

UPDATE FROM THE BARLOW TRUSTEES - SEPTEMBER 2019

We are delighted to welcome both Mike Fay and Mark Sutherland as new Trustees and the extra strength and expertise which they bring to the Board.

As we move forward it is important that everyone understands that The Barlow is now facing a number of key challenges if it is to continue to survive and prosper for the benefit of the community it serves.

It has been widely known for several years that the Barlow urgently needs a **new roof** but following recent survey reports this has been identified as critical and will cost in the region of **£350,000**.

The roof now has a life span of only 2-3 years.

However, it doesn't stop there because some of the other matters of serious concern include the need for:

rewiring, replacement of the heating system, full insulation, replacement of the windows and then major redecoration.

These improvements together will cost at least a **further £400,000**. However, frankly, if funds do not become available soon serious decisions will need to be taken about the future of the building.

Unfortunately the Heritage Lottery Fund bid made last year was unsuccessful and whilst we do have some capital reserves, thanks mainly to a very generous donation from the Barlow family, to achieve all of the above will require substantial external funding.

Local MP Jake Berry visited us on 22nd August and importantly has kindly offered his support to help us obtain funding. The main potential source at the moment is a Public Works Loan which we are currently discussing with BWDBC.

However, to achieve this The Barlow needs to gain the support of the Parish Council and then hopefully the residents of North Turton.

We are also pursuing other funding bids but urgently need help with the big one, the roof before being able to progress some of these.

But let's now be more upbeat and look at some of the positive developments currently taking place which include delegation to the volunteers for the day-to-day running of The Barlow.

This move is an important recognition of the excellent work of the volunteers, who have now formed an Interim Management Team to take the initiative forward. The Trustees will never lose sight of the fact that without volunteers there would probably be no Barlow.

On the financial front, over the past 6 months we have covered our operational costs with a small surplus. So again our thanks go to the volunteers for their excellent fund raising events and other income generating activities.

Meanwhile, negotiations are still on-going with the Cricket Club to try and finalise the terms and conditions of the lease agreed with them back in January but subsequently disputed and hence not yet signed.

Looking ahead:

The Trustees still urgently need a secretary. If anyone out there can volunteer to offer us just the equivalent of about two hours a week then please make contact.

The Reading Room is open every day and still needs your continued support to help keep it going as an important and thriving focal point in the community.

More volunteers are always welcome and opportunities exist across a wide range of interesting and important roles.

Kind regards
Stephen Danks, Acting Chair
On behalf of The Barlow Trustees
2nd September 2019

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