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'Balanced and fair' debate of the freehold issue



Chairman's report by Colin Smith

I HAVE RECEIVED a wonderful response since the last edition of *Hilltop News* with such comments as it was the best ever in respect of the stance taken; excellent presentation of the facts; balanced and fair argument presented; and made it clear why Hilltop should have the freehold.

Since the last edition, the Church has replied to our various points submitted in June with the following comments:

1. The views of the Bishop of Dover concurs with that of the PCC.
2. The Church would be guilty of a grave error of judgement if it were to sell the freehold as, under Charity Commission rules, it could end up in the hands of a third party
3. They understand that some people, including probably the trustees, believe the hall was constructed primarily for social activities; that the hall has been financed wholly by Hilltop initially and throughout its life and with a rebuild Hilltop would be funding the hall twice over.
4. They do not accept this view.
5. They further state if they held the alternative view they could not, even if they wanted to, bring it about by law.
6. Having spent many hours considering our letters there is no point in debating this further.
7. Given the situation they will keep the offer open in the medium term.
8. None of us can be sure what events may occur to bring this period to a close, or when that may take place.

Hilltop Trustees and Committee's views on points 1-8 above (with facts):

1. No surprise the Bishop of Dover's views concur with the PCC.
2. Charity Commission rules have safeguards when one charity sells land to another charity.
3. At no time have we stated the hall was built primarily for social activities, quite the contrary. It was built for social and religious purposes, without denomination. Funding it twice over is a fact.
4. The Church have never produced one documented fact to substantiate their views.
5. Not true, see point 2 above regarding Charity Commission rules.
6. Debate is always the way forward. There should be no time constraints, unless perhaps you have no answers and are hoping the problem evaporates
7. This is a no-cost option except to say we will continue to maintain and develop the hall, and continue to offer community care and support. It's a total no-cost option for the PCC.
8. We believe in the future. 'The future's bright the future is Hilltop'.

Dot Parnell

Dot Parnell of the Close has sadly passed away following her recent illness. We extend our deepest sympathy to Gordon and his family. Words cannot fill the gap that is left but hopefully your memories will give you strength in the future.

Frank Hoare

Frank Hoare of the Lane has also passed away at the age of 89. Frank was one of the sons of Percy Hoare who farmed one of the original small holdings in the road therefore maintaining an association with the area for many years. We extend our deepest sympathy to Pauline and Terry, Dolly Keen, his sister, and all their family.