

COMMUNITY ROOM REVIEW

Report of the Director of Housing and Customer Services

1. SUMMARY

This report updates the City Board on the ongoing work to review the levels of usage in community rooms across the City and provides proposals on the future use of rooms which are currently under-utilised.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the City Board approves the proposals to convert community rooms at Centurion Walk, and Churchside Walk to accommodation suitable for elderly or disabled tenants. To continue to support and monitor the growth of new activities at Oakleigh Avenue, Slindon Croft and Garsdale Court and to retain the current use of the community room at Humber Close.

The City Board are asked to note progress in encouraging greater use of the community rooms as detailed in paragraphs 3.43 - 3.49.

3. MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 Derby Homes manages twenty-five community rooms which are located within sheltered housing schemes. The schemes are primarily for older people and people with disabilities. The community rooms are used to varying degrees by local residents for community activities such as: coffee mornings, lunch clubs and bingo. Services are also provided by other agencies like Social Care to our residents and the wider community.
- 3.2 The residents of housing schemes with a community room pay 68p a week as an element of the rent.
- 3.3 There has always been a disparity in the levels of use in the community rooms, both by the residents and external agencies, which the Community Initiatives Team have attempted to address since April 2009.
- 3.4 Whilst we have seen almost a 40% increase overall in the numbers of residents attending social activities there are still a number of community rooms which are significantly under-utilised.
- 3.5 The Executive Team made recommendations to the City Board in June 2011 regarding the top 10 most under-utilised rooms. It was proposed that some of the rooms be considered for conversion to accommodation. These proposals were subject to consultation with the SHOUT group and local residents.

- 3.6 Derby Homes has carried out consultation events at the community rooms that were highlighted as having the potential to be converted into accommodation.
- 3.7 The SHOUT group created and sent out a questionnaire to all tenants that contribute towards the cost of the room and collated the results independently of Derby Homes (Appendix 1).
- 3.8 SHOUT and DACP were represented at each consultation event. Items discussed included: income and outgoings for each room (Appendix 2), current financial restraints on Derby Homes, current usage at each room, what has been done to increase activities and tenant's views about the future of the rooms. The SHOUT representative also read out the results of the questionnaires.
- 3.9 The following proposals are for the community rooms being considered for conversion to accommodation. Alvaston is unique in that it has three community rooms in very close proximity to each other. Although Humber Close was not one of the rooms highlighted as being underutilised, it was recommended in the previous report that it should be considered in line with the other two rooms in order to increase options and achieve the most satisfactory outcome.
- 3.10 There is currently a shortage of properties in the City that are suitable for adaptations. These rooms could be adapted and allocated to meet the specific needs of disabled clients.
- 3.11 **Centurion Walk, Chester Green** – There is currently one activity a week and one a month.
- 3.12 Only two tenants attended the event. They acknowledged that there was very little interest in using the room. Neither was interested in organising activities. There is a community centre available for hire at the end of the road at a cost of £8 an hour. Both agreed that there wasn't a case for keeping the room open and that it would make good accommodation.
- 3.13 Twelve out of 31 questionnaires were returned (37.2%). The 12 respondents indicated that they had used the room a total of 151 times in the last year. None of the residents surveyed were prepared to organise activities. One said they would assist.
- 3.14 The cost of running the room is £2609.13 a year. This is covered by £1011.84 income from tenants and £1597.29 subsidy from Derby Homes. The cost of converting the room to accommodation has been estimated at between £10,000 and £12,000. This property would convert to a one bedroom accommodation as it stands. The cost of conversion is higher than some of the other rooms because there is currently no central heating in the property. The property could be increased in size if the garage at the side was also converted. This would add about £3,000 to the costs.
- 3.15 Closure of the room would create an immediate saving to tenants of 68p a week and to Derby Homes of £1597.29 a year. If the conversion cost £12,000 and the rent charged was £80 a week (rent charge of similar one bedroom property in that area), the cost of the conversion would be recouped in 2.5 years.

- 3.16 Proposal – To convert the room to a desirable accommodation and to cease charging tenants from the agreed closure date.
- 3.17 **Churchside Walk, Parliament Street** – There are currently two activities a week.
- 3.18 One tenant attended the event. She said that she attends both the activities currently being run but she is the only tenant that does. She isn't prepared to organise activities in the room but would assist. She has been to Boyer Street community room in the past and would be prepared to attend activities there. She feels that the room would make good accommodation. However consideration would need to be given to parking. There is also a problem with some anti-social behaviour (ASB) in the alleyway at the side of the room which the local office is aware of.
- 3.19 Seven out of 65 questionnaires were returned (4.5%). The 7 respondents had used the room 103 times in the last year. One hundred of these were by the tenant that attended the event. One other person has attended 3 times during the year. One person said they would arrange an activity and 3 stated they would assist.
- 3.20 The cost of running the room is £2702.99 a year; this is covered by £2121.60 income from tenants and £581.39 subsidy from Derby Homes. The cost of converting the room to accommodation as it stands has been estimated at between £6,000 and £8,000. It could be converted to a two bedroom property which would suit a disabled person.
- 3.21 Closure of the room would create an immediate saving to tenants of 68p a week and to Derby Homes of £581.39 a year. If the conversion costs £8,000 and the rent charged was £81 per week (rent charge of similar two bedroom property in that area), the cost of the conversion would be recouped in less than two years.
- 3.22 Proposal – Move current activities to Boyer street; convert the room to a desirable accommodation and to cease charging tenants from the agreed closure date.
- 3.23 **Oakleigh Avenue – Chaddesden** – Activities have increased from one a month to three a week.
- 3.24 Five tenants and local councillor Sara Bolton attended the event. Over the past few weeks tenants have been very proactive and have already set up three new activities. They reported that despite their efforts they were disappointed that attendance was very low. However they remained committed to attracting more interest and increasing use. Councillor Bolton stated that she wanted the room to remain open and would do anything she could to support them. She said she would support with door knocking and fund raising. It was agreed that the Community Initiatives Assistant would continue to offer support with marketing and that Derby Homes Support Officers would help to promote activities.
- 3.25 No questionnaires were received by the SHOUT group, this was concerning given some of the tenants at the meeting reported that they had sent them back. However, they also reported that other mail had recently been lost in the post. Despite this, the commitment prior to the event and that shown at the event was very evident.

- 3.26 Proposal – To suspend a decision on the closure of this room for a three month period to allow tenants an opportunity to increase the usage, then allow a further three month period to test the sustainability of any activities that are set up. A further report will be presented to the City Board following this time period.
- 3.27 **Slindon Croft, Alvaston** – Activities have reduced from one a month and three a week to two a week. A further weekly activity will cease at the end of October when Derby City Council close their day centre provision.
- 3.28 Three tenants and the son of one of the tenants attended the event. The son was concerned that if the centre closed his 90 year old mother would lose her only means of socialising. The other tenants were also keen for the room to be kept open and said they were happy to welcome in outsiders. One of the tenants offered to run a coffee afternoon on a Tuesday. Two of the tenants agreed to do a door knocking session on the scheme to try and gather interest; the DACP said they would assist with this. It was also agreed that the Community Initiatives Assistant would meet with them to offer support and that the Support Officers could help to promote activities.
- 3.29 There was a Housing Focus Group meeting held at Slindon Croft on Tuesday 20 September where residents reported that they were concerned about parking and the congestion caused by people using the room. They asked if anyone using the room could be asked to park in the next cul-de-sac.
- 3.30 Six out of 30 questionnaires were returned (18%). The 6 respondents had used the room a total of 52 times in the year. Nobody said they would organise activities, 1 said they would assist, 2 tenants said they would use Humber Close if their room closed.
- 3.31 The cost of converting the room to accommodation has been estimated at between £7,000 and £9,000. This property could be converted to a large one bedroom bungalow.
- 3.32 Proposal – It is clear that there are not enough activities currently taking place to warrant the need for three community rooms in such a small area. However, given the enthusiasm shown by tenants at the present time, we recommend suspending a decision on the closure of this room for a three month period to allow tenants an opportunity to increase the usage, and then allow a further three month period to test the sustainability of any activities that are set up. After the six month period this room can be reviewed alongside Garsdale Court with the intention of closing the less viable of the two rooms and a further report will be presented to the City Board.
- 3.33 **Garsdale Court, Alvaston** – Activities have remained at two a week.
- 3.34 Two paying tenants came to the event alongside two local residents who attend activities held in the room. The tenants have put a lot of hard work in to trying to encourage attendance. They acknowledged that there is little interest in activities. One tenant commented that Derby Homes has bent over backwards to try and keep the room open and that if it closes the tenants only have themselves to blame. There were no ideas about increasing room usage. They agreed that the room would make good accommodation.

- 3.35 Nine out of 34 questionnaires were returned (30.6%). The 9 respondents had used the room a total of 427 times in the year. One person said they would organise activities, 2 said they would assist, 2 tenants stated that they would be prepared to use Humber Close as an alternative venue if their room closed and 1 said they would use Slindon Croft.
- 3.36 The cost of converting the room to accommodation has been estimated at between £7,000 and £9,000. The property could be converted in to a two bedroom property to suit a disabled person.
- 3.37 Proposal – It is clear that there are not enough activities currently taking place to warrant the need for three community rooms in such a small area. We recommend suspending a decision on the closure of this room for a three month period to allow tenants an opportunity to increase the usage, and then allow a further three month period to test the sustainability of any activities that are set up.

Garsdale Court currently has more tenants attending events than Slindon Croft but Slindon Croft tenants are showing more enthusiasm for arranging new activities. Also, given that parking has been raised as an issue at Slindon Croft, this may affect the potential for usage from outside groups who could help to sustain it.

After the six month period this room can be reviewed alongside Slindon Croft with the intention of closing the less viable of the two rooms. A report will be presented to the City Board with final proposals

- 3.38 **Humber Close, Alvaston** – There are currently six activities a week.
- 3.39 No tenants attended the event. It is believed that it coincided with a trip that some of the tenants were on. One of the tenants contacted DACP prior to the event regarding the trip and was advised to telephone Lorraine Testro to discuss. This didn't happen and it has since been difficult to determine how many tenants this affected on the day.
- 3.40 Eight out of 30 questionnaires were returned (24%). The 8 respondents had used the room a total of 694 times in the year. One person said they would organise activities, 2 said they would assist. Two tenants stated they would use Garsdale Court if their room closed.
- 3.41 The cost of converting the room to accommodation has been estimated at between £8,000 and £10,000. The property could accommodate a disabled person, either as a two bedroom bungalow with a small bedroom for a carer or a larger one bedroom property.
- 3.42 Proposal – Despite the lack of attendance at the event, it is clear that this room is used far more than any of the other two. It is used by tenants living on all of the three schemes. There are already six activities taking place and there is also potential to move activities across from the other rooms. I would therefore recommend keeping this room open.
- 3.43 The following is an update on the community rooms where it was highlighted that additional work was needed to increase usage

- 3.44 **Colville Street, Ashbourne Road** – There is still only one activity a week at this room. The room is a very strange shape and quite small making it unsuitable for conversion; this leaves us with limited options. The Community Initiatives Assistant will target residents over the next month in order to gauge their interest in setting up activities e.g. YMCA lunch's, buffet's
- 3.45 **Streatham Road, Mackworth** – There has been a dramatic increase in activities at this room. It previously stood at two a week, one a fortnight, one a month, and is currently five a week, one a fortnight, one a month, an increase of three activities a week. The increase has come from church services providing three tea/coffee/social events. Tenants are also interested in a fortnightly YMCA lunch.
- 3.46 **Max Road – Chaddesden** – Activities in this room have decreased from two to one due to a bingo activity closing down. However, Disability Direct, Big Help Project have agreed to deliver Bingo on a fortnightly basis starting on 25 October. The Community Initiatives Officer is currently researching other activities to discuss with residents e.g. exercise and IT classes
- 3.47 **Holly Court, Mickleover** – Activities at this room have remained the same with two activities a week and two a month. However, this will increase in October with the introduction of a YMCA weekly lunch club.
- 3.48 **Slaney Close, Allenton** – This has increased from three activities a week to five. The increase is due to church services delivering two coffee/social events. It is also anticipated that the beetle drive run previously will be resurrected shortly and tenants are interested in exploring a weekly tea/buffet.
- 3.49 **Rebecca House** – Activities remain the same at three a week. The tenants have recently set up a committee with the support of the Community Initiatives Assistant. The Support Officer will provide some support on an ongoing basis. There are still a number of vacancies at the scheme. We are hopeful that with an increase in tenants and the work of the committee, activities will begin to increase.

4. CONSULTATION IMPLICATIONS

The Housing Act 1985 requires that tenants are consulted on all matters that affect their tenancy. As a result of this we have consulted with affected tenants. Local Councillors, the DACP and the SHOUT residents group were all invited to the consultation events. SHOUT also sent out a questionnaire to tenants independent of Derby Homes. It is one of the objectives of SHOUT residents group to monitor progress on the proposals contained within this report.

5. FINANCIAL AND BUSINESS PLAN IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 If proposals to close two of the rooms are agreed Derby Homes will make savings in the long term once the costs of converting the accommodation are recouped. The Council will also gain additional income from the rental charge for each accommodation.
- 5.2 The income from Centurion Walk will be £5437.29 and after less than two years at Churchside Walk it will be £4469.39. This includes rental income and savings from utility, maintenance and staffing costs.

6. LEGAL AND CONFIDENTIALITY IMPLICATIONS

There could be planning implications if it is decided that it will be beneficial to extend the room at Churchside Walk.

7. COUNCIL IMPLICATIONS

This is a matter which requires the approval of the Council.

8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

None identified.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

These will be considered in line with issues that arise as a result of planned conversions.

10. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 10.1 Churchside Walk – Only one tenant regularly attends activities at this community room. She has confirmed that if the activities were to be relocated to Boyer Street, as proposed, she would continue to attend. It is also pertinent to note that a large proportion of the tenants are paying for a service they aren't accessing and would therefore benefit from the additional 68p per week. Therefore we have no reason to believe that any tenant will be adversely affected by the closure of this room.
- 10.2 Centurion walk – The room is used by a very small number of tenants (3 visits a week) who acknowledge that it would not be viable to keep the room open given the costs it generates compared to the number of people it serves. A large proportion of the tenants are paying for a service they aren't accessing. The room is situated in very close proximity to a Community that can be hired at a relatively low cost of £8 per hour. Tenants interested in activities could put the additional 68p per week they would save following the closure of the room towards hiring the facility.

11. HEALTH & SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

There may be issues that arise as a result of building alterations. These will be considered in line with future plans for conversion.

12. RISK IMPLICATIONS

Failure to close the rooms that are significantly underutilised could lead to unnecessary spend by the organisation due to ongoing utility, maintenance and staffing costs.

The areas listed below have no implications directly arising from this report:

Personnel
Policy Review

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If Board members or others would like to discuss this report ahead of the meeting please contact the author, or Phil Davies, Chief Executive, phil.davies@derbyhomes.org – Phone: 01332 888528

Author: Lorraine Testro / Customer Services Manager / 888675 /
lorraine.testro@derbyhomes.org

Background Information: None.

Supporting Information: None.

Appendix 1

Analysis of questionnaires - SHOUT

Centurion Walk

Number of Copies sent	Number of returns	Percentage of returns
31	12	37.2%

Question 1

How many times have you used the community room in the last year?

Collectively = 151 divided by 12 = 12.5 per month

151 divided by 52 = 2.9 per week

1A If not why not=

- Never open
- Nothing of interest to me and I can only do mornings as I have to rest in the afternoons hospital orders
- Not interested in card games or domino's

1B if so what activities did you take part in?

- Coffee mornings mentioned 7 times

Other things mentioned were

- Meetings with Derby Homes re anti social behaviour.
- Meetings with SHOUT
- Disability Direct re Tuesday afternoon- Socials
- Special exercises under supervision. Evenings quizzes etc.
- Originally meals, quizzes, Parties
- Disability sessions.

2 Would you be prepared to organise activities

- Totally answered with NO.

2A if yes, what activities would you organise

- Consistently no comments were made

3 Would you be prepared to assist with activities?

- Only one answered Yes

4 What activities would you what to take part in?

- None
- Coffee mornings
- Disability Direct fortnightly Tuesday afternoon socials
- None

- In the past year, the wife and myself used the room every week. It was a full house, trips out in summer, party at Xmas. From them days, I am the only one left at 87.
- Social activities that are suitable for pensioners(I am 94 and registered partially sighted)

4A Any other comment

- If unit is closed it should be put to good use i.e. doctors surgery- chiropodist- chemist, or of some use to the community.
- I think more people would support it if more is going on.

Name -4 people stated

Address -4 people stated

Telephone -4 people stated

Churchside Walk

Number of Copies sent	Number of returns	Percentage of returns
65	7	4.5%

Question 1

How many times have you used the community room in the last year?

Collectively = 103 divided by 12 = 8.58 per month

103 divided by 52= 1.98 per week

1A If not why not=

- Because my English Not good
- Not interested
- I haven't enough time
- There used to be two wardens to organise things. There were bingo, raffles, Friday dinners, xmas party. Things just faded out until there was just a coffee mornings. Then there was only 4 people made an appearance.
- No need
- Don't have tome to attend pensioners club or lunch on Tuesdays
-

1B if so what activities did you take part in?

- Bingo, dominoes, jigsaw puzzles, play your cards right, lunches, and slide shows.
- Playing cards

2 Would you be prepared to organise activities

- 1 Answered Yes
- 6 Answered NO.

2A there was no comments made

3 Would you be prepared to assist with activities?

- 3 Answered Yes
- 4 Answered No

4 What activities would you what to take part in?

- Anything of interest to older generation.
- Social events (jumble sales –fund raisers)

4A any other comment

- There were no comments.

Name - 5 people stated

Address - 3 people stated

Telephone -3 people stated

Garsdale Court

Number of Copies sent	Number of returns	Percentage of returns
34	9	30.6 %

Question 1

How many times have you used the community room in the last year?

Collectively = 427 divided by 12 = 35.58 per month

427 divided by 52= 8.21 per week

1A If not why not=

- 93 years to old
- Humber side!!!!
- Because I am an outdoor man

1B if so what activities did you take part in?

- Coffee mornings mentioned 5 times
 - Bingo mentioned once
- Other things mentioned were**
- Outings.
 - Counsellors meetings which we don't have now.
 - Volunteered as a tutor for a computer course –interne access withdrawn and attendees did likewise.
 - Craft classes Wednesday evening.

2 Would you be prepared to organise activities

- 1 answered Yes.
- 8 answered No.

2A if yes, what activities would you organise

- I have sent 30 years (20 years as dept manager) Knowledge & experience.
- Would like to have my 70th birthday tea party there in November.

3 Would you be prepared to assist with activities?

- 2 answered Yes
- 7 answered No

4 What activities would you what to take part in?

- Why not have D A C P meetings there?
- Social, Bingo etc.

4A Any other comments

- Ours is bigger why close ours and not theirs?.
- Evening entertainment on Saturday night- singers eg.
- Very good to have.

5 What other community room would you use if this one were closed.

- 5 have not answered
- 2 went for Slindon
- 1 went for Humber

Name - 5 people stated

Address - 5 people stated

Telephone - 5 people stated

Humber Close

Number of Copies sent	Number of returns	Percentage of returns
30	8	24 %

Question 1

How many times have you used the community room in the last year?

Collectively = 694 divided by 12 = 58 per month

694 divided by 52= 13 per week

1A If not why not=

- I do not find them very friendly, I do not like to go on trips, I do not mind paying to go,

1B if so what activities did you take part in?

- Coffee mornings mentioned 4 times
- Lunches mentioned 3 times

- Bingo mentioned 4 times
- Other things mentioned were
- Prince William wedding do.
 - Men's clothes sale.
 - Event's organised on a non frequent basis.
 - Police about Cold caller's.

2 Would you be prepared to organise activities

- 1 answered Yes
- 7 answered No

2A If yes, what activities would you organise

- Bingo.
- Due to husbands having dementia but would help if possible.
- Cannot owing to illness
- Disabled

3 Would you be prepared to assist with activities?

- 2 answered Yes
- 6 answered No

4 What activities would you what to take part in?

- Tea making
- Waitress work
- Bingo
- Help with anything

4A Any other comments

- I do not think that I would use either of the above especially in the colder months. We need our own community room.
- Humber Close is used at least 4 times a week for bingo, also coffee mornings every Thursday's and lunch every other Wednesday. I have used it from day one.
- None- due to husband's condition.
- Humber Close has, easy access for bus routes, good parking, Close to Hema medical centre, also has fetes to raise money for the community and the improvement's to Surgery. It is used every day except Monday's. Supported well with people from other courts. The money raised goes towards day trips and going out for meals. What worries me is if you close the centre, it is all we have to be with friends.
- Please leave this one open as I cannot more to far and we like it there, it will be like being confined to four walls.
- I have been at this flat for 14 years. I have been about 10 times I don't find them very friendly at all.

- Other schemes and Derby homes use the community room.

5 What other community room would you use if this one were closed.

- 3 have not answered
- 2 went for Garsdale
- 3 answered neither

Name - 4 people stated

Address - 4 people stated

Telephone - 4 people stated

Slindon Croft

Number of Copies sent	Number of returns	Percentage of returns
30	6	18 %

Question 1

How many times have you used the community room in the last year?

Collectively =52 divided by 12 = 4 1/2 per month

52 divided by 52= 1 per week

1A If not why not=

- Not interested
- Have got friends and colleagues and prefer to spend time with them and also my grandchildren, no desire for community based activities
- Not point in sitting in an empty room, we have no events at Slindon Croft, Certain neighbours have tried to get interest in starting something but had no response.
- Live at home meeting Wednesdays

1B if so what activities did you take part in?

- None
- N/a

2 Would you be prepared to organise activities

- 0 answered yes.
- 6 answered no.

2A if yes, what activities would you organise

- Coffee mornings, Indoor games, Musical evenings, bingo, talks, Meals, Film shows.

3 Would you be prepared to assist with activities?

- 1 answered Yes

- 5 answered No

4 What activities would you what to take part in?

No comments

4A any other comments

- I am 90 years old and almost house bound. The Slindon Croft centre is the only outing I can manage. Please do not close it.

5 What other community room would you use if this one were closed.

- 2 have not answered
- 1 said none
- 1 said neither
- 2 said Humber
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Name - 2 people stated

Address - 2 people stated

Telephone - 2 people stated

Appendix 2

Community Room Annual Costs

Community Room	Refuse costs	Cleaning Costs	Gas Costs	Electricity Costs	Water Costs	TV Licence costs	Staff & Maintenance costs – including repairs, inspection and fire alarm checks	Horizon Units	Total Annual Costs	Income	Subsidy
Centurion Walk (31)	£51.22	£209.63	No gas supply	£640.13	£230.65	£145.50	£1200.00	£132.00	£2609.13	£1011.84	£1597.29
Humber Close (30)	£69.81	£209.63	£551.75	£325.28	£270.30	£145.50	£1200.00	£132.00	£2904.27	£979.20	£1925.07
Garsdale Court (34)	No bin – refuse removed by cleaners	£209.63	£691.57	£236.34	£250.40	£145.50	£1200.00	£132.00	£2865.44	£1109.76	£1755.68
Slindon Croft (30)	£51.22	£209.63	£503.83	£261.81	£220.90	£145.50	£1200.00	£132.00	£2724.89	£979.20	£1745.69
Churchside Walk (65)	No bin – refuse removed by cleaners	£209.63	£253.24	£339.40	£423.22	£145.50	£1200.00	£132.00	£2702.99	£2121.60	£581.39
Oakleigh Avenue (38)	£69.81	£209.63	£588.27	£316.71	£75.09	£145.50	£1200.00	£132.00	£2737.01	£1240.32	£1496.69