

PLANS FOR THE CONNAUGHT HALL

The Trustees of the Connaught Hall are a body of volunteers, including a District Councillor and two Town Councillors, dedicated to the running and improvement of this valuable town asset. The imminent development of Attleborough is an ideal opportunity for improving the hall and it should be appreciated that all efforts will be made by the Trustees to ensure this is achieved. With this in mind some clarification is necessary due to it becoming apparent that a rumour is gaining ground that the Connaught Hall is to be closed and removed in favour of plans for the development of the present site. This has been fostered by word of mouth and by statements made on the Neighbourhood Planning (NP) Committee's website. Such plans are *not* in line with those of the Connaught Hall Trustees and never have been. The views of the Trustees, are widely known, as evidenced by the fact that they have been argued against for some time by some members of NP.

The day following the first NP meeting, July 2014, attended by Mr Peter Thatcher (Chairman Connaught Hall) a get together with Trustees was requested by Mr Bruce Giddy. This meeting was attended by Mr Thatcher, Mr Derek Tomlinson (Vice Chairman Connaught Hall) and Mr Danny Arpels (Trustee). Various proposed developments were mentioned and were concluded with the admission by Mr Giddy that the interest he represented wished to build houses on the site. The wishes of the Trustees were made known in return.

Last year Mr Tony Perkins, NP, attended a Trustees' committee meeting accompanied by Mr Richard Bond, NP. NP proposals were clearly stipulated by Mr Perkins, and again included the alternative development of the Connaught Hall site. The wishes of the Trustees were made clear at this time.

Mr Peter Thatcher has attended all but one of the NP meetings to which he was invited. At no time during these meetings was the future of the Connaught Hall discussed as a specific subject. The views of the Trustees were put forward when requested; these views are as follows.

The hall needs to be refurbished and developed as a venue for the activities for which it is presently used. This includes internal and external extension of the property; improvement of the decoration; improvement of the acoustics; modernization of the kitchen area and better hall lighting. Additionally, the land adjoining and belonging to the Connaught Hall is ripe for development. Since it would be next to the sports field it is ideally placed to provide relevant facilities and various social activities. Such improvements would be cost effective compared to a brand new development at an as yet undecided site which would need to be at least comparable in size to that held at present, if not larger to allow

for further expansion in the future, and it would need to be located at an equally central situation.

The rumour that the Connaught Hall is to be closed and removed needs to be dispelled! It is unhelpful in the extreme to suggest its closure and thus bias the intentions of potential customers; Trustees have been approached in the street and asked if closure is forthcoming; such attention is most unwelcome! The wishes of the Trustees are abundantly clear as they have been during the time of development discussion and it is to be hoped that funding and support will see those wishes fulfilled.

Peter Thatcher
Chairman of the Trustees