

CASCT – FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions)

If you have any questions about CASCT and the new hall project, please read these FAQs to see if your question is answered here. If not, please get in touch (see question 17) and we will answer your question as quickly possible, and if appropriate add it to the FAQs.

1. What is CASCT?

The Collieston and Slains Community Trust is a company limited by guarantee and also a recognised Scottish Charity. As a legal entity there are directors who are accountable to all CASCT members.

2. Who is a member of CASCT?

All residents and homeowners over the age of 18 within Collieston and Slains.

3. Why do we need to do anything about the hall?

The existing hall is not fit for purpose. It is too small and only has basic provision for the disabled. Also, it doesn't conform to modern building regulations. The Council will only commit to keeping it weather proof and have confirmed that there is no budget for refurbishment. In addition to this, the village shop may close and the post office will now provide a very reduced level of service. If we do not proceed with this project then there is also the possibility that the council will review the costs and income for the hall (The schoolhouse has been declared surplus to Aberdeenshire's requirements and is on their list of disposable buildings).

4. Why do we need a community centre?

To grow the heart in the community. There is no other community meeting place in the village. The community centre keep's the play group going in the village, plus provides a vital service for those without a car.

A multifunctional, vibrant community centre will enable a vibrant social community, for example it could be a place for a coffee and a chat on a cold winters day, it could host local provision of services, e.g. a hairdresser, chiropodist etc. It will be an inviting place to hold parties (e.g. childrens, big O birthday party, wedding, silver wedding, etc.). It can also be a place to go and learn new skills for all ages during the day and in the evening. The possibilities are endless – what do you want to do?

CASCT – FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions)

5. Will it really be financially sustainable?

The business plan is a continually evolving plan, which must be robust and yet flexible enough to adapt to change. Our research and consultation to date has given us confidence that we are working in the right direction with our key income generators of;

- 3 or 4 self-catering accommodation units, suitable for respite care, holiday rentals, affordable winter lets and an Arts Council “artist” in residence studio flat.
- Business meetings - the proximity to Aberdeen is an advantage in attracting customers
- Function rentals
- An almost zero energy cost

The business plan is not just about money, it is about the benefit to the community, though we are aiming to operate with a surplus, which will be put back into community groups and projects.

We will continue to hold workshops to aid understanding and commitment to the plan, or alternatively please get in touch with us if you would like to assist in its development.

6. How does CASCT propose to work with the new Community Council?

The main aims of CASCT are to manage the process involved in developing a new community centre and to set up the foundations of a sustainable social enterprise. Our aim is complementary to the Community Council's and we will need to work together to identify the best way of operating together in the future.

7. What is a social enterprise?

A community run business where ALL the profits go back into the community and which also provides community or social services.

It could for instance provide funding for the ongoing repairs that the pier will require. It will underpin the sustainability of the Centre.

8. Will the new community centre bring in an influx of visitors?

We do need to attract visitors in order to help generate income, however it is intended that this does not compromise local use and the business plan will reflect this.

It is intended to guarantee user good behaviour by asking for a significant deposit upon booking.

9. Will the design spoil the look of the village?

The right design is obviously very important to everyone in the village. We are now working very closely with our architects Reiach & Hall to ensure that we achieve this.

The majority of our community appear to like the design that has been chosen.

10. Does the existing hall have to be demolished?

In May 2004 residents and homeowners in Collieston and Slains voted by a significant majority to demolish and rebuild the hall on the existing site.

Following on from the appointment of our architects it has been agreed that they can incorporate part or all of the existing buildings (as accommodation units) into the new design.

CASCT – FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions)

11. What will we do with the Rivie, if the project doesn't go ahead?

We have purchased the Rivie for £5000 . This is well below market value. If the project does not go ahead we have the option of retaining it as a valuable community asset or selling it whereby Slains Estate have the right to claw back any profit. The decision on what we do will be made by you – the community.

12. What will the current hall users do during the build?

This is to be decided and options will be investigated as we develop the plans.

13. Why did we not go for a potential alternative site?

No definitive offer of an alternative site was ever made to CASCT. Consequently, members attending a Public Meeting in October 2005, voted to proceed with the original plan to build the new centre on the existing site.

14. Will the harbour come under CASCT?

No, the Harbour Trustees is a legal body formed by an Act of Parliament. The Harbour Trustees will continue to look after the pier.

It is assumed the new Community Council will continue the Amenities Committee's investigation of the current status as an interested party. It is hoped that in the future, the Harbour Trustees could be beneficiaries of a proportion of any surplus funds generated by CASCT activities.

15. Will the building be too big and too expensive?

The size of the new building is based on feedback from the community. The intent is to develop a centre to last at least another 100 years. CASCT believes that the building costs will be met by obtaining external grant funding from bodies such as the Big Lottery. We will only be awarded these grants if we can show that our ongoing running costs can be met by the income generated from the new Community Centre. A larger energy efficient building will not cost proportionally more to run than the existing Hall.

All the advice we have been given to date indicates that so long as we can generate enough income to run the new Centre, then we should not be too concerned about the cost of building it. Whatever its eventual size.

When it comes to renting facilities in the new hall, local users will have priority over external users. Two rental rates will be used – a cheap local rate subsidised by a more expensive rate for external users.

16. Couldn't we just obtain the money and upgrade the hall without taking it over?

We have looked into whether it would be possible to go into partnership with the Council and upgrade it without taking it over. We have been advised by several knowledgeable professionals that the funders will not give us the money to develop the hall unless it is a community asset. If we did not take on the property then it would be seen as "back door" funding for the council. If we want to have a 21st century facility for the whole community then we have to take the plunge and develop a social enterprise, of which the new centre will be the hub.

17. How can a question be raised with the CASCT committee?

Submit a question either by email to info@colliestononline.org or direct to any Committee member.