



15<sup>th</sup> February, 2011.

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### **Update on the Temporary Closure of the Billingshurst Scout and Guide Hut.**

Although we are still faced with the temporary closure of the building and outwardly there may not be signs of it, some progress is being made to recover from the recent past.

Over the Christmas and New Year period a group of volunteers managed, under supervision, to remove all the stored items of all units / sections from those areas deemed to be possibly contaminated and to see what could be salvaged. As a result, some items have been salvaged but a significant amount has been condemned. In short, that's any item where there is a possibility of asbestos fibres lodging in any part of it regardless of how minimal that risk was. Our thanks to the volunteer group for this quite arduous task.

I am pleased to say that we now have the building partially back in use although the immediate occupants were those making scenery for 'Showtime 2011'. It is worth mentioning that as much of the 'Showtime' stock of scenery and costumes had to be condemned too, a tribute must be paid to those really hard workers who are recovering the situation to put on Showtime 2011 next week.

As soon as Showtime is over, the side hall and kitchen will be available for more general use and should ease the temporary arrangements that all have had to endure since the Autumn.

The Committee has now received costs for all aspects of the restoration as well as an up to date set of costs for the original toilet area refurbishment project. As a result, the total now required is a considerable sum so your Committee has decided on a multi-pronged approach to get funding for all aspects in place as soon as possible. As a result we have already submitted applications for community grants, we have already launched a 'Save Our Hut' Appeal and we have now established a dedicated fund-raising group with aims to have a rolling programme of fund-raising activities happening throughout 2011 - and indeed beyond.

During this year the fundraising group will aim to raise our profile as well as funds with events including Bag packing and collecting at Tesco's Pulborough (23-25 Sept), a Car wash, Gold, Silver and Bronze badge challenge, Willie Austen and Big Band evening (Sept TBC) and a show of strength in the high street (March). Please look out for these events and support them as much as you can.

Whilst we all want the building fully in use as soon as possible, we are unable to start on any aspect for which we are applying for community grants – it's their rules, I'm afraid. Then, of course, we also have to wait a while for those direct fund-raising events to be successful. Both these factors preclude any immediate recovery from today's partial use situation but we will waste no time in starting as soon as we are able to do so – all HDC Planning aspects are now in place.

Thank you for your understanding and I hope to report more progress in my next update.

Richard Pope.  
Chairman – Billingshurst Scouts and Guides Executive Committee.