

PRESS RELEASE

13 January 2010

COMMUNITY CENTRE SAVED AT ELEVENTH HOUR!

In a final bid to save Exeter Community Centre on St David's Hill, Exeter, a team from St David's Neighbourhood Partnership yesterday won their bid for £1.2m to secure the future of the Centre.

Hannah Reynolds and Kelvin Lacy of St David's made a presentation to a 'Communitybuilders' panel of 15 assessors in London for funding to refurbish and remodel Exeter Community Centre. The £1.2m is part grant and part loan and this, together with the funding from Devon County Council, has secured the total of £1.4m needed for the community to refurbish the Centre and take over the ownership.

Negotiations over the Centre, near the Iron Bridge, have lasted five years. However, last year Devon County Council agreed to gift the building to the community's new Trust provided the community could secure the funding needed to bring the building back into full use. The community group was given until January 2010 to secure government funding otherwise the Council's offer would have been withdrawn and the building offered for sale on the open market.

"It has been a challenging time", said Hannah Reynolds, Chair of the new Exeter Community Centre Trust Ltd. "This was really our last hope of saving the Centre. Throughout the year, and particularly the last couple of months, members of St David's Neighbourhood Partnership and the Trustees have been working flat out to gather all the information needed to complete the CommunityBuilders bid. The presentation in London really was a last ditch stand".

Kelvin Lacy, Chair of St David's Neighbourhood Partnership said, "We are absolutely delighted. The Centre is the heart of our community and we are grateful to the

many local individuals and businesses who have helped create our application, for example offering legal, surveying and business expertise. The successful outcome is the result of a huge effort by members of the community and a practical example of just what determination and a strong community spirit can achieve."

The Centre is a very large 3-storey Victorian grade 2 listed building and the extensive work needed to bring it back into full use will take some time. Preliminary and exploratory work on the building will be undertaken first so that detailed plans can be developed in consultation with the local community.

Details of the proposed timescale and progress on the refurbishment will be available on the St David's website for anyone wishing to follow the project - www.stdavidsneighbourhood.org.uk

END

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