the new Porty community, youth club! Don't let this chance pass YOU by, Porty NEED'S something, for everyone, from babies to the purple rinse brigade, everyone!”

“There's a gap between the ages of 12 and 15/16 - P7 to S3, too young to go into Town, too old for parents.”

“A community cafe with locally grown veg”

“Community cooking for those recently housed”

“We need somewhere in Portobello dedicated to the arts and concerts”

“Make it into a community centre for the youth”

“I want an indoor hall to go to with my mates, play games and hang out after school”



“Stuff for Dads(so they don't go to the pub!!!!)”



“Food and restaurant space; farmers market; pop-ups; use the balcony seating for eating; food *is* community”



“live music venue!”

“...be good to see it properly equipped to use as a theatre venue”

“I have always thought, as I passed the town hall, that IT should be used for events!”

“Film nights or cinema nights. For children, Adults & Teens on different days or times.”



“Community cinema”

“..weekend morning cartoon showings (drop in / out to fit in with all the kids clubs in Portobello”



“....early evening nightclub for parents”

“Tea dances and socials..for the elderly”

“I have hired hall over last 4 years , sometimes 5 times a year for our northern soul all-dayers “

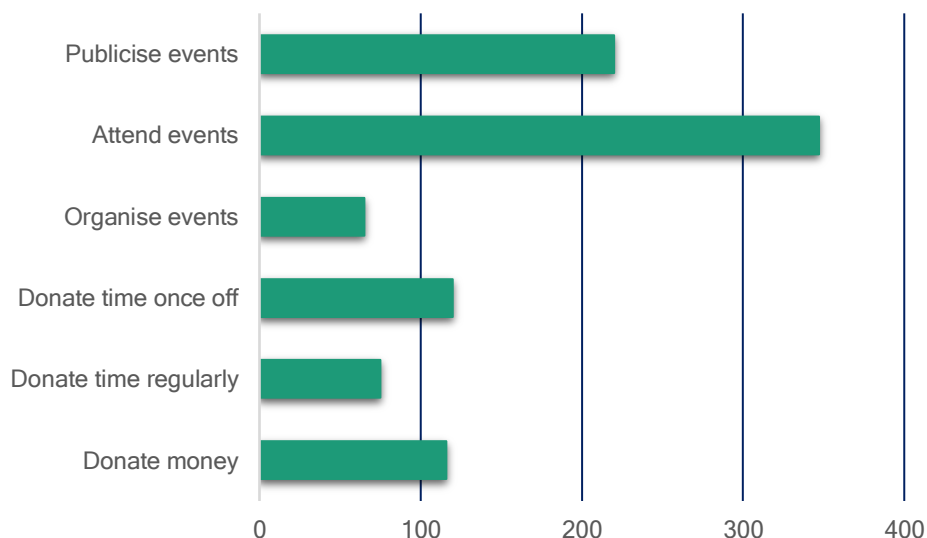
“Portie does Strictly”



“discos... for ages 12–15”

## The community wants to help

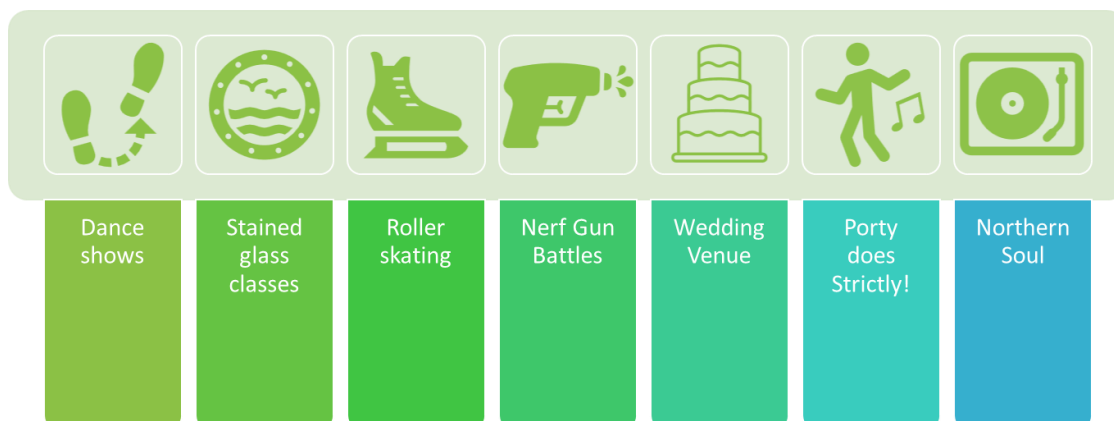
In our surveys and conversations we asked participants if they would be willing to help and in what way. People were able to choose multiple options, varying from spreading the word about events to donating time and money.



195 people in total offered to donate time, 120 on an ad hoc basis and 75 regularly. Skills offered included design, project management, events programming, conservation architecture, sharing experience of 3<sup>rd</sup> sector organising and similar community projects, cleaning, painting, and gardening. 137 email addresses were provided to discuss offers in more detail - we are still working through that list.

116 participants indicated willingness to support the project by donating money. The community have donated £540 so far (Sept 2020), in response to an update for our mailing list. We did not explore other options (community shares, crowd funding) at this stage of engagement.

63 respondents were interested in organising events, those mentioned specifically:



## What we did

### Purpose of Engagement and Identification of Partners

First we agreed the purpose of our engagement plan based on our understanding of the communities ambitions, informed by the original petition establishing community interest.

Purpose of Engagement
Understand what Portobello Community needs, and what is missing from our existing portfolio of community spaces.
To involve our wider community in shaping the proposal we deliver, and to make sure that we accurately represent our communities' views.
Understand what the community of Portobello want to use Portobello Town Hall for now and in the future.
Understand what support the community of Portobello are willing and able to give.
To excite the community about the possibilities of Portobello Central

Our next stage was to identify partners within the community that could help us design and deliver our engagement, leaning on their knowledge to ensure our design was inclusive and removed barriers where possible. We met various community organisations:

- Portobello Community Council
- Portobello Library
- Portobello High School
- Other community centres - The Washhouse and Bellfield
- Local Scout Groups

Original plans included speaking at High School assemblies; workshops at the library; crafting sessions with the local Scouts group; and world café style events at the Washhouse, who donated their venue for this purpose.

COVID-19 meant we had to re-think. Within the constraints of social distancing, while continuing to focus on the importance of diversity and inclusivity of participants, we designed our 300 conversations in 30 days campaign:



## 300 Conversations in 30 Days

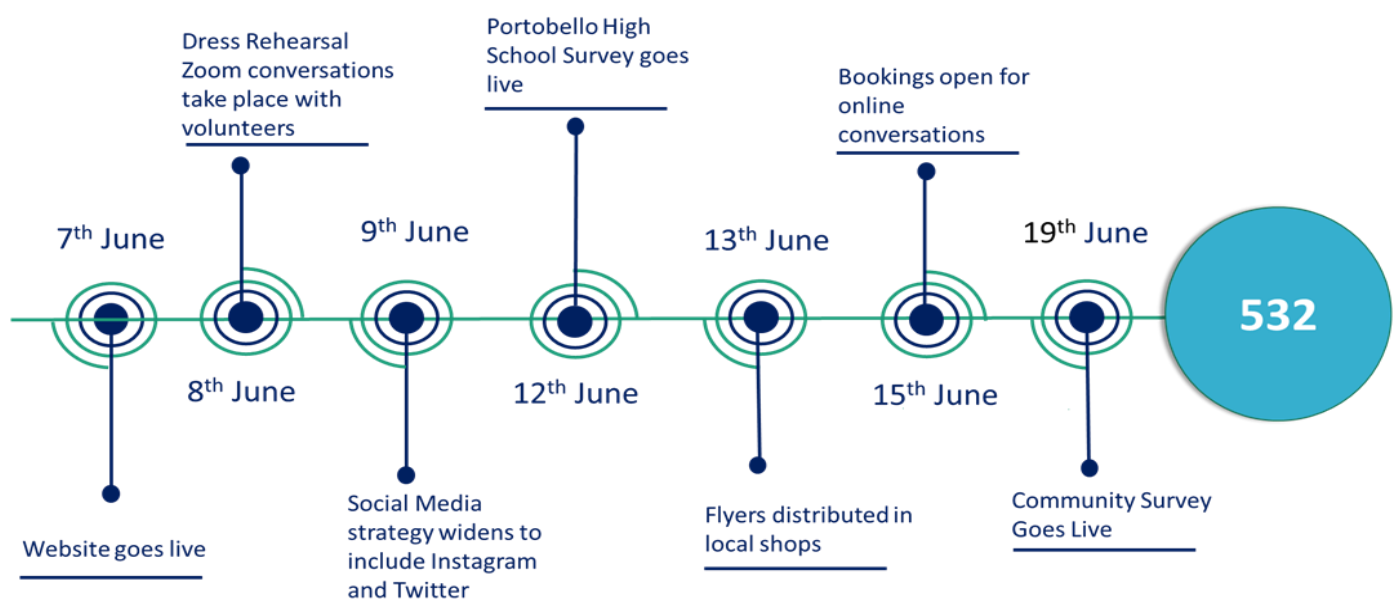
## 300 Conversations in 30 Days: Design and Methodology

300 conversations in 30 days was developed to encompass our ambition to align with the National Standards of Community Engagement within the constraints imposed by social distancing.

We continued to strive towards diversity of views and inclusion through:

- social media strategy to widen audience using different platforms;
- different online approaches (targeted surveys; online group meetings; email)
- creating avenues for those not able or willing to engage online (socially distanced meetings, hard copies of survey questions)
- socially distanced physical publicity (flyers, banner, presence on High Street)

The campaign name, “300 conversations in 30 days” provided a sense of urgency, what we felt was a reasonable and representative target, and allowed us to encompass all of the different methods by counting each point of engagement, by whatever means, as a “conversation”.



Method of Engagement	# Conversations
Main Survey	459
Online Workshops	19
Portobello High School Survey	18
Socially distanced face to face	11
Facebook	11
Email	9
Hard copy form	5

## Social Media Strategy

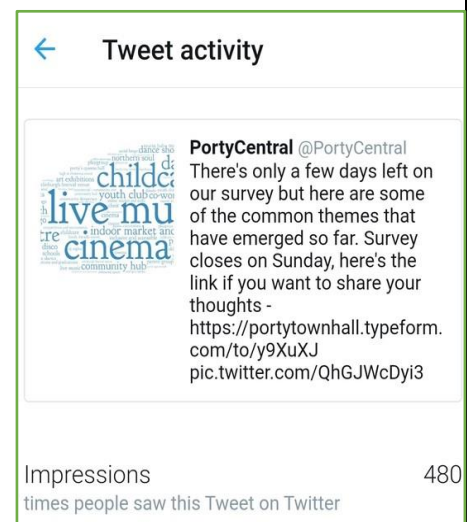
The objective of the social media strategy was to reach as wide an audience as possible. This meant moving beyond our established Facebook group (800) which was non-diverse (74% identified as female, majority within age group 35 - 64).

We developed [www.portobellocentral.org](http://www.portobellocentral.org), using this as the launch pad for communicating our work and plans for engagement. We then echoed through Facebook; Instagram and Twitter.

We conducted a social media community audit. This identified groups with large and active followings within our community and those we hoped might expand our diversity (e.g. Portovelo, Spokes Porty and Portobello Rugby Club). We engaged these groups through Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Our partners, Portobello Library, the Wash House, and Bellfield, along with individual supporters, also promoted our campaign.

During the campaign, the Portobello Central (Saving Porty Town Hall) Facebook group quickly grew from c.800 to well over 1,000 members, c.650 of whom are deemed “active”. Twitter followers grew to around 200 and Instagram to 150. Formal “subscribers” to the Porty Central mailing list through the website grew to c.100.

We used these platforms to provide information and encourage engagement. We kept everyone up to date on our tally of conversations and used “wordles” to share popularity of ideas at given points. This provoked engagement from those who did not see their idea. We also had meaningful conversations via Facebook with participants providing their thoughts and ideas, which made up a small element (11) of our 532 conversations.



## Online Workshops

Using the online booking platform, Eventbrite, we set up a series of 12 “Zoom” meetings for people to book. Using a semi-structured interview style based on the purpose of our engagement these were small, focused workshops. To ease nervousness and wary of “Zoom-fatigue” during lockdown, these were promoted and designed to be relaxed and informal with no more than 5 or 6 participants encouraged to “bring a cup of tea”.

“Just had a great ZOOM discussion & really feel that there is so much potential for so many uses for the Town Hall!  
I would definitely recommend booking into one of ZOOM discussions, really found it interesting & great to hear other folks suggestions & ideas!”

In total, 19 of the 532 conversations were performed in this way. Participants were from a variety of backgrounds, 5 identified as male and around 36% occupied the 65 and over age group. Participants were animated, bouncing ideas off each other, asking questions, and providing advice.

## Surveys

We designed and executed 2 surveys covering the purpose of our engagement using Typeform for both. The largest by far, with 459 responses, was the general community survey, promoted through our social media.

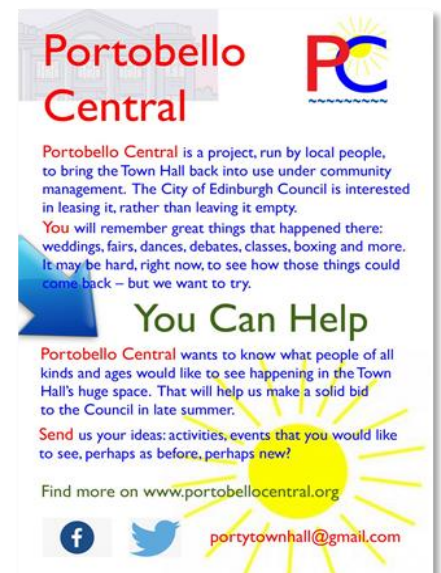
We also worked with our partner, Portobello High School, to provide a tailored survey to High School pupils which was shared through the school's weekly update email out to pupils and parents. 19 pupils took part, providing an insight to an age group for which we were not seeing a high level of engagement.

The design of both surveys was initially by the working group, using the guidance provided by the Typeform platform. These were then tested and feedback was sought from community members (a teacher for the High School survey) prior to publication. Drop off rates were low, and insignificant for the community survey once the survey was started. Only completed surveys were counted.

## Non-Virtual Methods of Engagement

Keen to ensure we included those who were not able or willing to engage online we supplemented our engagement plan with non-virtual methods where possible:

1. 1000 printed flyers with questions on the back distributed in shops and public spaces, Bellfield provided a delivery location. At this stage in the lockdown we were not confident of a successful socially distanced doorstep delivery.
2. Large banner hung on doors of the Town Hall
3. Physical presence outside of Town Hall (2 days, consecutive weekends, socially distanced) where we were able to distribute leaflets and talk face to face with passers-by.
4. Pre-arranged socially distanced face to face conversations outside with no more than 2 households present at any time.



Of our 532 conversations, 11 were face to face and 5 were paper forms handed in.

## Annex 1: Appendix 1: Over 100 Unique Ideas

<p> Weddings  Parties / celebrations  Farmers market  Nursery age child care  Wrap around childcare  Drop in crèche  Playgroups  Live events  Live music venue  Permanent cinema  Pop-up cinema  Shop  Christmas fairs  Market space  Tables sale  Indoor car boot sales  Arts and craft fairs  University or college outreach  Community hub with police, CAB and library  Seaside tourist hub - manage our tourism  Artists studios;  Co-working space  Edinburgh festival  Support schools  Northern Soul  Youth club  Community place  Hub for community groups  Community performances </p>	<p> Licensed Bar  Community / Commercial mix  Permanent café  A community cafe with locally grown vegs  (making use of the garden for crops, great for  children school project type thing)  Drop in centre  Coffee mornings  Jewellery studio;  Tango dances  Cercos dances  Dance shows  Porty's Queen Hall  Boutique hotel  Classes and clubs for kids  Exhibitions  Tea dances  Social bingo  Bingo  Fundraising events  Art classes  Community democracy events  Under 18 discos  Social events for ages 12 - 15  Theatre performances  Community centre for the youth  Charity events  Volleyball  Quiz night </p>
--	--



<p>Fitness</p> <p>Support schools</p> <p>Drama clubs</p> <p>Orchestras</p> <p>Ceilidh</p> <p>DJ nights</p> <p>Family friendly events</p> <p>Games conventions</p> <p>Lectures</p> <p>An indoor hall to play games and hang out after school.</p> <p>Office space</p> <p>Somewhere to get out of house to meet other</p> <p>Mums over coffee and let the babies play with toys and chat.</p> <p>Play frame, ball pit.</p> <p>Rehearsal space</p> <p>Kids fitness or self defence classes</p> <p>Adult self defence classes</p> <p>Boxing Tournaments</p> <p>Lego league</p> <p>Arts and crafts groups</p> <p>50's, 60's 70's dance nights</p> <p>Lip reading lessons</p> <p>Office functions</p> <p>Christenings</p> <p>Prom venue</p> <p>Nerf gun battles</p> <p>Laserquest</p> <p>Badminton</p> <p>Pop-up bank</p> <p>Zero-waste grocery</p> <p>Dog shows</p> <p>Hidden Doors festival</p> <p>Spiritual fellowships</p> <p>Chinese New Year Celebrations</p>	<p>A space like Out of the Blue</p> <p>Circuit training</p> <p>Stuff for Dads so they don't go to the pub</p> <p>Choir</p> <p>Dance competitions. (Highland, Ballroom, Stage or Hip Hop)</p> <p>Youth theatre</p> <p>Festival Fringe events</p> <p>Ping pong evening (Bellfield too small)</p> <p>Swing dance society</p> <p>Conference space</p> <p>Children's sporting events</p> <p>Training young people about community work and volunteering - grow the next generation of citizens</p> <p>After school activities</p> <p>Mindfulness classes</p> <p>Work with other centres to create weekend "events" to get a buzz going round Porty</p> <p>Innovation and entrepreneur space</p> <p>Family Saturday theatre / cinema</p> <p>Multi-generational events</p> <p>Venue for Edinburgh Beltane</p> <p>Science outreach and education</p> <p>Graduations</p> <p>Venue for Fun Palace</p> <p>Porty does Strictly</p> <p>Food festival</p> <p>Mini highland games</p> <p>Community cooking for those recently housed</p> <p>Theatre training</p> <p>Local energy project</p> <p>Local history museum</p> <p>Social innovation space</p> <p>Porty Robots finders Gathering</p> <p>Polling station</p>
---	---

## Annex 1: Appendix 2: Lessons Learned

A key objective of the National Standards for Community Engagement is to use what has been learned to improve our future community engagement.

To that end the working group got together at the end of the campaign to discuss how we felt and what we would do differently in the future. We also welcomed feedback throughout our conversations.

There was so much more that could have been done with the benefit of more time, skills, and resources. COVID restrictions caused constraints, both for our engagement plans but also in the capacity of the community and partners.

There were also some things we would do differently if we had our time again regardless:

### **Diversity and Inclusivity:**

We were acutely aware of the limitations of COVID restrictions and what this meant in terms of lack of diversity. We did not reach as many offline as we would have liked and participant demographics were skewed towards those of the working group.

With the benefit of hindsight we would:

- Spend more time identifying and engaging partners at the start with diversity firmly in mind.
- Identify youth “ambassadors” to spearhead engagement with this age group (participant feedback).
- Expand our offline conversations, enabling volunteers to hold these with neighbours and friends. This would allow those that know the participant best to tailor each conversation to the participant’s needs.

### **Communication and Branding:**

Participants fed back that our branding “Portobello Central” made it unclear at first glance what our objective was. A similar criticism was aimed at the “300 Conversations in 30 Days” tagline where it was suggested the uncertainty of objective may have put people off.

With the benefit of hindsight we would:

- Make sure our branding was clear, adding the line “Saving Portobello Townhall” beneath.
- Welcome feedback in advance of our campaign communications to ensure these were as clear as possible.

# Portobello Town Hall

Running the  
Community Business



## Annex 2

### Running the Business

# **Portobello Central**

---

## **Running the Community Business**

### **Introduction**

### **Phase 1: Objectives**

### **Phase 1: Costs and Funding Sources**

### **Phase 1: Forecast Income and Expenditure**

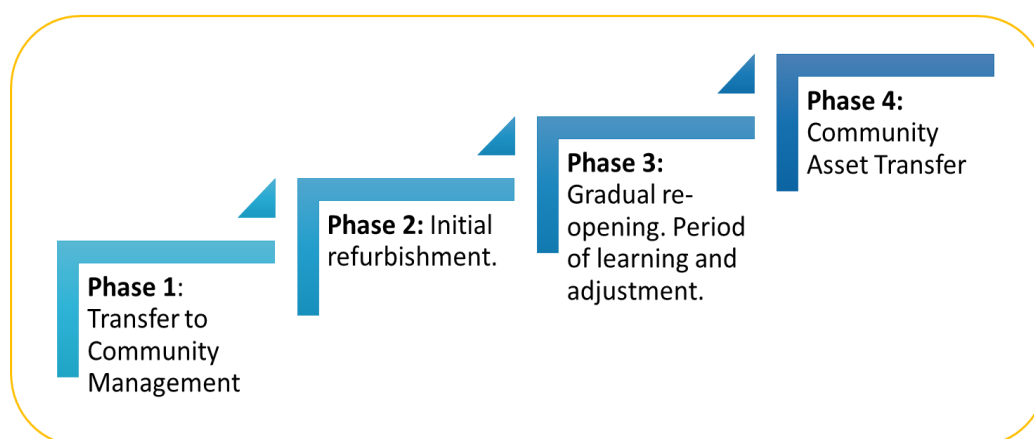
### **Phases 2-4: Projected Income and Expenditure**

### **Phases 2-4: Assumptions**

## Introduction

Portobello Central Ltd was established to re-open Portobello Town Hall and bring it under community management and potentially ownership.

Portobello Town Hall closed in July 2019 following a period of management by the City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) through the Libraries department. This business case provides a basis for a CEC-supported transfer of the management of Portobello Town Hall to the local community (“Phases 1 to 2”). This will allow the community to refurbish, re-open, manage and prove the long-term viability of the Town Hall. With the consent of the community, we will explore potential future community ownership over a 3 to 5-year period (“Phases 3 to 4”).



Often referred to as a “try before you buy” model, this is a tried and trusted approach to Asset Transfer under Part 5 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, recognised by supporters such as DTAS and the Scottish Land Fund. This plan details the financial requirements underpinning Phase 1.

This initial phase in the project consists of exploratory work to fully understand:

- community appetite for management and ownership;
- community needs, ambitions and vision for the space;
- scale of works required to allow re-opening;
- operational costs and realistic anticipated income streams.

Hence outgoings will consist predominantly of professional fees and a nominal level of business expenses and publicity.

This initial phase will be funded through donations (time, expertise and money) and grants.

## Phase 1 Objectives

The overall objective of Phase 1 is to agree a CEC-supported transfer of the management of Portobello Town Hall to the local community.

Currently the City of Edinburgh Council has offered the Town Hall for let:

“The Council is seeking a tenant to provide a sustainable future for this important historic building. Ideally the proposed future use should include community benefits and facilities.”

In order to achieve this and commence further negotiations with CEC we must build a business case which demonstrates our proposal has the backing of the community and is financially sustainable. Our 3 key objectives for Phase 1 are therefore:



To date we have completed an initial programme of community engagement, funded by small donations of money and large donations of time and goodwill. This showed strong support for the project; helped us understand the needs and ambitions of the community and provided over 100 unique ideas for building use<sup>1</sup>.

We now require professional assistance to achieve the remaining objectives and are seeking grant funding and donations to make this happen.

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 1: Community Engagement Report

## Phase 1 Costs and Funding Sources

### Costs

The following list of services required, and cost estimates, are based on the prior experience of other centres and individuals who have conducted similar exercises and initial conversation with professionals and advice and funding bodies.

They are subject to change and we may uncover the need for more specialist services as we proceed:

Services Required	Estimated Cost
Building condition survey <sup>2</sup>	£0
Specialist reports (e.g. VAT planning, asbestos, ceiling specific, green energy)	£5,000
Conservation architect options report	£3,500
Business plan, feasibility study and option appraisal	£4,400
Legal Fees	£1,000
Business Expenses and marketing materials	£1,000
Total	£14,900

### Funding Sources

Similar to estimated costs, the funding sources below are based upon indicative conversations and prior experience.

Source	Target	Actual	Status
Community donations and fundraising	£2,000	£761	received
National Lottery Community Fund Microgrant	£500	£500	received
Architectural Heritage Fund	£7,500	£6,500	secured
Scottish Land Fund - 1 <sup>st</sup> Stage	£10,000		engaging
Foundation Scotland			prospect
Regeneration Fund			prospect
Total	£20,000	£7,761	

<sup>2</sup> We have assumed £0 for building survey as architect indicates we would proceed based on Council survey.



## Phase 1 Income and Expenditure Forecast

As a small, voluntary organisation we do not anticipate any overdraft or other financing requirements at this stage. We will constrain our activities based on the income available at the time. The timeline for phase 1 is forecast as follows:

	Nov 2020	Dec 2020	Jan 2021	Feb 2021	Mar 2021	Apr 2021
Opening Balance	£1,141	£1,261	£1,361	£1,461	£1,561	£261
Donations and fundraising	£120	£300	£300	£300	£300	£300
Architectural Heritage Fund					£6,500	
Scottish Land Fund - stage 1						£6,000 <sup>3</sup>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>£120</b>	<b>£1,561</b>	<b>£300</b>	<b>£300</b>	<b>£6,800</b>	<b>£6,300</b>
Building survey					£0	
Specialist reports						£5,000
Conservation architect report					£3,500	
Business plan					£4,400	
Legal Fees						£1,000
Expenses	£0	£200	£200	£200	£200	£200
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£200</b>	<b>£200</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£8,100</b>	<b>£6,200</b>
<b>Closing Balance</b>	<b>£1,261</b>	<b>£1,361</b>	<b>£1,461</b>	<b>£1,561</b>	<b>£261</b>	<b>£361</b>

<sup>3</sup> This is an indicative amount. We intend to apply for £10k and assume the need for further unidentified services will crop up during this phase.

## Phases 2 - 4 Projected Income and Expenditure

We provide a projection of anticipated costs and income up to Phase 4 to illustrate our understanding of the magnitude of the task. Capital expenditure is based on provided Council reports, phased to reflect informal conversations with local architects, operational income and expenditure is based on existing community centres and previous costs of the Town Hall, provided by the Council. Funding sources are indicative at best at this stage (prior to feasibility study).

	Q2 2021	Q3 2021	Q4 2021	Q1 2022	Q2 2022	Q3 2022	Q4 2022	Q1 2023	Q2 2023
Opening Balance	£361	£961	£36,561	£21,661	£31,961	£63,961	£66,961	£31,061	£361
Donations and fundraising	£600	£600							
Funding Sources	£42,000	£75,000	£50,000	£80,000	£50,000	£10,000	£5,000		
Income	£0	£2,000	£16,100	£21,300	£63,000	£64,000	£26,100	£21,300	£63,000
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>£42,600</b>	<b>£77,600</b>	<b>£66,100</b>	<b>£101,300</b>	<b>£113,000</b>	<b>£74,000</b>	<b>£31,100</b>	<b>£21,300</b>	<b>£63,000</b>
Capital Expenditure	£25,000	£25,000	£40,000	£50,000	£40,000	£30,000	£25,000	£10,000	£5,000
Operational Expenses	£10,500	£10,500	£39,500	£39,500	£39,500	£39,500	£39,500	£39,500	£39,500
Consulting Fees	£5,000	£5,000					£1,000	£1,000	£5,000
Management Expenses	£1,500	£1,500	£1,500	£1,500	£1,500	£1,500	£1,500	£1,500	£1,500
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£42,000</b>	<b>£42,000</b>	<b>£81,000</b>	<b>£91,000</b>	<b>£81,000</b>	<b>£71,000</b>	<b>£67,000</b>	<b>£52,000</b>	<b>£51,000</b>
Closing Balance	£961	£36,561	£21,661	£31,961	£63,961	£66,961	£31,061	£361	£12,361

## Phases 2 - 4 Assumptions

The projected income and expenditure provided for phase 2-4 is illustrative and we expect it to change rapidly following the business planning process (see appendix 3).

The basis for each of our assumptions are listed:

Income	Assumption
Donations and fundraising	Assuming we are successful we plan to begin a fundraising programme within the community, target amounts are spread across the phases. To date donations have been largely unsolicited
Funding Sources	We recognise the plan as it stands is reliant on grant funding. We will be able to provide more tangible details once consultancy work starts. We are also exploring potential commercial partnerships and anchor tenancies within the ambitions and needs of the community.
Income	Expected income is seasonal with festive and wedding seasons represented. Amounts are based on community experience and discussions with other venues. It is also based on a return to something closer to normality post COVID towards the end of 2021.

Expenditure	Assumption
Capital Expenditure	<p>We recognise the Council survey indicates an overall cost of refurbishment to modern day standards at around the £750k - £1m mark.</p> <p>However, initial discussions with architects would suggest a more modest sum of around £250,000 would be enough to get the doors open.</p>
Operational Expenditure	Operational expenditure is based on knowledge of other centres within Portobello (duly "grossed up" to reflect the larger size and ambitions of the Town Hall). We have been informed by the previous running costs provided by the Council. We make the assumption that, as a charity, we would not be paying rates.
Consulting Fees	We assume we will continue to require specialist services and make allowances for this in the forecast.
Management Expenses	We have allowed for a small amount of expenses not directly related to the running of the building, fundraising for example.

## **Annex 3:**



## **Munro Allison Architects & Rob Robinson Heritage Consultant**

### **Proposal for Project Viability Study**



# **Proposal by Munro Allison and Rob Robinson Heritage Consultant for a Project Viability Study (Extract)**

## **METHODOLOGY & COSTS FOR ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE FUND VIABILITY STUDY**

---

The study would be carried out in three stages

### **1.0 INTRODUCTORY/ BRIEFING MEETING**

To meet the core client team, gain a detailed understanding of the project and project group ambitions (for the study and the project), obtain any further background information, including any consultation requirements and contact details, discuss deadlines and timescales and visit the site (Rob Robinson).

### **2.0 RESEARCH STAGE**

At this stage as much information about the building as possible is researched, collated and analysed, including previous studies, earlier consultation and surveys.

#### **2.1 Work to be carried out by Munro Allison Architects**

##### **2.1.1 Historical Research and Building Analysis**

This involves researching the building and its history to inform and better understand the significance of the building and its setting. This includes documentary research in archives as well as collating and assessing any previous research carried out. An analytical survey of the building will be carried out which will allow us to identify any changes to the building and assess the relative importance of the building in terms of architecture, social history, etc.

##### **2.1.2 Condition**

A condition survey is normally carried out at this point, but given that the council have recently carried out extensive condition surveys, including specialists for plaster ceilings, this section would summarise and assess the findings of these.

##### **2.1.3 Statement of Significance**

This is the key summary of why the building is important holistically and would identify the elements of the building which are of more or lesser significance: this then allows the effects of proposed alterations to the building to be assessed accurately. A summary of the constraints and opportunities faced by any re-use of the Town Hall will also be produced.

## **2.2 Works to be carried by Rob Robinson Heritage Consultant**

### **2.2.1 Data collection/ research:**

All relevant documents and data relating to the project and the market / local context will be collated and reviewed. It is anticipated that the client team will assist with the collation of some of this material but its collection will be led by the consultant and will include:

- Any previous studies along with all associated documents
- Any further building reports including operating reports
- Any previous community consultation
- Any project group documentation (mission statement / constitution / Forward Plan)
- Local demographic and economic data (e.g. Edinburgh by Numbers) including future proposals (Draft Local Plan)
- Additional local or regional visitor data
- Additional community needs reports (e.g. community action plans)
- Any other relevant data, strategies, studies or plans known to the client team or the consultant

### **2.2.2 Activity Research and Summary:**

Through discussion with the client team to provide a summary of the current activity by the project group and of past activity within the Town Hall.

### **2.2.3 Locality and Context:**

To provide an assessment of the Portobello locality in terms of socio economic position and demographics. This will be to sufficient detail to provide context for the project and option proposals as per the requirements of the Project Viability Report.

## **3.0 OPTIONS APPRAISAL AND FINAL REPORT**

### **3.1 Summary**

The final viability study will identify three options for re-use or alteration of the building. These will be based on both the architectural constraints and opportunities identified in previous stages as well as the economic viability of use.

Following discussion with the client group, the preferred option will be chosen and developed into an indicative scheme with capital building and repair costs identified.

### **3.2 Works to be carried out by Rob Robinson**

Working with the client team, three options for use will be developed for the building. Each option is likely to include a variety of use mixes (based on community needs, project team ambitions and building suitability). Some consultation is likely to be required at this stage with potential partners, users or stakeholders.

For each option, the use will be described and assessed from a business perspective to assess outline financial viability and risk and an assessment of pros and cons for each option will be provided leading to a recommended preferred option.



**Economic outcomes:** For the preferred option, a basic economic evaluation will be undertaken providing an estimation of economic outcomes, employment and volunteering. If the use and data allows this will include an outline economic impact assessment.

**Funding:** Funding research will be undertaken to identify the key sources of funding, the levels of funds required from each funder and how this fits with the preferred option. This information will be entered into the tables in the PVR template.

**Action Plan:** Input into the action plan to clearly identify next steps for the client team to progress the project

### **3.1 Works to be carried out by Munro Allison Architects**

After identifying the three preferred uses (or use mix), we will then develop sketch schemes for how these can be accommodated into the Town Hall building, and whether any significant alteration or extension of the property would be required or help to accommodate viable economic uses.

These design options can be used as the basis for initial discussions with funders. Each option will also include: the necessary repairs to the existing fabric of the building; a summary of the pros and cons of each approach; and the potential for staged development.

The final, preferred scheme will be drawn up in sufficient detail to allow for indicative budget costings, including necessary repairs and indications of potential for development stages.

## **4.0 ADMINISTRATION**

### **4.1 Lead Consultant**

The project will be led and co-ordinated by Munro Allison Architects. Each consultant will be appointed directly, and separately, by the client. MAA would be appointed on standard RIAS conditions of appointment.

### **4.2 Meetings**

Meetings with the client are proposed at start up (stage 1), and on production of interim and draft reports. These will be in person, COVID-19 permitting, and by Zoom / skype etc. if not.

### **4.3 Reporting**

Reports would be provided at interim (selection of preferred option) and full draft stages. Following meetings at each report stage and taking client comments on board the final report will be produced.

### **4.4 Exclusions:**

**Community Consultation** - community consultation is not regarded as necessary at this stage, but if deemed so, this would be undertaken by the client team or at additional cost

**Costings:** A suitable experienced cost consultant would be required to produce the costing for the preferred scheme and collation of the repairs to the building. We can arrange this if required.

## Annex 4: Who we are



**Damian Harney**

Experienced IT professional with almost 20 years in various sectors such as telecoms, finance and public sector. Main area of expertise is change management.



**Lynn Houmudi**

Portobello resident of 30+ years. Former diplomat and civil servant, now supporting purpose-driven organisations including charities and social enterprises. Interim manager, Bridgend Farmhouse and Multi-Cultural Family Base Trustee.



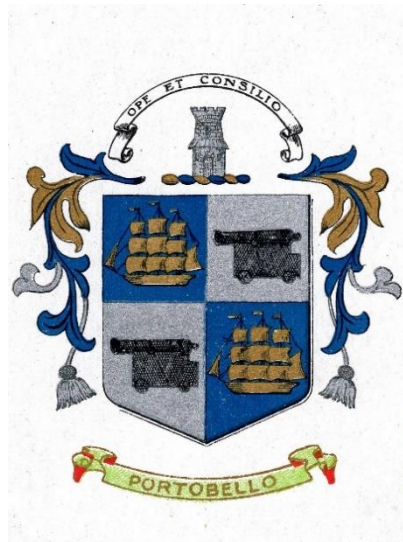
**Jon Davey**

Former IT systems developer, now operating a local photography business. Local resident, familiar with the locality, in particular the local cultural landscape. Served for three years as a director of Art Walk Projects CIC and remains on the Art Walk committee.



**Jayne Saywell**

Senior risk manager, focused on climate risk. Co-founder of a social enterprise helping companies pivot to regenerative business models. Finance professional (ACMA). treasurer of the Wash House, local parent.



**Jennifer Elliot**

Salesperson in the IT industry for 20 years, now a carer for the elderly., Treasurer of Action Party since the early days of that project - the 1st urban community right to buy. The learnings and positive experiences from that project led to Jennifer being a founder member of the Portobello Central organisation.



**Will Tyler-Greig**

Civil servant whose most recent work was responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, leading on the 'Wellbeing Fund' with a range of third sector partners to distribute £50 million to thousands of front-line charities. Will has a background in planning and geography and is a Trustee of UK charity Living Streets.



**Morag Phillips**

Owner/Principal of Lothian Dance Academy for 32 years. Former professional dancer involved in dance & dance education 45 years. Experienced events and shows organiser. Registered teacher Royal Academy of Dance. Experience in advertising networking & social media. Active in local community.,



**Geoff Pearson**

Retired Scottish Government civil servant, experienced in legislation, third sector, NDPB structural issues, government finance and policy development. Previous experience includes board of Venture Scotland; Chair of Streetwork UK; secretary of a local community council; member of the community planning partnership structure.



Cover picture by Rhanna Baldwin, Spaceinajardesigns

[www.portobellocentral.org](http://www.portobellocentral.org)  
[portytownhall@gmail.com](mailto:portytownhall@gmail.com)  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/saveportytownhall>  
<https://twitter.com/PortyCentral>  
<https://www.instagram.com/portobellocentral>

Published by:  
Portobello Central Ltd  
1 Windsor Place  
EH15 2AJ  
26 November 2020



# **Delivering New Life**

## **The Community Proposal for Portobello Town Hall**



Portobello Central Ltd  
*A not-for-profit  
community organisation*  
19 March 2021

# Delivering New Life

1. WE CAN MAKE THIS WORK.....	2
2. PREPARE.....	3
Legal Structure	
Timeline	
Funding Strategy	
3. OPERATE.....	10
Financial Plan	
20-Minute Neighbourhood	
Community	
Space	
Sample Programme of Events	
4. POSSESS.....	17
5. THE NEW LIFE APPROACH .....	18
Where Is Portobello?	
6. SUPPORTING THE CASE	
Detailed financial plans.....	20
Assumptions.....	23
Risks and mitigants .....	26
Promising beginnings .....	34
Action Party Support.....	35
Like Minds .....	36



# We Can Make This Work

1. Portobello Town Hall is nothing without its community, but the community is enriched, enlivened and working for all with the Town Hall open for business. It was built for every sector and segment of life and is adaptable to the new needs and uses coming in the “new normal”. There should be something happening here for everyone, to strengthen our business community, widen our cultural and social life, no matter what life we come from.
2. Our “*New Life*” vision is for Portobello Town Hall to be the focal point of the town, the beating heart supporting a truly resilient “20-minute community”. Portobello Town Hall will become “the go to” place for information, support, education, entertainment, company, and culture.
3. Portobello Central Ltd is a social enterprise whose mission is to place Portobello Town Hall under community management to enhance life in Portobello for the benefit of local residents and the local economy. We seek to maximise community resilience and wellbeing through the Town Hall.

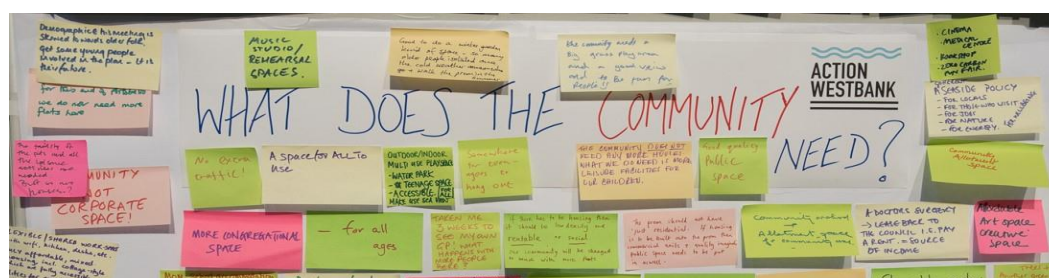
4. To deliver the “*New Life*” vision, Portobello Central Ltd proposes to:

**PREPARE:** take occupation of Portobello Town Hall under an informal arrangement with the City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) from September 2021. Immediately, an assessment will be made of the works required for safe public use, funds will be raised and those works will be carried out by Portobello Central SCIO. An assessment of the works required to fulfil long term plans will also be undertaken, along with fund raising and development of a social impact framework.

**OPERATE:** open the Town Hall for business from 1 April 2022 (if pathway 1 is possible), under the management of a new SCIO which is being established. The SCIO would hold the lease with CEC and will develop and expand the uses of the Town Hall by the community, building on its legacy and the interest shown by individuals and organisations over the last 12 months.

**POSSESS:** In due course the SCIO will engage with CEC to assess the scope for asset transfer of the building under Part 5 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.

5. “*New Life for the Heart of Portobello*”, submitted in November 2020, focussed on what Portobello Town Hall means to the community and what “life” the community wishes to see. That arose from substantial consultations in the summer of 2020, which form the foundation of this proposal. This document, taken with the 2020 paper forms our proposal at March 2021.
6. Almost a year on from the start of that work, we now set out the practical steps needed to return the Town Hall to the community.



# Prepare

7. The building has been dormant for almost two years and only lightly used before that, so it will take some time to re-create demand. The nature of demand may have changed during the pandemic but recovering former users and uses as well as developing and providing for the new will be a first priority for the business. We have strong indications of people seeking what the Town Hall can offer.
8. We propose an informal arrangement to run until 31 March 2022. During this time no full lease would be signed and no rent paid but negotiations for the full lease with CEC would be undertaken with the final agreement to be made with the SCIO in late 2021.
9. During the period to March 2022 we will seek managed access to the building by Portobello Central representatives and our consultants, in order to assess, plan and cost the works required. We recognise there are insurance and safety issues to be considered to be discussed with CEC officers.
10. By mid-2021 Portobello Central will have the full Project Viability Study from Munro Allison Architects and Rob Robinson Heritage Consulting funded by the Architectural Heritage Fund which will cover:
  - A works schedule (for repairs and refurbishment)
  - An assessment of potential improvements
  - Ideas for business and market development.
11. This independent professional advice will support Portobello Central in completing our plan to re-open the building to public use.
12. We are convinced that the Town Hall can be run as a viable community asset and this proposal lays out our reasoning.

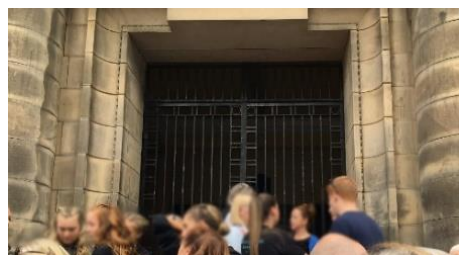
## Legal Structure

13. Portobello Central Ltd was set up as a temporary limited company to be able to apply for funding and give a legal foundation to the project. It is not the structure to run the building.
14. We are applying to OSCR to register a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO). In ordinary times this would take 3 months but currently is likely to take much longer.
15. The SCIO will take the standard two-tier form, with a body of community members which elects a set of trustees. The Trustees are responsible for delivering the business and reporting to the members. The procedure provides that the first trustees are those making the application, currently drawn from directors of Portobello Central.
16. Once OSCR has approved the application, and we have CEC approval, we can call for members - we know there are many who wish to support the project in this way. The SCIO is a recognised and recommended structure for this kind of business, providing a deep root into the community and a business-led form of management.



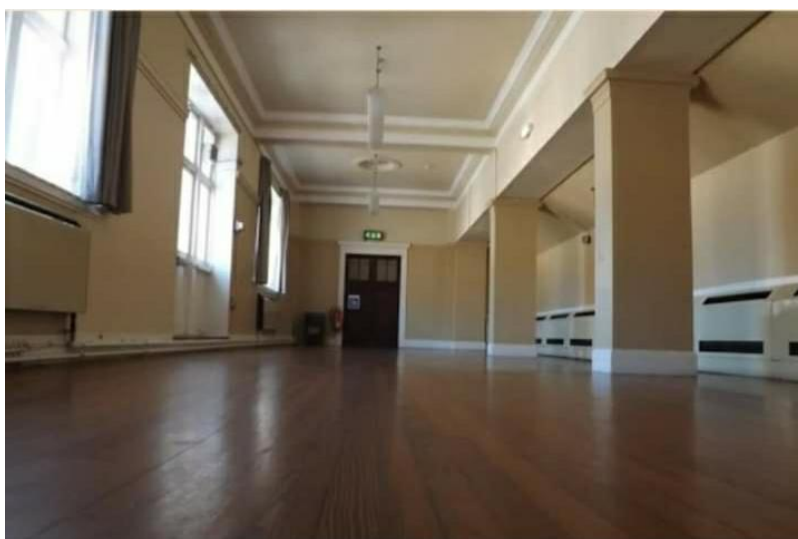
## Timeline

Decide	
30 November 2020	Portobello Central (PC) Ltd Submitted “ <i>New Life for the Heart of Portobello</i> ”
11 February 2021	CEC asks for Best and Final submissions
18 March 2021	PC Ltd contracts for Project Viability Study to report in late-May
19 March 2021	Closing date for Best and Final submission “ <i>Delivering New Life</i> ”
20 May 2021	Finance & Resources Committee
Prepare	
June 2021 - Sept 2021 (Phase 1)	Discussions between CEC officers and PC Ltd on terms of occupation and opening access for “safe to open” works
Oct 2021 - March 2022 (Phase 2)	Development of SCIO, membership voting for Trustees; With SCIO in place formal applications can be made for funding Advertising for users to rent, book spaces, make plans
Operate	
April 2022 - March 2024 (Phase 3)	SCIO takes up occupation, nominal rent, no rates to be paid Parts of building refurbished for office/studio use by commercial tenants Open for business - subject to remnant COVID rules
April 2023	Discussions open with CEC on asset transfer.
Possess	
1 April 2024 (Phase 4)	Asset transfer to SCIO



## Funding Strategy

17. In total we estimate a requirement for around £350,000 grant funding over the first 2 years to safely and sustainably open Portobello Town Hall. To make better use of the building a further £350,000 is estimated bringing total grant funding requirement to £700,000 over 5 years.
18. Our business plan estimates around £250,000 capital is required to re-open Portobello Town Hall and that we spend around £600,000 in fixed operational costs between opening in April 2022 and March 2025, met in large part by an estimated £540,000 operating profit margin. This leaves a funding gap of at least £310,000 and does not take into account the timing of cashflows which make the first year, in particular, grant dependent.
19. Our financial programme runs in 4 Phases, starting from first agreement by the Council that our proposal is accepted. Until that point all arrangements and calculations are necessarily tentative. The formal arrangements can begin once the SCIO is agreed by OSCR; until that point no long-term formal agreement can be entered into, although Portobello Central Ltd would wish to negotiate access arrangements as early as possible in order to make definitive plans.
20. We will develop a social impact framework, to demonstrate to CEC and funders the community benefits that will result from our plans for the Town Hall. In addition to grant funding, we are exploring other models such as raising impact investment and community shares, which take a long-term approach and can lever local investment from businesses which would benefit from a revitalised Town Hall.
21. It is difficult to plan for grant funding at this early stage without a positive decision from the council, so we have established a multi-scenario strategy with at least four pathways underway at any one time to obtain funding in the phases as required (see pathway summary at end of this section).
22. Ideally, arrangements might be made to allow access to funding from the Town Centre Fund, which would need to be granted by the council and spent by end March 2022 (Pathway 1). If Pathway 1 proved possible, it would allow the timing of the project outlined in this proposal but we recognise that is a fast delivery. The other pathways are feasible but the Town Hall programme opening dates slip 12 months. What is needed and its costs will be assessed against the Project Viability Report already commissioned.



The Upper Hall

## Pathway Summary

	Pathway 1	Pathway 2	Pathway 3	Pathway 4
<b>Phase 1: Prepare</b>				
Architectural Heritage Fund	6,500	6,500	6,500	6,500
Lottery Microgrant	500	500	500	500
Donations	700	700	700	700
Awards for All National Lottery	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Scottish Land Fund Stage 1	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000
Community Fundraiser	1,300	1,300	1,300	1,300
Total Phase 1	34,000	34,000	34,000	34,000
<b>Phase 2: Prepare</b>				
Crowdfunding	16,000	16,000	16,000	16,000
Town Centre Fund	300,000	100,000	100,000	0
Total Phase 2	316,000	116,000	116,000	16,000
<b>Phase 3: Gradual Reopening</b>				
Regeneration Fund	0	300,000	£0	300,000
Scottish Land Fund	100,000	50,000	300,000	100,000
National Lottery Community Fund	50,000	0	50,000	50,000
Total Phase 3	150,000	350,000	350,000	450,000
<b>Phase 4: Possess</b>				
Community Share Options	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000
<b>Total £</b>	<b>700,000</b>	<b>700,000</b>	<b>700,000</b>	<b>700,000</b>



Hustings

## Consideration of Phases by Funding Pathways

### Phase 1: Prepare (June 2021 - Sept 2021)

23. We know that significant funding will require a long-term strategy. In the short term (May 2021 to Sept 2021) all pathways are the same and we set out potential funding from National Lottery Awards for All of £10,000 towards staff and £15,000 of Stage 1 Scottish Land Fund (SLF) towards professional fees.
24. We are in discussion with both National Lottery and Scottish Land Fund to understand what is feasible. Currently, it is clear SLF will fund us only if there is an owner willing to transfer the asset. Therefore, securing SLF funding for the whole project depends on the CEC position.
25. Some community fundraising (an event) to raise £1,300 would take place in this period. Including existing funding of £7,700, and assuming SLF and Awards for All funding this brings us to an expected £34,000 for Phase 1.

Award	Amount	Status
Architectural Heritage Fund	£6,500	Secured
Lottery Microgrant	£500	Secured
Donations	£700	Secured
Awards for All National Lottery	£10,000	In discussion with funder
Scottish Land Fund Stage 1	£15,000	In discussion with funder
Community Fundraiser	£1,300	
<b>Total Phase 1</b>	<b>£34,000</b>	

26. In this phase, serious conversations with key funders are crucial. The principal funds in our plan are the Town Centre Fund, Regeneration Fund and Scottish Land Fund (may also be considered in conjunction with the Architectural Heritage Fund) as well as National Lottery Community Fund. We are already talking with each of these funding bodies with the goal to secure funds for Phases 2 or 3.
27. Upon a positive decision from CEC, we will prepare a more detailed Funder Matrix showing timings, values, criteria, probability etc of various funds, not just those named above. The funds selected are the most significant and aligned to our cause but there are others such as; Foundation Scotland; Climate Change Fund; Creative Scotland; Various Trusts and many smaller funds that could all contribute should they be necessary.

### Phase 2: Prepare (October 2021 - March 2022)

28. On agreement by CEC we plan to crowdfund with a target of £10K-£20K, with the expectation of achieving around £16,000 during this Phase.
29. We are targeting funds aligned to our purpose of becoming the heart of Portobello and the most readily available funds. With that in mind, we are targeting £300,000 from the Town Centre Fund to be used by March 2022 as our preferred funding route (Pathway 1).

30. Securing the full TCF funding would allow us not just to make the building safe but would also allow us to undertake suggested improvements and adaptations resulting from our architect's report.
31. This proposal is not dependant on Portobello Central obtaining Town Centre funding but it is a key fund in the plan and allows us to move fastest.

Award	Amount	Status
Town Centre Fund	£300,000	In discussion with funder
Crowdfunder	£16,000	Planning
Regeneration Fund	TBC	In discussion with funder
Scottish Land Fund	TBC	In discussion with funder
National Lottery Community Led Fund	TBC	In discussion with funder
<b>Preferred Phase 2 Pathway</b>	<b>£316,000</b>	

32. We recognise that the timing on Pathway 1 is aggressive and to that end under Pathways 2 and 3 we seek only £100,000 from the Town Centre Fund for essential capital works in Phase 2.
33. Pathway 2 then seeks to close the funding gap with a Regeneration Fund bid of £300,000. Pathway 3 closes the funding gap with Scottish Land Fund money. Neither of these would be allocated until April 2022 at the earliest assuming we submit a Stage 1 applications for either/both by June 2021.
34. Were we to go down Pathways 2 or 3, the 'Operate' phase would be delayed by 12 months (essentially merging Phases 2 and 3), accepting that the knock-on impact on operational income generation may necessitate larger grant funding.
35. Pathway 4 has no Town Centre Funding allocated in Phase 2 and is our least preferred route. No significant funding starts for Pathway 4 until after April 2022. Under Pathway 4 there is a long period of uncertainty for the project as no significant funds are secured for almost a year. Work to make the building safe to open does not even start until after April 2022 and all focus is on fund-raising until then.
36. While we have put the funding of Pathway 4 into Phase 3 in the summary it really means Phase 2 continues for longer.

### Phase 3: Gradual Reopening and Evolution

37. In each of our pathways, by the time we reach Phase 3 we are looking to have secured £500,000 of funding.
38. Our preferred funding plan (Pathway 1) is built on £300,000 from the Town Centre Fund in Phase 2 and then £100K of Scottish Land Fund and £50K of National Lottery Community Fund in Phase 3 and allows us to open fastest and with the most secure funding route. If Pathway 1 cannot be secured, the timeline is slower and less certain for Pathways 2 and 3 and Pathway 4 is the slowest and least secure but is also feasible.

## Phase 4: April 2024 - March 2026

39. We plan to launch a Community Share Option at the end of the mid-term plan in Phase 4 (Community Asset Transfer and Real Development). Ideally this supplements an already successful funding strategy rather than be the keystone of it. However, if we failed to secure funding we could move sooner to a Community Share option and aim for £300K rather than £200K as an additional pathway.
40. Community Share options are typically successful more for existing thriving community businesses and are no small undertaking. This is not a good funding option on its own.
41. In the longer term we will seek to develop a holistic funding strategy exploring other options such as impact investment and using community expertise to supplement a sustainable social enterprise with legacy, corporate and grant funding for specific initiatives.



# Operate

## 20-Minute Neighbourhood

42. We have based our thinking on a three-way partnership: community, commercial, Council. We see the Town Hall as the centrepiece in a thriving town with a wide variety of shops and services. The High Street contains a good number of high-quality shops of many kinds interspersed with a fair number of charity shops and empty premises. We know that bringing businesses together creates business, gives choice to the customer, encourages variety and brings on the smaller businesses that do better with lively neighbours.

*“High streets are not collections of competitive businesses, but sets of different shops, restaurants, and services, whose business is dependent on each other”*

### Community

43. A lot of effort has been made to understand the community view - which might lead to a perception that the Town Hall is just an over-sized community centre. In fact, it has substantial potential to drive economic growth in the east of Edinburgh. It occupies a prime, prominent site, is recognisable as a landmark surrounded by an array of premises providing the staples as well as the specials. We believe that its importance has been lost in the last decade - it is so big, it is easy to miss it.

### Commercial

44. But now there is a real prospect of its loss or permanent closure, we know that businesses are concerned that the draw of Portobello is too focussed on the Prom. The thousands who come to Edinburgh's Seaside, not just on high days and holidays, would also come if the Town Hall were providing a range of interest. On the basis of “provide and they will come” we think that jobs of all kinds will grow from an active Town Hall. It is too big to be just a single purpose building, and that has deterred business people who have approached us, quietly. A day by the sea will be better if there is more to see.

### Council

45. The City Council has talked much of bringing services closer to communities, delivering to citizens in their own areas and now the welcome “20-minute neighbourhood” which seeks:
- well-connected local places
  - builds new models of shared service delivery with partners including key role of the voluntary sector
  - delivers synergies between services and 'serendipity' of finding out more from one visit
  - takes our best assets and delivers more services from them, creating more fit for purpose, sustainable assets
  - creates a strategic approach to the location of our services rather than the existing organic way buildings have grown up over the last century
  - all key to supporting a growing city in a sustainable manner
46. We firmly believe that the Town Hall can make a powerful contribution to the delivery of this programme and hope that the Council will engage with us to make it a reality.



47. "20-minute neighbourhoods" need to be created from within those neighbourhoods, which are the communities centred on Portobello. (Outcome 12 in the Sustainable Economic Recovery strand of the CEC Adaptation and Renewal Programme)

## Financial Plan

48. Portobello Central is a mission driven social enterprise. Our primary objective is to generate a profit to finance not-for-profit activities and safeguard the future financial sustainability of this enterprise. Our vision, mission, and purpose cannot be achieved without financial sustainability.
49. We have prepared a detailed financial plan for the period April 2022 to March 2026 to test the viability. This is on a cashflow basis and assumes funding Pathway 1, excluding community shares. It is also prior to the anticipated advice in the consultants' Project Viability Report. We will re-draw the business plan following receipt of their report.
50. It is based upon much research; discussions; input from members of the community and the combined experience of the Portobello Central group.

Year on Year	Year to end Mar-22	Year to end Mar-23	Year to end Mar-24	Year to end Mar-25	Year to end Mar-26
<b>Receipts</b>					
<b>Grants &amp; Fundraising</b>	<b>£342,300</b>	<b>£150,000</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>
Zone 1: Large Hall Operating Profit	£0	£48,887	£114,230	£114,230	£114,230
Zone 2: Small Hall Operating Profit	£0	£9,090	£20,140	£20,140	£20,140
Zone 3: Kitchen and Class Operating Profit	£0	£2,232	£4,712	£4,960	£4,960
Zone 4: Retail Units Operating Profit	£0	£8,650	£17,300	£17,300	£17,300
<b>Total Variable Profit</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£68,859</b>	<b>£156,382</b>	<b>£156,630</b>	<b>£156,630</b>
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>£342,300</b>	<b>£218,859</b>	<b>£156,382</b>	<b>£156,630</b>	<b>£156,630</b>
<b>Fixed Expenses</b>					
Operating Expenses	£16,350	£34,909	£28,508	£28,831	£29,178
Licenses & Insurance	£6,050	£15,780	£13,937	£14,188	£14,457
Staff Costs	£11,076	£85,592	£94,181	£95,960	£97,868
<b>Total Fixed Expenses</b>	<b>£33,476</b>	<b>£136,281</b>	<b>£136,626</b>	<b>£138,979</b>	<b>£141,503</b>
<b>Operating Profit (excluding grant funding)</b>	<b>-£33,476</b>	<b>-£67,422</b>	<b>£19,756</b>	<b>£17,650</b>	<b>£15,127</b>
<b>Capital Expenditure (including professional fees)</b>	<b>£323,000</b>	<b>£50,000</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>
<b>Total Payments</b>	<b>£356,476</b>	<b>£186,281</b>	<b>£136,626</b>	<b>£138,979</b>	<b>£141,503</b>
<b>Net Receipts / Payments</b>	<b>-£14,176</b>	<b>£32,578</b>	<b>£19,756</b>	<b>£17,650</b>	<b>£15,127</b>
<b>Cash balance at the end of the year</b>	<b>-£6,476</b>	<b>£26,102</b>	<b>£45,858</b>	<b>£63,508</b>	<b>£78,635</b>

51. We anticipate grant dependency for the first two years building a surplus in the following years to safeguard against future capital repairs.
52. A sustainable profit level is estimated to be reached by Summer 2023 if funding Pathway 1 is successful. Should Pathway 1 prove to be unsuccessful it would delay our starting date and take longer to achieve financial sustainability.
53. The assumptions upon which we base this business case are prudent and reflective of where we are on our journey. We fully anticipate these will change as we develop our plan.
54. A full list of assumptions is provided on page 23. Some key points:
- In line with our experience of community spaces, we have forecast an average low occupancy level Monday to Thursday of around 50% for zones 1 & 2, slightly higher for the kitchen zone 3 at 56% reflecting the longer duration of mid-week use per hiring.
  - Weekend occupancy of zone 1, large hall, is higher at 60%. Small hall occupancy at weekends drops to around 20% to account for the larger events requiring this to be kept free. Similarly, we have forecast no rental income for zone 3, kitchen, during the weekend, assuming this is hired alongside the large hall.
  - Hire rates are in line with other community spaces in the area and differentiated between community and commercial. Our charging structure will become more nuanced as we develop options such as discounts for longer term usage, off peak usage and risk/profit share arrangements, particularly in the early stages
  - We aim to protect rental space for free community use where the objectives fit with the community social outcome ambitions. It is too early in this stage of development to commit to a particular volume of occupancy but this will be available to as large a degree as possible while remaining financially prudent and sustainable.
  - In addition to these prudent assumptions, we then halved the operating profit forecast in the first year to indicate the inherent uncertainty when starting any new venture.
  - We have assumed 3 full time salaried members of staff and ad hoc events staff at the living wage.
  - Expenses have been forecast based on experience at Bellfield and Washhouse, grossed up to reflect the larger size of the Town Hall.
55. On the advice of events space experts, we have also applied seasonality to our forecasts, with summer being the most lucrative and post-Christmas very slow. While our application of seasonality is crude at this point, it does provide an idea of the cash balance swings we will need to consider when discussing financing arrangements, particularly in the early years. This is further skewed by some instances of grant funding receipt not quite matching up with payments.

## The Market

56. The Town Hall exists within a community already served by various public spaces, the Washhouse, Bellfield and three church halls (St John's, Baptist Church and Portobello and Joppa Parish Church). Also Tribe, and soon to open Edinburgh Palette at Stanley Street (with a waiting list for over 80 users versus the initial 20 to be provided). Each is unique in its facilities, location and demographic appeal. Each, before the pandemic, was busy and generally used to good levels. The unique selling point of Portobello Town Hall within the community is simple. It is placed at the heart of the community, it is large and it is not in a residential location. It can thus offer events, spaces and location the other venues cannot.
57. There may be a perception that the Town Hall will compete with other venues, commercial and community. This is similar to the concerns often raised when a commercial venture starts up in a new area. The reality is often that related and complementary businesses add to the offer and increase footfall and turnover. We believe that this is the case for Portobello's venues; having a range of types, sizes, styles and locations should enhance prospects for them all. There are already preliminary discussions in hand to make the most of these opportunities.
58. Justin Kenrick, a local citizen, described in a recent Porty Podcast:
- "We used to have the existing community centres and also the George bingo hall, the Dalriada, St James' church halls. Since their loss Portobello has grown, not shrunk, we can definitely sustain more community space and with the planned significant scale housing development at Seafield in coming years demand for community spaces can be expected to grow not decline."*
59. Undeniably the impact of the pandemic on the use of community buildings has been devastating but when this passes there will be a vibrant demand for spaces again and the existence of community space will help drive local recovery and resilience. It might be that as we reopen from COVID restrictions the use of space will have changed - demand may well be for smaller booth offices rather than open plan spaces, bigger, well ventilated halls are likely to be more in demand than smaller spaces. Things will have changed but as we deliver new life in Portobello Town Hall, we can adapt to the changes.



## Beyond Portobello

60. We recognise that this is a major venue, which can be used flexibly and is competing against venues in Musselburgh and the City. Flexible, agile marketing is essential and we would expect to employ a manager early on to create that market, preferably in collaboration with other community venues.
61. The large size of the Town Hall and its long history extend its natural community beyond the traditional Portobello bounds. We think users of the building will come from Bingham, new Brunstane, the Christians, Craightinny, Duddingston, Magdalene, Mountcastle, Northfield as well as new Seafield and, possibly, Leith and Musselburgh. We already know that some events have brought numbers from the rest of Britain and Europe. 'Northern Soul Dance' that hope to put on five weekends a year, have regular dancers who come from Manchester, Newcastle, and all over Scotland. They book B&B locally, thus benefitting the local economy.
62. The seating capacity of Portobello Town Hall, particularly with the balcony seating included, positions the venue in a particularly sweet spot for performers looking for something between the 200 seat venue and the stadium. Local events manager, Stephen Davidson, comments:
- "The town hall could become a fantastic community owned venue bringing culture, people and money to Portobello. With the balcony open the venue would have the mid-range capacity to entice high level comedians, bands and shows to Edinburgh's seaside".*
63. To secure these opportunities we plan the following actions:
- Respond to the many requests for space to build into a 2022/23/24 programme
  - Engage potential users in the design of building improvements and configurations.
  - Work with local events management specialists to assemble a rolling 3-year programme to provide time and space that suits users but planning for periods of "dark" while repair, maintenance and improvement works can be undertaken.
  - Nurture good working relationships with other venues, particularly within our community. Seek to create a collaborative approach with a wider network of venues. Aim to be part of something bigger.
  - Maintain horizon scanning of other venues within and around Edinburgh to ensure our pricing and facilities on offer hits the sweet spot of being financially sustainable and competitive.



## Theatre Spaces

**Brunton Theatre** in Musselburgh has a seating capacity of 296 in the old auditorium. It can seat 497 in the larger conference room by way of bleacher seating. That encroaches onto the performance area so 400 is usually a comfortable maximum. The old theatre attracts both professional and amateur shows and is always well booked up.

**Churchill Theatre** in Morningside has a 342 seat auditorium. It used mostly by amateur groups and is very popular with dance schools for annual shows and amateur drama productions. It is well used also during the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

**Leith Theatre** is a massive venue that can seat 1400. It is ideal for large events but too big for many community events, sole performers and smaller bands.

**Rose Theatre** in Rose St (former Baptist church) is a fairly new theatre and the main auditorium seats 300.

**St Stephen's Church** in Stockbridge has a main performing area with audience capacity of 234 in the lower Proscenium Arch Theatre and 400 in the Upper (theatre in the round).

**St Bride's Centre** Orwell Terrace has a small performance area and seats 250 via bleacher seating. It attracts many dance school performances, drama, cinema etc. as well as being a busy Festival venue.

**George Square Theatre** This venue holds about 450. As it belongs to the University it is not readily available.

**Portobello Town Hall** The Town Hall has a capacity seated of around 600. So it provides yet another choice of audience size.



## The Space

64. We expect the Project Viability Report to identify new ways of using all the spaces within the building. For the moment, we see it in four parts:

- The front building, with foyer, toilets and cloakrooms occupying valuable street-facing space.
- The upper hall above.
- The traditional proscenium arch theatre
- The rear pre-1912 building intended as artistes' retiring rooms and now including a reasonably modern catering kitchen - and having separate external access.



A "Retiring room"



The Kitchen

65. These zones will be re-thought, with the aim of maximising the usability of the proscenium arch theatre while also providing space for anchor tenants who would provide a base income. We will ensure that necessary public amenity is provided, and that the external spaces are being used to best advantage, all within the constraints of the "B" listed status.
66. The CEC documents identify a full programme of refurbishments, but we believe this should be reviewed and updated, based on the future intended uses and changes in best practice. For example, since that programme was assembled, the overall approach to energy has changed but has yet to settle into industry norms. For example, it may be possible to fit solar panels to the building to provide heat or electricity (as has been done at Bellfield).
67. The Town Hall heating system is coming to a late stage in its life but within 5-10 years it is likely that a replacement system would be based on air or ground source heat pumps. There is life in the current system and that remaining time can be used to plan with care how that and other systems should be replaced. It is also likely that, in the short term, once the integrity of the roof is certain, that insulation of the roof space could be done in a fairly straightforward manner.
68. We would ensure that the building was brought up to date with modern services, for example fast broadband, and met current high standards for accessibility. We would develop a long-term maintenance and improvement plan to keep the building in good condition and up to date with emerging needs and uses.



# POSSESS

69. The long-term future of the building will be set by its success over the next few years. Local concern is that the building might ultimately be sold and its use radically changed, but we hope that our efforts to breathe new life into the Town Hall will mean that never happens.
70. A loss to the community might be avoided by asset transfer under Part 5 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. This has already happened to buildings in Edinburgh. Transfer to the SCIO would ensure that it then remained in charitable hands, even if that were another charity.
71. This is not a focus of the current work, as it is not essential for delivery of our vision but, in due course, it might be the right outcome.



*Great Occasions*



# THE NEW LIFE APPROACH

72. The community has expressed a strong wish to have the Town Hall re-opened along the lines suggested by Portobello Central, and we have received hundreds of suggestions of ways in which the building can support and develop the cultural, social and economic life of the area.
73. An important part of our vision is the need for diversity and inclusivity. This has been reflected in potential hirer requests. We have heard from people who run wheelchair dancing and others asking about the kitchen to teach cooking to their Down's Syndrome group. There is an appetite for interaction between the generations in family disco sessions and ceilidhs. Post pandemic it will be important to entice older people out into the social scene again.
74. While there are still some uncertainties to be worked through, we believe that our proposal is the best outcome for the building and the community, and the alternatives risk the building to continue to be dark and decaying, or used for a commercial purpose and denied to the community for many years.
75. By partnering with Portobello Central and by supporting, using, and raising funding to restore and improve this important landmark, the City of Edinburgh Council will be fulfilling its remit in ensuring that this Council property is used for the long-term benefit of the community in which it is located, and contributing positively to the area.



*Space*

## Where is Portobello?

76. Portobello has not lost its feeling of independence, even after almost 140 years within Edinburgh. In that time new communities have grown around the old town and are very much the community this proposal addresses. So while “Porty” is the shorthand, we think of, in alphabetical order, Baileyfield, Bingham, Brunstane, Craigentinny, Craigmillar, Duddingston, Joppa, Magdalene, Mountcastle, Northfield, Seafield, at least. Our proposal is intended to be inclusive of all the areas who look to a wider community whose centre is the Town Hall and to meet their ideas, needs and aspirations.



*Everyone welcome*

# SUPPORTING THE CASE

## Detailed financial plans

Quarterly	2021/22					2022/23				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Y/E Mar 22	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Y/E Mar 22
<b>Receipts</b>										
<b>Grants &amp; Fundraising</b>	9,300	57,000	0	276,000	342,300	150,000	0	0	0	150,000
Zone 1: Large Hall Operating Profit	0	0	0	0	0	14,666	19,555	9,777	4,889	48,887
Zone 2: Small Hall Operating Profit	0	0	0	0	0	2,727	3,636	1,818	909	9,090
Zone 3: Kitchen and Class Operating Profit	0	0	0	0	0	670	893	446	223	2,232
Zone 4: Retail Units Operating Profit	0	0	0	0	0	2,595	3,460	1,730	865	8,650
<b>Total Variable Profit</b>	0	0	0	0	0	20,658	27,544	13,772	6,886	68,859
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>9,300</b>	<b>57,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>276,000</b>	<b>342,300</b>	<b>170,658</b>	<b>27,544</b>	<b>13,772</b>	<b>6,886</b>	<b>218,859</b>
<b>Fixed Expenses</b>										
Operating Expenses	0	0	6,426	9,924	16,350	10,447	7,997	8,147	8,318	34,909
Licenses & Insurance	0	0	3,000	3,050	6,050	3,881	3,111	3,081	5,707	15,780
Staff Costs	0	0	0	11,076	11,076	16,074	23,006	23,006	23,506	85,592
<b>Total Fixed Expenses</b>	0	0	9,426	24,050	33,476	30,402	34,114	34,234	37,531	136,281
<b>Operating Profit (excl grant funding)</b>	0	0	-9,426	-24,050	-33,476	-9,744	-6,571	-20,462	-30,645	-67,422
<b>Capital Expenditure (incl professional fees)</b>	8,000	65,000	0	250,000	323,000	0	0	0	50,000	50,000
<b>Net Receipts / Payments</b>	1,300	-8,000	-9,426	1,950	-14,176	140,256	-6,571	-20,462	-80,645	32,578

## Detailed Financial Plans

Quarterly	2023/24					2024/25				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Y/E Mar 22	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Y/E Mar 22
<b>Receipts</b>										
<b>Grants &amp; Fundraising</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Zone 1: Large Hall Operating Profit	34,269	45,692	22,846	11,423	114,230	34,269	45,692	22,846	11,423	114,230
Zone 2: Small Hall Operating Profit	6,042	8,056	4,028	2,014	20,140	6,042	8,056	4,028	2,014	20,140
Zone 3: Kitchen and Class Operating Profit	1,984	1,488	744	496	4,712	1,488	1,984	992	496	4,960
Zone 4: Retail Units Operating Profit	5,190	6,920	3,460	1,730	17,300	5,190	6,920	3,460	1,730	17,300
<b>Total Variable Profit</b>	47,485	62,156	31,078	15,663	156,382	46,989	62,652	31,326	15,663	156,630
<b>Total Receipts</b>	47,485	62,156	31,078	15,663	156,382	46,989	62,652	31,326	15,663	156,630
<b>Fixed Expenses</b>										
Operating Expenses	8,672	6,386	6,636	6,813	28,508	8,781	6,456	6,706	6,889	28,831
Licenses & Insurance	3,920	3,106	3,106	3,806	13,937	3,993	3,165	3,165	3,865	14,188
Staff Costs	23,420	23,420	23,420	23,920	94,181	23,865	23,865	23,865	24,365	95,960
<b>Total Fixed Expenses</b>	36,012	32,913	33,163	34,539	136,626	36,639	33,486	33,736	35,119	138,979
<b>Operating Profit (excl grant funding)</b>	11,473	29,243	-2,085	-18,876	19,756	10,350	29,166	-2,410	-19,456	17,650
<b>Capital Expenditure (incl professional fees)</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Net Receipts / Payments</b>	11,473	29,243	-2,085	-18,876	19,756	10,350	29,166	-2,410	-19,456	17,650

Quarterly	2025/26				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Y/E Mar 22
<b>Receipts</b>					
<b>Grants &amp; Fundraising</b>	0	0	0	0	0
Zone 1: Large Hall Operating Profit	34,269	45,692	22,846	11,423	114,230
Zone 2: Small Hall Operating Profit	6,042	8,056	4,028	2,014	20,140
Zone 3: Kitchen and Class Operating Profit	1,488	1,984	992	496	4,960
Zone 4: Retail Units Operating Profit	5,190	6,920	3,460	1,730	17,300
<b>Total Variable Profit</b>	46,989	62,652	31,326	15,663	156,630
<b>Total Receipts</b>	46,989	62,652	31,326	15,663	156,630
<b>Fixed Expenses</b>					
Operating Expenses	8,897	6,531	6,781	6,970	29,178
Licenses & Insurance	4,072	3,228	3,228	3,928	14,457
Staff Costs	24,342	24,342	24,342	24,842	97,868
<b>Total Fixed Expenses</b>	37,311	34,101	34,351	35,740	141,503
<b>Operating Profit (excl grant funding)</b>	9,678	28,551	-3,025	-20,077	15,127
<b>Capital Expenditure (incl professional fees)</b>	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Net Receipts / Payments</b>	9,678	28,551	-3,025	-20,077	15,127

# Assumptions

Costs	Assumption
Cleaning supplies	Based on Bellfield figure of £1,000 a year, then tripled to account for post-COVID stricter cleaning and decontamination regime (£3,100). We then add on a small stipend of £100 a year to hire the Bellfield misting machine. This starts to tail off after 2022 with supplies reduced down to double the Bellfield figure plus mister by April 2023 (post winter). In 2023 onwards we assume it maintains this new baseline but increase in line with projected inflation.
Communications	Most communications will be undertaken by a mix of our admin support officer and events manager, with support from the volunteer network. We assume that in 2021 we pay for a professional website (£1000) and an initial communications consultant to build our strategy over 3 days (£1000). Beyond this we have allowed for some paid staff training. This may be overly prudent and volunteer expertise could fill these gaps. We have also allowed a small amount (£250) twice a year for publication materials. Finally we have allowed for an annual fee of £100 for website hosting and £8 per month for Mailchimp minus the 10% charitable discount. Given the small and separate amounts here we have not applied inflation.
Equipment and Maintenance (including office equipment)	From Council documents we have a figure of c.£51k per annum for non-janitorial staff and operating equipment and maintenance. If we assume, therefore that this covers a staff expense of around £30k, including NIC etc, then a sensible estimate for equipment and maintenance might be around £20k per annum, if we remove cleaning supplies from this we are looking at around £17k per annum, although unsure what else this includes. This seems overly prudent considering Bellfield spend of around £10k but may be correct in the first year or two of opening a mothballed facility. Therefore, from 2023 we reduce this to £12k per annum. We assume this cost will commence after receiving the keys, assuming a 2 month lag in assessment and purchasing.
Building Insurance - includes public liability and employers liability	Insurance - Given the size of the Council excess, have assumed it would be necessary to have insurance from the point of lease signing. Have taken annual Bellfield insurance fee of c£4k and roughly tripled due to size of venue. Have also assumed this kicks in when we sign a lease, timing in line with SCIO application (Sept 2021), and get the keys. Finally, have assumed an increase each year in line with projected inflation costs.
Performance License	Based on Washhouse accounts - the performance license allows recorded music to be played in the venue - particularly useful for fitness classes. Assume this kicks in for opening in April 2022 and rises in line with inflation.
Alcohol Licence	Following advice from Callum Laidlaw, we assume we could make use of occasional licences in the first year (£10 each, max 12, £50 personal licence to sell alcohol), following that we would develop our own bar offering. For this we have assumed legal fees of £1500 (start 2023) and, given rateable value of £98k, one off application fee of £1,156 and annual fee of £700.
Payroll	Assuming we would use SCVO payroll service, price based on Washhouse when it had 2 members of staff, grossed up by a third (so £560 per annum to £728). Timing - assume this would not kick in until 2 months prior to opening and would rise in line with inflation.
SCVO membership	SCVO membership provides access to HR services amongst other supportive services. Taken from current pricing matrix (£280), we are aware this is currently under review. Increased by inflation each year, we assume this would commence at the same time as payroll services.
EVOC membership	Currently £35 per annum, assuming our income remains below £500k.



## Assumptions

Costs	Assumption
Ongoing Professional Fees	Here we have included the ongoing professional fees. These include audit, accountancy and bank fees. We assume the role of Treasurer will be filled by a volunteer but expect to pay accountancy fees for annual filings. We have based audit and accountancy fees on Bellfield at £2000 pa. Bank fees are difficult to predict prior to opening so have based on a rough estimate of Bellfield at £45 per month.
Software Subscriptions	Xero or similar accounting package - including invoicing and linked to bank account c.£30 per month; Office 365 including Teams, email, basic project management, cloud storage and the usual Microsoft suite (£11.28 per user per month, including VAT) - assume up to 5 users once staff on board, £56.40 (3 staff plus Treasurer and Board Secretary). Assume social media scheduling can use basic, free versions (Hootsuite, Buffer) , same for volunteer organising tools such as Basecamp, Trello, Slack, WhatsApp etc
Internet	Post COVID in particular, online connectivity is crucial. We anticipate a flexible approach to events with parallel streaming taking place for a nominal ticket price. Based on Bellfield costs, assume paid from one month post lease signing (£125 per month, rising with inflation). However, we fully anticipate working with CEC and/or BT to turn the Town Hall into a high speed free hotspot location to reduce digital exclusion.
Heat & Light	Based on Bellfield costs (pre-solar) with 25% uplift then reduced by 10% until opening, so £900 until April 2022 rising to £1000 per month.. Assume paid from month lease signed. One of our top priorities would be to work with Zero Waste Scotland to implement basic energy, waste and water monitoring and processes. Assuming this project would take around 4 months (3 month establishing baseline, 1 month implementing), we reduce energy costs by at least 10% 4 months after opening (assumption verified with consultant). We would further expect to work with Porty Energy to implement renewable energy options and insulation prior to 2025, however, this would likely have to be grant funded so have not included in forecast.
Capex Repairs Fund	In the first 2 to 3, or even 5 years we can assume the Town Hall will not be a profit centre and will be seeking grant funding for major works until such time as we have established a sustainable social enterprise. Our goal is to establish a capital repair fund as soon as possible.
Rent and Rates	Assume rent free and no rates as charitable body.
Staff Training	Have assumed £300 to £500 per year to spend on professional development.
Salaries and NIC	See salary spreadsheet
Professional Fees for 1st Year	As per the initial business plan in our first proposal. We have appointed Munro Allison Architects and Rob Robinson, Heritage Business Plan specialist to provide architectural options and project viability. This will cost £8K. We have also included contingency for further, specialist, reports (e.g. VAT planning, asbestos, ceiling specific, green energy) of £5,000 and legal fees of £2,000 given we have a strong contingent of legal expertise being lent to the project.

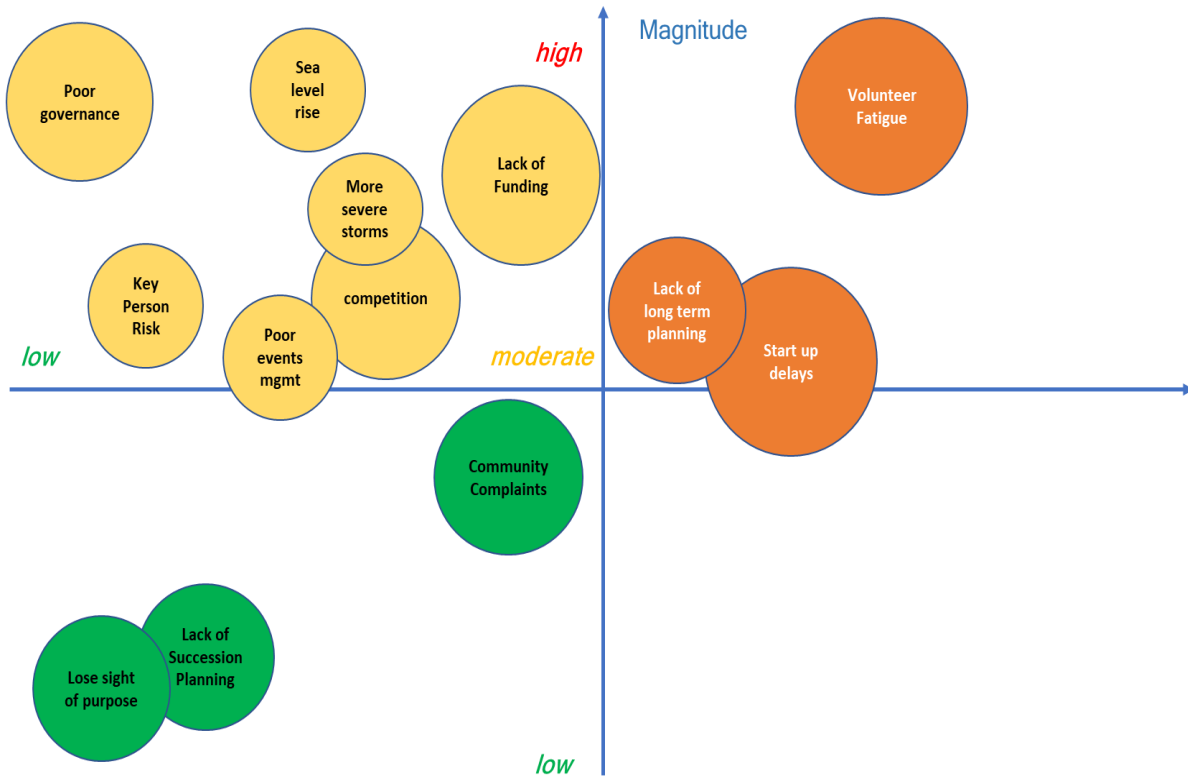


## Assumptions

Income Line	Assumption
Large hall - charges	£30 an hour for community hire, £35 for commercial. £100 for professional events requiring support, including sound and lights. £1500 for large weddings over 3 days and £750 for smaller weddings where everything can be done in one day. Weddings assume whole venue
Large hall - occupancy	For financial year 2021/22 assumed 47 available weekends, 12 taken up by large weddings, 13 smaller weddings of 1 day each, predominantly on Saturdays. 18 whole day cultural events at weekends over Friday to Sunday, such as Northern Soul all-dayers. Predominantly Saturdays. Also includes fairs, smaller cultural events and community use. All in resulting in an occupancy rate of around 60%. Detailed assumptions within spreadsheet. For future years, 51 weekends assumed with similar occupancy rates
Variable costs	Events charges are based upon the number and type of each type of event and the expected length. They include bar profit, security and cleaning staff, varied according to the type of event (typically we could expect large bands, for example, to require more security and cleaning staff). Living wage assumed. Bar profits are worked up based on expected number of attendees at any particular event using average volumes of drink, ratio of those drinking alcohol and average cost of alcohol. Other costs include ice and stock levels. Income incorporate corkage for weddings. Detailed assumptions within spreadsheet
Small hall	Hourly rates assumed. £20 commercial hire, £25 for hire including equipment (e.g. for boardroom style); £15 for community hire. Occupancy rate of around 50% Mondays to Thursdays, 20% at weekends - takes term time occupancy into account.
Kitchen	Hourly rates assumed. £30 commercial hire, currently assuming equal community hire for free in line with community engagement focus on Food in building communities.
Retail unit 1	Assumed available from opening. Rates based on discussions with local jewellery maker and validated by cost of ex-bookmakers premises across the road (£1k per month)
Retail unit 2	Assume will take time to attract the right tenant, use as discounted pop-up space in meantime to encourage new businesses - if affordable this may become a permanent solution. £25 a day, assume 5 days a week on average - £125 per week. Based on half price of similar sized pop-up space in Leith ( <a href="http://www.appearhere.co.uk">www.appearhere.co.uk</a> )

# Risks and mitigants

Risk Magnitude / Likelihood Matrix



77. A project of this magnitude is risky, something the group are very aware of from their own experiences. To be successful we must actively identify, monitor and mitigate risks as much as possible. To create the initial identification of risks we used different techniques including a standard workshop format and “reverse stress” approach. The standard workshop format is a simple forward-looking brainstorm, designed to bring out experience and knowledge. The reverse stress approach is more creative. Participants are asked to imagine the demise of the organisation some time in the future and work out scenarios to get there. We used a 10 year timeframe and encouraged everyone to write “obituaries” of the organisation at that point to illustrate the combination of events (scenarios) that could occur to bring about the end of the organisation.
78. This resulted in the initial risk register (below), ranked using a scale of magnitude looking at impact and likelihood.

## Initial Risk Register

	Risk / opportunity	Likelihood	Magnitude	Timeline	Details	Mitigant
1	<p><b>Operational Risk:</b></p> <p><b>Volunteer fatigue</b> Not enough volunteers to successfully maintain operations leading to burnout of few key volunteers.</p> <p><b>Opportunity:</b> Work across the community organisations to build a network of potential volunteers</p>	Moderate / High	High	By 2026 or after around 4/5 years post opening	Our own experience tells us that the higher risk is fatigue of the regular volunteers that underpin operations.	<p>Most importantly we will prioritise an optimal and sustainable mix of paid and voluntary roles.</p> <p>Volunteering should be a fun and rewarding experience. From our own experience, we need a large and diverse pool of volunteers, actively recruited, cared for and allowed to follow their own interests within the organisation.</p> <p>The role of volunteer coordinator is critical, requires Board support and the role will be considered as one of our key person risks.</p> <p>We will make full use of local volunteer support services such as Volunteer Edinburgh and EVOC.</p>
2	<p><b>Strategic Risk:</b></p> <p>Start-up period longer than anticipated</p>	Moderate	High	Within first year	Within the wider strategic risk of forecasts not matching reality. The impact of a longer start up period than anticipated depends upon the outgoings during this time and so, the arrangement entered into with the Council. Also, the architectural findings and the	<p>This is an area of high uncertainty and we are painfully aware of how long a start-up period can be for such a project through experience at Bellfield and talking to other organisations such as Leith Theatre.</p> <p>Risk can be mitigated somewhat through making full use of professional advice</p>

**Risks and Mitigants**

	Risk / opportunity	Likelihood	Magnitude	Timeline	Details	Mitigant
					length of COVID restrictions.	available - architects are appointed, and we have gathered a legal and property advisory board.
3	<b>Strategic Risk</b>  <b>Lack of long-term focus</b>	Moderate	High	Beyond 10 years	<p>Can also manifest as losing sight of purpose. To be truly sustainable, Portobello Town Hall must be actively cared for with future generations in mind.</p>	<p>Strategic and investment decisions must be made with a long term view (governance).</p> <p><b>Opportunity:</b> A trustee with the specific remit to consider future generations. A youth council to build in the views of the younger members of the community, also helpful in succession planning and volunteer pipeline.</p>
4	<b>Strategic Risk:</b>  <b>Lack of Funding:</b> Portobello Town Hall requires in the region of £250k to open its doors and will seek grant income going forward.	Moderate	High	Immediate	<p>There are no guarantees in funding and following COVID we have moved the risk of finding funding from low to moderate. Without funding the project will likely fail. Additionally, our pathway 1 entails spending Town Centre Funds within a calendar year - being able to spend the funds on time itself brings additional risk</p>	<p>We have developed a funding strategy to maximise our resources on the most likely funding avenues. We take a portfolio approach, assuming a certain element of failure in our applications. We make use of supporting organisations and local fundraising specialist volunteers to advise and review strategy and applications.</p> <p>The objective of our financial plan, although initially dependent on funding, is to be financially sustainable. This will mean balancing events management with steady income streams such as</p>

## Risks and Mitigants

	Risk / opportunity	Likelihood	Magnitude	Timeline	Details	Mitigant
						strong anchor tenants.
5	<b>Strategic Risk</b>  <b>Competition:</b> Risk of losing business to similar venues or venues that can offer similar facilities	Moderate	Moderate	Ongoing	The USP of Portobello Town Hall within Portobello is simple. It is placed at the heart of the community, it is large and it is not in a residential location. It can thus offer something the other venues cannot. This is not the case throughout Edinburgh where similar venues exist.	By building a good working relationship with other venues we will seek to create a collaborative approach with a wider network of venues. We will aim to be part of something bigger. And not in competition.  We will also maintain horizon scanning of other venues within and around Edinburgh to ensure our pricing and facilities on offer hits the sweet spot of financially sustainable and competitive.
6	<b>Operational Risk</b>  <b>Increased precipitation, more severe storms (climate change):</b> Unforeseen capital expenditure required, particularly the roof.  <b>Opportunity:</b> Portobello Town Hall becomes a beacon of climate related adaptation and mitigation to create a truly sustainable community space.	Moderate - under scenario of moderate cuts to emissions (assume less than Paris Agreement)	High	by 2030, worsening beyond	The Town Hall is an old building under some disrepair. Our initial works will ensure it is wind and watertight but there is a risk that future changes in the climate accelerate any deterioration.	Monitor predictions globally and locally. Seek professional advice on regularity and depth of checking required for building. Financial sustainability means creating a building fund from the start of operations, understanding the need for future repairs and building this into future strategy.  <b>Opportunity:</b> Seek professional advice on adaptation considerations. Work with Zero Waste Scotland to create a net zero plan.

## Risks and Mitigants

	Risk / opportunity	Likelihood	Magnitude	Timeline	Details	Mitigant
7	<b>Strategic Risk:</b>  <b>Poor events programme management</b>	Low	Moderate	Post opening	Poor events programme management goes further than lowering demand, it can create tensions with the community leading to complaints and reduced volunteer numbers. It can also prevent us from achieving our social goals. Potentially manifesting from "losing sight of our purpose".	Events management goes beyond creating a profit. The programme created is a careful balance of community engagement, social outcomes and financial sustainability. We will agree a framework, with the community, within which we will curate our events programme and will aim to fund an experienced events manager.
8	<b>Operational Risk:</b>  <b>Climate Change; Sea level rise:</b> intermittent flooding, potentially of Boiler room. <b>Transition Risk:</b> Town Hall commandeered to rehome those most badly affected. <b>Opportunity:</b> Town Hall becomes centre for support and advice, manned by community volunteers.	Low - under scenario of moderate cuts to emissions (assume less than Paris Agreement)	High	by 2030, worsening beyond	Climate Central interactive map shows areas of central Portobello up to the High St at Figgate Burn in particular, moderately likely to experience annual flooding. Adaptation Scotland report 2021 reports sea level rise predictions in Edinburgh of between 9 and 28cm by 2050 in a high emissions scenario. Source: <a href="http://www.climatecentral.org">www.climatecentral.org</a> <a href="http://www.adaptationscotland.org">www.adaptationscotland.org</a>	<b>Operational Risk:</b> Monitor predictions globally and locally via the Forth Coastal Observatory and Adaptation Scotland. Seek professional advice on adaptation considerations.  <b>Transition Risk/Opportunity:</b> Work with Adaptation Scotland to devise a community plan to mitigate and adapt.
9	<b>Operational Risk</b>  <b>Keyperson Risk:</b> The risk that one or a small number of volunteers or	Low	Moderate	Ongoing	Similar to volunteer fatigue, the risk is that one or more key people leave or become absent from the organisation abruptly, leave with a poor handover	Understanding the diversity of skills, experience, background and thought both within our volunteers and our Trustees will be critical to avoiding this risk. We will seek



**Risks and Mitigants**

	<b>Risk / opportunity</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Magnitude</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Mitigant</b>
	<p>Board members have particular skills which make them indispensable to the operating of the organisation.</p> <p><b>Opportunity:</b> To actively grow diversity on our Board of Trustees, leaning on support organisations and building partnerships with local schools and colleges to widen our appeal.</p>				<p>and/or we struggle to match their skills, networks or experience.</p>	<p>to actively develop those areas we feel are most at risk (for example, specialist professional skills). We intend to develop a shadowing programme early in our development</p> <p>We will promote diversity within the organisation, potentially partnering with others such as Change the Chemistry to identify new Trustees.</p> <p>We will make full use of local volunteer support services such as Volunteer Edinburgh and EVOC</p>
10	<p><b>Governance Risk:</b></p> <p><b>Poor Governance:</b> Poor governance leads to bad or poorly thought through decisions and weak controls.</p>	Low	High	Ongoing	<p>Governance risks may include charity trustees not knowing or living up to their responsibilities; high board turnover; conflict on a board; conflicts of interest not properly managed; absence of relevant policies; failure to properly implement agreed policies; and policies not being reviewed.</p> <p>A significant governance risk may also arise where the charity trustees do not give due consideration to the charity's legal form and governing document and</p>	<p>We are in the process of forming a SCIO and will follow the governance processes accordingly. Several of the founding members have Trustee experience.</p> <p>We will follow the "good governance" guidelines produced by OSCR and annually review the 12 elements identified by OSCR.</p> <p>We will take full advantage of the EVOC governance training available and encourage all new board members to do the same within our induction pack.</p>

## Risks and Mitigants

	Risk / opportunity	Likelihood	Magnitude	Timeline	Details	Mitigant
					decide whether they are fit for purpose.	We will seek professional help when necessary, including co-opting Board members if we find a skills gap.
11	<b>Operational Risk:</b>  <b>Community complaints:</b> Vigorous programme of live events leads to complaints about noise, crowds and general nuisance, particularly after hours.	Moderate	Moderate	From opening	As experienced by Bellfield and Washhouse, noisy late evening events in particular can lead to complaints which can curtail hours of operation and the types of events we can hold, ultimately reducing income.	Portobello Town Hall is not in a densely residential area. Nonetheless we are working for the benefit of our community and will build ongoing dialogue with immediate neighbours into our events planning framework.
12	<b>Operational Risk</b>  <b>Lack of succession planning:</b> The risk we fail to plan for the succession of Trustees, leading to volunteer fatigue and keyman risk.  <b>Opportunity:</b> To actively grow diversity on our Board of Trustees, leaning on support organisations and building partnerships with local schools and colleges to widen our appeal.	Low	Low	2023 or 2/3 years post opening	Brings up similar issues as keyperson risk and volunteer fatigue	Succession planning underway within 12 months of opening

## Risks and Mitigants

	Risk / opportunity	Likelihood	Magnitude	Timeline	Details	Mitigant
13	<b>Strategic Risk</b> <b>Losing sight of purpose</b>	Low	Low	Ongoing	Portobello Central is a purpose led social enterprise for the benefit of the local community. Drifting from this purpose could result on low demand, lack of volunteers and neighbourhood complaints.	Work within our agreed governance structure to establish strong accountability, keeping the community at the heart of everything we do.



At the heart of Portobello

## Promising beginnings

### Northern Soul Dance

"I have hired hall over last 4 years , sometimes 5 times a year for our northern soul all-dayers. I am also employed as a full time joiner but I would be willing to help any way I can . Thanks for letting me join group in what is hopefully the re- birth of Porty Town Hall".

*Stephen Froude: Northern Soul Dance*

### United Sk8s

"The idea of being able to host our roller disco sessions in such an amazing venue is just brilliant. We do believe that it would bring something very different to the community here and would be something that the whole family could enjoy. We would love to be part of these amazing memories in the making".

*James & Lesley Hunter: United SK8s*

### Brenda Ronnie

"I hire Portobello Town hall for 3 events a year, I absolutely love the hall and it holds so many memories. I am Secretary of the City of Edinburgh Highland Dancing Association, for your records".

*Brenda Ronnie: Highland Dance Competitions*

### International Purves Puppets

"Now in our 50<sup>th</sup> year. We provide a family audience show, a great fun pantomime style performance using large scale puppets that glow in the dark. This would be a big draw for your venue as so many of the audience would have heard of us or seen us in the Edinburgh Festival."

*Vickie Purves. Purves Puppets*

### Sassy School of Burlesque

"We cannot wait to do lots of events here".

*Sassy School of Burlesque*

### AI Productions

"We did look into using the hall just before it closed. We are planning on doing lots of concerts/ musicals/ parties in the future and loved the space and were gutted when we couldn't use it! Please keep us posted".

*Aidan: AI Productions*

### Gannet & Guga Café

"We would love to have a socially responsible set up and maybe do some work with local charities or run events that could raise money for local causes too. The kitchen looked well appointed so I imagine it could be possible".

*Malcolm: Gannet & Guga*

### Move it Dance

"We cannot wait for the Town Hall to reopen. We do hope it will. It's a precious community resource and lends itself well to both community & social enterprise. I have been using the Town Hall for 20 years putting on shows and doing workshops. I was gutted when it closed. My new enterprise needs a large venue with lots of smaller spaces. The Town Hall is ideal for this. So please keep me posted with your endeavours".

*Sara Black: Move it Dance.*

# ACTION PORTY SUPPORT



Extract from Letter to Councillors

13 March, 2021

Dear Councillor / Council Official

Portobello Town Hall

I am writing on behalf of Action Porty, the community organisation formed to take the former Portobello Old Parish Church into community ownership and run it as a community hub (Bellfield). At the request of the City of Edinburgh Council, Action Porty hosted the initial meeting to consult the community on the future of Portobello Town Hall, and we have been closely following events since. What happens to Portobello Town Hall has implications for the future of Bellfield as well as for the wider Portobello community.

~~~~~

Action Porty has recently been in discussions with the Washhouse about how we can ensure that both venues remain complementary and to explore how we can better support each other. The logic of this dialogue is that the programming of Portobello Town Hall becomes part of this process, thus ensuring the avoidance of needless competition and encouraging a spirit of mutuality between community venues. Action Porty has no doubts that - from a range of evidence - that there is sufficient demand to support all 3 venues, and that is without taking into account further planned housing development and corresponding population growth.

Action Porty fully supports the community bid being led by Porty Central, which is based on significant community engagement and offers a pragmatic approach to the opportunities and challenges of the undertaking. We are prepared to work alongside Porty Central if required, and offer whatever help and support we can to progress their work. Together we hope that the Wash-house, Bellfield and Porty Central can evolve a strategic approach to the provision of community venues in Portobello.

Ian Cooke  
Company Secretary / Trustee

## Like Minds



Out of The Blue fully supports the proposal by Porty Central to re-develop and re-invigorate Portobello Town Hall. Out of the Blue has over 25 years experience of taking on and re-purposing older buildings and developing them as community assets, so we fully understand the importance of buildings like the Town Hall to the Portobello community.

Out of the Blue believes that the proposal by Porty Central represents the best and most community-oriented proposal to revitalise Portobello's cultural and community public infrastructure along with the Bellfield project, The Wash House and the proposals to save The George Cinema from being converted into flats. After Covid 19, communities like Portobello need a range of cultural infrastructure to provide a focus for our communities to come together once more and enjoy many types of cultural and community events.

Out of the Blue

March 2021



Edinburgh Food Social has been involved in Portobello for a number of years, running projects at Portobello High School as well as being involved with a number of local community groups. Over the past 5-10 years, we have seen the growth of Portobello into a thriving town with a number of new independent businesses and the conception and development of some valuable community provision- however with swift growth and development comes an increased need for community-led organisations to serve a community that includes many ages, backgrounds and points of view.

We feel that the community bid led by Porty Central is crucial to the development of services and places that are beneficial to local people- something that is so important at this point in time. Having followed the process so far, we feel that a commercial bid is entirely the wrong fit for this building, which carries huge significance to the town and its residents. We are excited to continue our work in Portobello and very much hope that this will be with alongside the existing groups (Action Porty, Wash House etc), each of whom individually and together serve their members and the community so well.

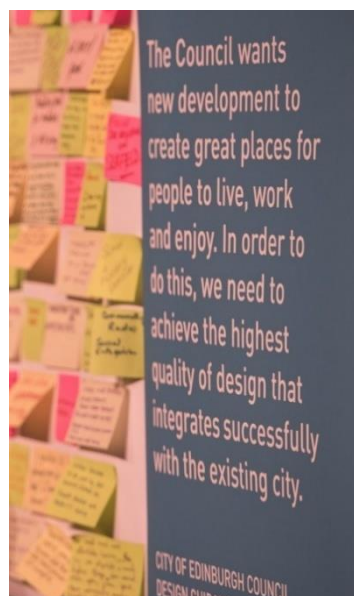
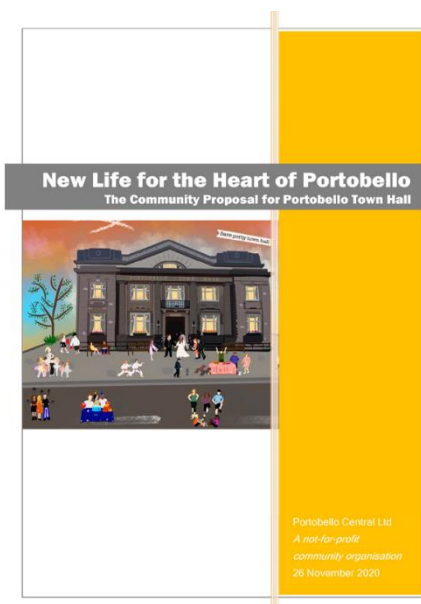
Edinburgh Food Social CIC

March 2021



## The Back Page

This document is the second and final part of the proposal by Portobello Central Ltd to bring back Portobello Town Hall into community use. The first part was submitted to the City of Edinburgh Council on 30 November 2020 and contains the thoughts and ideas from a substantial consultation in the summer of 2020 and the proposal for a Project Viability Study, now underway. The two parts should be read together.



## Thank You

Portobello Central Ltd is grateful to a huge number of people across Portobello and beyond, for advice, comment, ideas, actions and, above all, honest support – in cash, kind and heart.

If this proposal is accepted by the City of Edinburgh there is a huge amount of work to be done to make it a reality, a thriving centre of activity at the very heart of Portobello Town. That work will, we plan, be done by a new charitable body with a membership to elect its trustees, a formal step to ensure the Town Hall is managed in the interests of the community.

The business case suggested in this proposal is a demonstration of possible financial feasibility. The views and opinions expressed in this document are our best effort given the information available and do not represent the professional views of any individual.

Jennifer Elliot  
Jayne Saywell

Jon Davey  
Will Tyler-Greig

Damian Harney  
Geoff Pearson

Lynn Houmdi  
Morag Phillips

[www.portobellocentral.org](http://www.portobellocentral.org)  
[portytownhall@gmail.com](mailto:portytownhall@gmail.com)  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/saveportytownhall>  
<https://twitter.com/PortyCentral>  
<https://www.instagram.com/portobellocentral>

Published by:  
Portobello Central Ltd  
1 Windsor Place  
EH15 2AJ  
19 March 2021

# Portobello Town Hall Lease Proposal



2.3.2021

Mr Valerio Lo Coco-Native Wines Ltd

136 Dundas Street

Edinburgh EH3 5DQ

Email: [info@bacco-wine.co.uk](mailto:info@bacco-wine.co.uk)

Tel: 07588714152

**Proposed Use:** our proposed use for the Portobello Town Hall is to create a food market, in line with all major cities in the world. The market would consist of stalls for the sale of fresh local produce, street food, drinks, craft and natural products. The idea is also for the premises to be used a community hub and be an important part of the Portobello community life.

**Aims and Objectives:** our aim is to create a Nonprofit Organisation with the following objectives: economic, health, environmental, social, cultural.

-creating a market would attract many visitors to the area, benefiting local businesses in and outside the market. Young people would have an opportunity to start their own business within the market with very little investment. Local producers would have an additional point of sale with access to thousands of potential customers every week.

-the market will aim to promote fresh, healthy and organic food. A healthy diet is fundamental for a healthy life style.

-we are also very sensitive to the environmental challenges the world is facing in our era. We want to play our small part in protecting the environment. We aim for the market to be plastic free and recycling as much as possible, reducing the landfill waste to almost zero. We will also try to use sustainable materials in the construction works and green sources of energy. We will use electric vehicles for deliveries too.

-we will create a food bank to provide free hot meals and produce to people in need. Hospitality and food retail businesses produce food waste at the end of every day which cannot be sold the next day but that is perfectly suitable for consumption. We will use it for giving free meals at the

end of every day. We will also finance the food bank with donations and part of the profit from the market. We will organise activities for the community, such as cooking classes, food and wine tastings, gigs and performances.

-we will employ award winning designers and consultants to ensure a sensitive restoration while injecting a new life into the Town Hall. This will also turn the building into a visitors attraction.

**Terms of the lease:** we propose a 20 years Full Repairing and Insuring lease, with the first 3 years rent free to allow for the refurbishment and £60.000pa rent thereafter with periodic reviews. We would take the lease on as a Nonprofit Organisation. This is in order to have access to public funds and grants to cover the main repairing works as they are only available for Nonprofit Organisations. This is also due to the nature of the project. We will carry out all the necessary repair and restoration works, including the roof and the stands, to make the building suitable and safe for public use. This stage will be mainly funded through grants. The funds to complete any additional work necessary for setting up the venue as a market, allowing the serving of food and drinks will be obtained through fundraisers, private donations, grants and public funds available to nonprofit organisations. We will also ask the businesses that will be part of the market to contribute to the refurbishment costs as they would do if they were to lease different premises to set up a business. All of the above will be subject to Planning Consent and Building Warrant.

We expect to be able to cover rent and other regular expenses through the profit generated by the market. This will consist of:

-Rent of food stalls

-Home deliveries generated through a website and app. Every business part of the Portobello Food Market will be able to sell their products on the market's website. The Portobello Food Market will be responsible for delivering the orders in the Edinburgh area with electric vans and it will charge sellers a 20% commission.

We would also rely on donations and public funds. Any balance left after covering all the costs would be used to provide free meals to people in need.

Please find attached a separate sheet with a forecast cash flow.

# Potobello Food Market Cash Flow Projection

## Monthly Revenue:

|                                 | Amount | Qty |
|---------------------------------|--------|-----|
| Retail Stalls Rent              | 1500   | 15  |
| Hot Food and Drinks Stalls Rent | 3000   | 20  |
| Home Deliveries                 | 30000  | 20% |
| Total Revenue                   |        |     |

## Monthly Expenses

|                             |
|-----------------------------|
| Rent                        |
| Utilities                   |
| Business Rates and Licenses |
| Insurance                   |
| Trade Waste                 |
| Security                    |
| Cleaning                    |
| Staff                       |
| Marketing                   |
| Accountancy and Admin       |
| Miscellaneous               |
| Maintenance                 |
| Total Expenses              |

Total Income

Total

22500

60000

6000

88500

5000

9000

?

1000

2000

6000

8000

18000

2000

3000

1000

1000

56000

32500