

Martlets Shopping Centre Short Term Revival Project

Introduction

When judged against the District Plan and the Mid Sussex Sustainable Communities Strategy it is evident that the area around the former Martlets Hall site and the Martlets Shopping Centre does not match up to the visions which is for:

*“a thriving and attractive District, a desirable place to live, work and visit. Our aim is **to maintain, and where possible, improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of our District and the quality of life for all, now and in the future.**”*

The vision is underpinned by four priority themes that promote the development of sustainable communities are:

- Protecting and enhancing the environment
- Promoting economic vitality
- Ensuring cohesive and safe communities; and,
- Supporting healthy lifestyles.

The Strategic Objectives of the District Plan expands on the vision for sustainable development with outcomes that:

- Promote a place which is attractive to a full range of businesses, and where local enterprise thrives.
- Create and maintain town centres that are vibrant, attractive, and successful.
- lead to safe and socially inclusive places.
- support the local economy; and
- create places that encourage a healthy and enjoyable lifestyle by the provision of first class cultural and sporting facilities.

Policies DP2 and DP7 are also relevant.

For a variety of reasons, the redevelopment of the Martlets Shopping Centre and neighbouring Martlets Hall site has stalled. It is not clear when the redevelopment might be revived, what form any redevelopment will take or the phasing of it.

The only clue in this respect is in the NRR November 2021 Investor Update which referred to the group considering bringing forward the residential element, a new car park and refurbished retail units.

The consequence of the delays in redevelopment of the Martlets Shopping Centre are for all to see. The area is blighted and, if we are to be true the vision in the District Plan, it is incumbent upon parties with responsibility for this estate to take action to reduce the blight.

Burgess Hill Town Council is willing and able to support Mid Sussex District Council and NRR in the reduction of the blight in the Martlets Shopping area and the former Martlets Hall site and the proposal in this paper sets out what we can achieve.

Summary of the projects

There are two principal projects being proposed

1. The Victoria Schilling Urban Garden

This will be located on the concrete area of the former Martlets Hall site. Designed with sustainable and re-usable materials the garden will be constructed in such a way that it can be moved to create space for outdoor community activities or if the land is required by ITV for its film crew and equipment.

2. The Little Hive

This will be located on the ground floor of the former LIDL building where there is an area of approx. 4000 sq.ft. of space which we would convert to a 'pop-up' community venue. This would be available for use a range of uses including community activities, indoor events, drop-in sessions for a range of community services, drama, comedy and music performances, and commercial activities (e.g., po-up indoor market).

The fit-out of The Little Hive will be in such a way that the capital assets (which is most of the expenditure) can be re-utilised in other locations (e.g., in The Beehive).

We are aware that New River has leased the whole of the LIDL building to Sandridge Media, the agents for ITV, and we would work with them to ensure that our use did not interfere with ITV's production schedule.

Other works

Related to the delivery of these two projects we would like to see a programme of general visual and environmental improvements as well as works that will reduce health and safety risks. We understand that some activities of this nature are potentially planned by New River and would seek more information on their intentions to reduce costs.

Critically though we would like to see visual improvements to the exterior of the LIDL building and creative work to the hoardings on the Martlets Hall site.

3. Project cost

The total project cost is £100,550.00 (excl. item 4)

The cost of each project is:

1. Urban Garden	£47,200 (includes 10% for contingencies)
2. The Little Hive	£48,350 (includes £4k for contingencies)
3. Creative hoardings	£5,000 (estimated)
4. LIDL building wrap	To follow (potentially carried out by NRR)

(Excl. VAT)

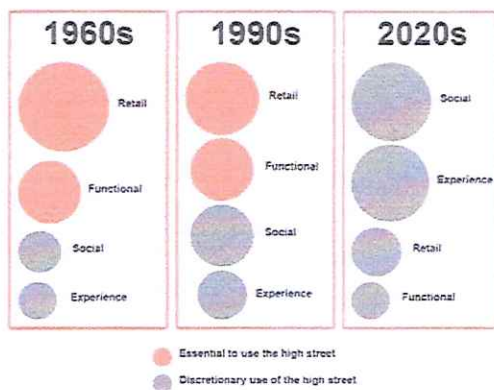
4. How will the town centre benefit from these projects?

There are a range of benefits to be obtained from adapting the disused Martlets Hall site and front portion of the LIDL building.

Visual: The Martlets Hall site and LIDL building sit on an elevated point in the town's shopping centre and in their current situation detract considerably from the townscape. No-one believes the are is visually appealing. Improving the townscape creates a more welcoming appearance at this important gateway. The intention is to encourage visitors to spend more time at this point rather than pass through to Church Walk or the Market Place shopping centre.

Environmental: The **Urban Garden** creates a green space in a town setting. There is a trend in urban design for green space to be incorporated in new developments and, indeed, there are now recent examples where redevelopment schemes are being adapted to provide green oases in urban environment (e.g., Castlegate, Stockton-on-Tees, Mayfield Railway Depot, Manchester and Aire Park, Leeds). The Urban Garden also fits into a key plank of the government's 25 year plan on the environment (i.e., "Greening our towns and cities).

Social: Both the **Urban Garden** and the **Little Hive** are being designed to maximise community use across all age demographics. The LGA and other organisations see social activities, community use and experience led functions as keys to maintaining the importance of high streets through this decade and into the 2030s (see below from Creating resilient and revitalised high streets in the 'new normal' – LGA Jan 2022) which highlights the growth of social and experience led high street uses.



Community Health: The effect of Covid on mental health has been well documented in several studies. By providing this outdoor and indoor space we can create opportunities for people to meet in informal and formal settings. Both spaces lend themselves well to hiring out to a broad range of community groups for social and leisure purposes. Until The Beehive is constructed there is an opportunity to create a community hub and performance space in the town centre. All of these activities are good for community mental health.

Economic: The Urban Garden and Little Hive provide opportunities to generate additional economic activity. This can be achieved by hiring out the spaces for commercial, leisure and community purposes. There is the added benefit that these proposals will also generate footfall and, therefore, more activity for other businesses in the town centre.

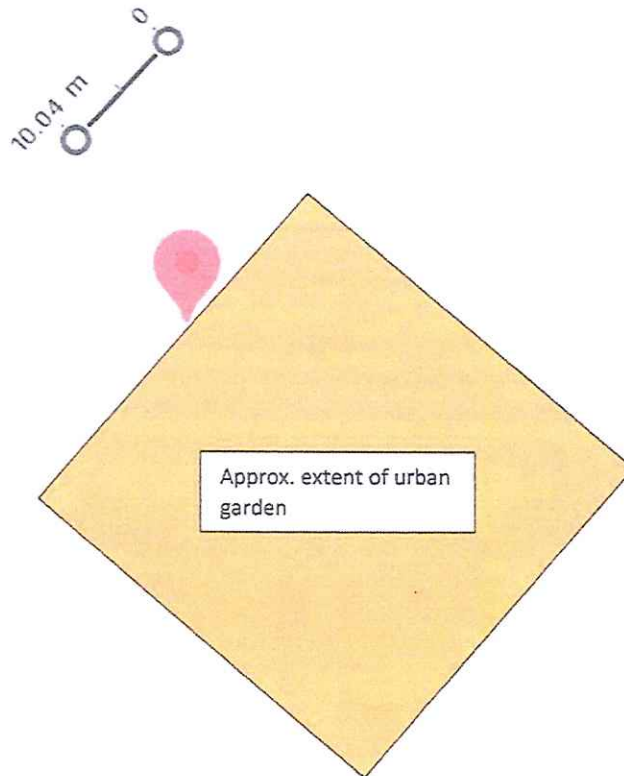
Victoria Schilling Urban Garden

Victoria Schilling was born Victoria Hallett in Burgess Hill, West Sussex in 1952, the fourth generation of her family to be born in the town. She could trace her ancestry back to Edwin Street who was the founder of the Burgess Hill Pleasure Garden.

Her grandfather was gamekeeper at the nearby Heaselands Estate owned by the Kleinwort family which was noted for its formal and woodland gardens including ornamental trees and spectacular displays of native bluebells in spring

It was Vicky who, together with Alan Mitchell, founded the Tree Register of the British Isles (patron: HRH The Prince of Wales) and who subsequently became the central figure in the growth and development of the Tree Register. Vicky's contribution in the formative years of the Charity was unequalled and reflected her passion for trees.

Vicky passed away on 23rd November 2019 and we would like to honour her memory by naming the garden after her.



The area identified in brown is the approximate extent of the Urban Garden which consists of the hard concrete area on the former Martlets Hall site. The area between the Urban Garden and the unused land will be securely fenced off as will the perimeter, which will be close boarded. Access to the Urban Garden will be via lockable gates

The Urban Garden has space for community, leisure and commercial events built in as part of the design, but it is also intended as a flexible mobile space so that it can cater for larger events. The planters in the central areas can be moved so that the space can be redeployed for community

events, pop-up leisure activities such as an ice-rink, displays or festivals. It could be offered out for markets or promotional activities. Furthermore, our understanding is that ITV has indicated that they may need use of the land from August – December for their film crew vehicles. If this is the case, then the mobile garden could be relocated to make this space available.

We have considered various surfaces for the Urban Garden. On the understanding that the site is not available for long term use this limits the surface that could be placed onto the concrete. Concrete is not a particularly porous material and laying vegetation, such as turf, is not considered practical for several reasons including:

- (i) a tendency to turn into mud in wet weather,
- (ii) creating an anaerobic reaction when stagnant water is combined with heat,
- (iii) a need for higher maintenance in dry weather and
- (iv) cost.

The turf option would also not be suitable for any vehicles parked on the surface for any length of time unless it was combined with some form of grass reinforcement.

We also considered a play safe bark surface but there was not practical way of creating a surface that would securely remain in place.

Whilst AstroTurf is not ideal given that it is a plastic material it has several advantages. It creates an all-weather surface and can be easily laid. Vehicles could park on the surface. If the site is returned for redevelopment the AstroTurf can be removed and re-used by the supplier.

The plan is to screen the area behind the Urban Garden with Cupressus Trees and, in addition, place camouflage netting on the Heras fencing. The decision to place Heras fencing at this point is again to accommodate ITV if it needs to take over the site. It also reduces the need for further boarding.

The perimeter of the Urban Garden will be boarded to half height and there will be a gated access. Planting will be into allotment beds constructed from sleepers and pallet planters to create 10 allotment beds and 34 sleepers. There will be a small number of seats and benches.

We considered installing playground equipment, but this would be costly, and it is difficult to find equipment of this kind which is safe and mobile. We could look at installing basketball nets as these take up relatively little space.

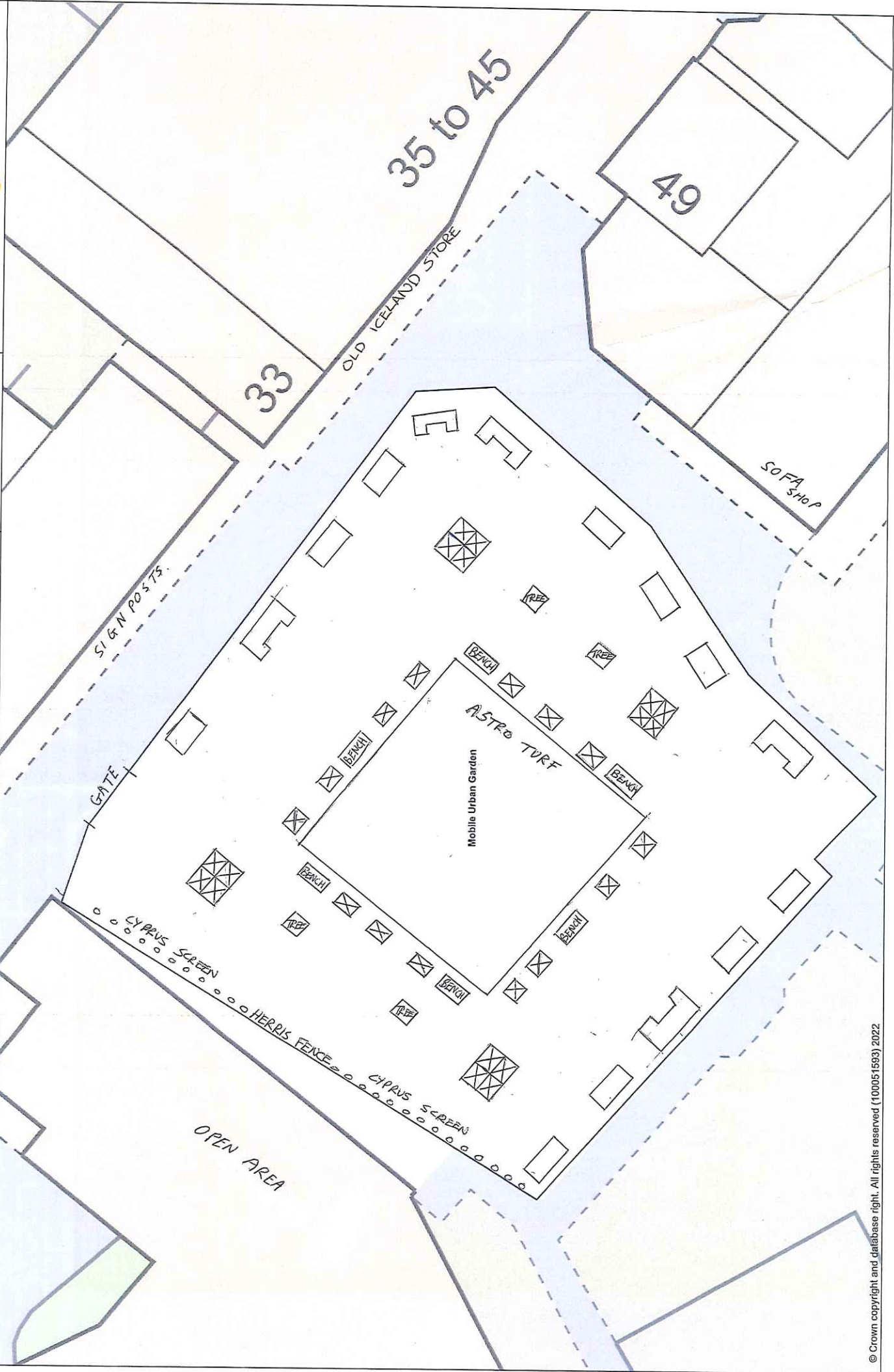
As part of the project, we would also plan to decorate some of the wooden hoarding with art to reduce the negative impact of the black structure.

The costs of the Urban Garden are included in the accompanying spreadsheet.

Burgess Hill

Author:

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Item	Quantity	Cost per item	Total cost		
Allotment beds 2.4m x 1.2m x 0.60m	10				
Sleepers 2.4m x 0.1m x 0.2m (9 per bed)	90	£ 23.90	£ 2,151.00		£ 2,151.00
Angle sleeper brackets 90mm x 90mm (12 per bed) 25 per pack	5	£ 39.69	£ 198.45		£ 198.45
Stainless steel timber railway screws 6.7mm x 150mm (36 screws per bed) 25 per pack	15	£ 34.59	£ 518.85		£ 518.85
Stainless steel timber railway screws 6.7mm x 300mm (18 screws per bed) 25 per pack	8	£ 64.05	£ 512.40		£ 512.40
Wood screws (box of 1000)	1	£ 30.00	£ 30.00		£ 30.00
Magnetic hex socket driver bit 8mm	1	£3.72	£ 3.72		£ 3.72
Weed-Defenda 50 Weed Control Fabric 50gsm 2m x 50m (7m per bed)	2	£38.58	£ 77.16		£ 77.16
Staples	1	£5.00	£ 5.00		£ 5.00
Loose blended topsoil from KPS 1.65m3 per bed	17	£34.00	£ 578.00		£ 578.00
Plants	10	£400.00	£ 4,000.00		£ 4,000.00
Planters	34				
Pallet	34	£ 17.00	£ 578.00		£ 578.00
Pallet Collars (2 per planter)	68	£ 14.00	£ 952.00		£ 952.00
Marine ply (1 sheet per 2 beds)	17	£ 60.00	£ 1,020.00		£ 1,020.00
Angle sleeper brackets 90mm x 90mm (4 per bed) 25 per pack	6	£ 39.69	£ 238.14		£ 238.14
Weed-Defenda 50 Weed Control Fabric 50gsm 2m x 50m (3m per bed)	2	£ 38.58	£ 77.16		£ 77.16
Loose blended topsoil from KPS 0.48m3 per bed	16.5	£ 34.00	£ 561.00		£ 561.00
Plants	34	£ 75.00	£ 2,550.00		£ 2,550.00
Screening for Heras Fencing					
CUPRESSUS SEMPERVIRENS TOTEM 80-100 7L	30	£ 49.99	£ 1,499.70	£1,199.76 with 20% discount	
CUPRESSUS SEMPERVIRENS PYRAMIDALIS 125-150 15L	30	£ 59.99	£ 1,799.70	£1,439.76	
CUPRESSUS SEMPERVIRENS PYRAMIDALIS 200-250 30L	30	£ 149.99	£ 4,499.70	£3,599.76	£3,599.76
Camouflage netting 3m x 2m	10	£ 32.95	£ 329.50		
Camouflage netting 8m x 1.5m	4	£ 74.98	£ 299.92		
Astroturf					
200m2 Trade Easigrass no shock padding (installed)	1	£ 7,360.00	£ 7,360.00		£ 7,360.00
100m2 Trade Easigrass no shock padding (installed)	1	£ 4,000.00	£ 4,000.00		
Edging not included. This would be assessed upon a site survey	1	£ 1,000.00	£ 1,000.00		£ 1,000.00
Playbark surface					
Not viable					
Playground Equipment					
Not viable					
Hoarding extension & Gates					
Doriton quote	1	£ 6,595.00	£ 6,595.00		£ 6,595.00
Hoarding decoration					
Seats	2				
Broxap Lakeside seat	2	£ 600.00	£ 1,200.00		£ 1,200.00
Plantscape seat with planters	5	£ 2,000.00	£ 10,000.00		£ 10,000.00

Loose blended topsoil from KPS 0.538m ³ per unit											
Plants	3	£ 34.00	£ 102.00								£ 102.00
	5	£ 200.00	£ 1,000.00								£ 1,000.00
Equipment											
Pallet trolley	1	£ 350.00	£ 350.00								£ 350.00
Hosepipe 50m	1	£ 50.00	£ 50.00								£ 50.00
Tap											
			£ 54,136.40								£ 45,307.64
										add 10 percent	47200

The Little Hive

The Little Hive is a reference to The Beehive which is the community centre and performing arts venue project being developed by Burgess Hill Town Council. The Beehive will not open until late 2024 at the earliest. The Little Hive will operate as a pop-up community space and performance venue until The Beehive is open. If redevelopment of the Martlets Shopping Centre has not commenced by late 2024 there is no reason why The Little Hive could not continue to operate.

Utilising approx. 4000 sq. ft. on the ground floor of the former LIDL supermarket, The Little Hive will be flexibly designed to accommodate a range of daytime and evening uses. This includes everything from:

- (i) soft play days for toddlers,
- (ii) arcade type games for older children and teenagers,
- (iii) comedy nights (we already have an experienced promoter who is willing to run a monthly comedy club
- (iv) live music or drama events,
- (v) rehearsals,
- (vi) keep fit, yoga, dance and other classes,
- (vii) private hire, and
- (viii) commercial pop-up events (e.g., kilo sales, auctions).

The Little Hive will be licenced for regulated activities including the sale and consumption of alcohol and other regulated activities. It is envisaged that as a theatre venue it would be capable of hosting an audience of between 140 – 170 people seated theatre style. In essence it will operate as a 'pop-up' version of The Beehive.

The capital equipment being required for The Little Hive could be redeployed at the end of the project's life.

We are aware that ITV will require the use of the rear of the LIDL ground floor and activities will be coordinated so as not to conflict with their production schedule.

We are also proposing that ITV has its own secure entrance and exit to the rear of the ground floor so that The Little Hive can be self-contained. This would be achieved by building a partition to create a double door width corridor in the interior on the right-hand side (looking into the building). This side of the unit has two entrances, one of which is currently boarded up.

There are two toilets (one of which is accessible) and a kitchen which would be refurbished and would serve as a staff area or green room for artists. There are nearby public toilet facilities that could be used by members of the public.

A modular demountable stage would be purchased for performance events along with theatre seating. There is storage space to accommodate chairs and staging when The Little Hive is not being used for performances.

The unit has 2 entrances/exits and one (on the left as you look into the building) could act as a box office and foyer. We already have interest from a promoter of a comedy night who would be willing to host a monthly comedy club and would expect to be able to add to the performance roster for other artistic events relatively easily. A drama school is also interested in using the space for teaching and rehearsals. We would anticipate growing community use relatively quickly as there is a demand for space in the town.

In terms of the fit-out cost of community space the below is an estimate.

1. Fix water supply - £1,500
2. Refit toilets and tea point (basic condition look ok but they need an overhaul - £1,000
3. Check installed aircon/heating if not operable/repairable install 4 x wall mounted systems (as per Trading Spaces) - £10,000
4. Painting/decorating/cleaning - £2,000
5. Partition - £4,000 (to accommodate separate ITV entrance)
6. Electrics – install cabling for sound & lighting rig and add power points where appropriate - £2,000
7. Swap out strip lights for LEDs - £1,500
8. OPTIONAL – remove ceiling tiles (a) creates a better height for performances and (b) gives it a more urban feel - £2,000 (mainly labour but would need to re-org electric fittings)
9. Modular stage and valance - £5,250
10. Blackout and sound absorbing curtains - £1,000
11. Acoustic blocks - £1,200
12. 160 chairs - £6,400 (I have had a look around and it is possible to get 2nd hand chairs which are a lot cheaper)
13. Fittings for lighting rig and demountable Par Can lights - £1,500 (Talk to TS Professional about potential to hire or purchase ex hire stock)
14. OPTIONAL – PA Rig (sound deck, speakers, fold back monitors, mikes and stands). £5,000 (alternative you hire in the tech support each night it is required).
15. Contingency £4,000

Total cost £48,350. Plus VAT