

# GODALMING TOWN COUNCIL



## PRESS RELEASE

### REFURBISHMENT OF WILFRID NOYCE COMMUNITY CENTRE

Refurbishment of the Wilfrid Noyce Community Centre looks likely to commence in the summer of 2015.

Opened as a Youth Centre in 1962 the Wilfrid Noyce Centre is currently running at almost full capacity despite parts of the building showing its age. Six months ago Godalming Town Council appointed a working group to look at the future of the centre. That group studied various options, consulted current and potential users of the community centre and ran an online survey to ascertain what facilities the residents of Godalming wanted. On 24 April 2014 the Council's Policy & Management Committee considered a report submitted by the working group. The report identified the need to provide greater flexibility enabling the centre to be used by more than one user at a time and recommended alterations to create three separate halls that can be used simultaneously for different activities whilst maintaining capacity of the current main hall, which is one of the largest activity spaces in the area. The working group also recommended energy efficiency improvements, upgrading of the kitchen and toilets facilities, improved acoustics, better storage and visual improvements to the exterior of the building. Some of the proposals will be subject to landlord consent and planning approval.

The working group also looked at how the work could be funded within the Town Council's overall budget. Potentially the cost of the improvements is £700,000 - £800,000, for which the Town Council would need to obtain a loan. The loan would be repaid over 30 years and would cost the Town Council in the region of £48,000 per annum in repayments. By budgeting carefully and saving money elsewhere the Town Council plans to meet those borrowing costs without increasing its charge to Godalming's taxpayers. As such the Policy & Management Committee will recommend to the Full Council at a meeting, to be held on 26 June 2014, that it accepts the recommendations to refurbish and improve the Wilfrid Noyce Community Centre and applies to the Department of Communities & Local Government for a borrowing provision of up to £800,000. Members of the public are welcome to attend Godalming Town Council meetings and residents of Godalming may, if they wish, request to make statements or ask questions on any of the agenda items of those meetings.

Ends

In case of query please contact:

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**Notes for Editors**

The Wilfrid Noyce Community Centre is located in Crown Court, Godalming. Built in the early 1960s by the then Godalming Borough Council the centre was run as a youth centre by Surrey County Council who leased the premises from the Borough Council. Following local government reorganisation in 1974 ownership of the building passed to Waverley Borough Council, although the lease to Surrey County Council remained. In 2005, after Surrey County Council withdrew from providing youth services at the centre, the lease was assigned to Godalming Town Council. The Town Council has run the Wilfrid Noyce Centre as a community centre ever since and in 2011 took on a new 125-year lease of the building.

The Wilfrid Noyce Centre was opened as the Godalming Youth Centre on 6 June 1962 by a former Godalming Borough Councillor, Wilfrid Noyce, a Charterhouse master well known as a mountaineer and a member of the 1953 British Expedition that made the first successful ascent of Everest. Just six weeks later Wilfrid Noyce died on the descent from Mount Garmo in the Pamirs in Central Asia. The youth centre was renamed in his memory.

Godalming Town Council are required to apply to the Department of Communities & Local Government (DCLG), via the Surrey Association of Local Councils (SALC) for a borrowing facility from the Public Works Loan Board of up to £800,000. SALC will scrutinise the project proposals to ensure it meets the community's needs, provide value for money and is sustainable and affordable. If SALC considers these objectives have been met they will recommend to the DCLG that a certificate of borrowing approval is granted to Godalming Town Council for this specific project.