

Keep Water Lane Hall in community use

Invitation to pledge funds towards purchasing, restoring and repurposing the Water Lane Hall, Water Lane, Bishop's Stortford CM23 2JZ

After 100 years of service to the local community, Water Lane Hall is threatened with demolition. Sadly East Herts District Council and their partner Cityheart now plan to knock it down and put car parking spaces in its place!

Last September the hall was registered as an Asset of Community Value.

The Friends of Water Lane Hall are looking for generous pledges of donations, to help to save this heritage, give the hall a new lease of life, and keep a much-needed community space in the town centre.

We intend to buy the hall and create a vibrant community asset – a space for art, theatre, education, exercise, and meetings, all at an 'affordable price', and run by the community.

We are generating a groundswell of support from people and organisations who:

- Wish to save a heritage building – see Dr Emily Cole's, Historic Buildings Report February 2022 (<https://waterlanehall.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/the-hall-and-its-history-report-final-feb-22.pdf>).
- Want more opportunities for small-scale performing arts.
- Want there to be an affordable, accessible community space in the centre of town.

Our aim is to raise £500,000 towards the cost of buying and refurbishing the hall. A committed pledge from you and others will support this community initiative.

Background:

Water Lane Hall has been a performing arts venue and community space for 100 years and we're about keeping and developing it as such - alongside the UR church, Charis Centre, Apton Road Centre, South Mill Arts and other community facilities, but filling the existing gap for affordable arts and community space.

Last year, Bishop's Stortford Civic Federation notified East Herts Council that the community intends to make a bid to purchase the hall. We have until 23 March 2023 to make a bid. Until then East Herts Council, the current owner, is not allowed to dispose of it.

- Bishop's Stortford Civic Federation is the constituted community organization that secured the Asset of Community Value and invoked the moratorium on its disposal.
- Community Initiative (Bishops Stortford) is the trust that will hold funds and take ownership of the property if the bid succeeds.

- There is a memorandum of understanding between these two groups, to establish the process.

How to help secure the future of the hall:

- Fill in the form below
- Register your pledge by emailing info@waterlanehall.org
- If and when we are ready to purchase, we will call in your pledge, to be paid into a dedicated bank account, held by Community Initiative (Bishops Stortford) Trust Charity No.1109106.

For information:

Our fundraising target is based on the hall's existing use value to enable a realistic negotiation for purchase. We have a recent Building Survey, Architect's Statement and are obtaining a 2023 valuation. We're also preparing a business plan setting out projected income, ongoing fundraising and leveraged funding to be sought from grant giving bodies and lenders once East Herts Council accepts our community offer.

We're working on one or more schemes to recognise donations of various amounts too. Watch this space!

In addition to buying the hall we will programme repairs and immediate improvements, although it can continue to be used for many community activities once the purchase is completed.

Your details will be held confidentially according to current data protection legislation.

Funds will be called in if and when acquisition has been agreed with East Herts Council and a contract has been prepared.

If payment is made to Community Initiative (Bishops Stortford) but the purchase subsequently fails, all the called-in funds received will be repaid¹.

Thank you for your support.

Friends of Water Lane Hall

Community Initiative (Bishops Stortford)
Cross-party Old River Lane Working Group
Bishop's Stortford Arts Forum
Bishop's Stortford Civic Federation

¹ This excludes funds given for surveys conducted before making the community bid

Friends of Water Lane Hall

Pledge to donate funds to help purchase, restore and repurpose the Water Lane Hall, Water Lane, Bishop's Stortford CM23 2JZ

I/We would like to help keep Water Lane Hall in community ownership, for affordable creative and community activities in the centre of Bishop's Stortford, for the benefit of all.



QR code for
online` fillable form

If a bid succeeds, I am/we are committed to give (please indicate as appropriate):

£25		£50		£100		£250		£500	
£1,000		£5,000		£10,000		Another amount:			

I will pay this sum to Community Initiatives (Bishops Stortford) Charity No.1109106, acting on behalf of the Friends of Water Lane Hall, if and when a sale is agreed with East Herts Council and a contract has been prepared.

Name: _____

Email: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

I am/We are willing for my/our details to be kept on the Friends of Water Lane Hall's database until April 2024. If my/our details need to be kept longer I understand that the Friends of Water Lane Hall will contact me asking for permission to do this.

If you are a UK taxpayer Community Initiative (Bishops Stortford) can claim back the tax paid on your donation from HMRC via the UK Government's **Gift Aid** scheme. This would be requested at the time your donation is called-in.

General Data Protection Regulation Privacy Policy, which came into force 25 May 2018.

The personal data the Friends of Water Lane Hall hold about you and process is for us to communicate with you and provide information to you. We therefore have a lawful, legitimate interest to hold your data. We do not store or retain any bank account information.

Comments

Our pledges are in no way legally binding. They are commitments made voluntarily and enforced solely by your own conscience.

See www.waterlanehall.org – Pledges page