

Strathblane Community Development Trust - Update on the new Library

Following on the brilliant community response to our crowdfunding appeal, SCDT has now submitted what we hope will be the final designs for the Thomas Graham Library to Stirling Council's planning department. You can see full details of the designs, including site positioning and internal layout, on the council's online planning portal – visit <https://stirling.gov.uk/planning-building-the-environment/planning/view-comment-on-planning>

As of February 19, the amazing total of £64,834 has been donated by 243 donors, with Gift Aid swelling this sum further. This is truly an outstanding commitment from this community to the library project, and one of which we can all be proud. We should emphasise however that the crowdfunding appeal remains open for further donations: SCDT believes that we have now raised sufficient finance to enable the building as now designed to go ahead – but we have learned from other communities that have funded their own public buildings that you can never have enough finance to achieve the top-quality result that we all want!

This is both an exciting and a critical stage in the long journey to delivering this vital new building. Since your generous support gave us the confidence to press the 'Go' button on planning permission, we've been busy with our architects, Thomas Robinson of Croftamie, in finalising the detailed building design. This has involved working with Stirling Council's libraries department, which will be responsible for delivering the continued library service, to meet modern building standards for the facilities and services that we'll need to provide.

In summary, both internal and external layouts of the building have undergone redesigns to take account of these requirements. Stirling Council is now going to bring in a specialist company to produce a detailed design for the layout of the actual library, including a separate Children's Zone. And we have secured a Scottish Government grant towards the cost of designing and specifying the building's renewable energy system, which is likely to incorporate roof-mounted solar panels and an air-source heat pump.

The planning approval process will now take several months to clear. But as soon as we know that the plans are likely to be approved, we will seek construction tenders from building companies. We have identified a number of builders with expertise in this type of wooden-framed, energy-efficient community buildings.

SCDT's timeline remains to start construction this summer with the library opening next spring. Once we get to building tender stage, we'll find out how practical this timeline is.

We will also find out from the tendering process how much building costs have been affected by factors such as Brexit, which is already increasing the costs of imported materials such as the glulam wooden frames.....hence the need for financial caution.

Please remember these three things:

- DO visit the Stirling Council planning website to check out the new plans
- DO consider making a donation to the community crowdfunding appeal if you've not yet supported the cause by clicking on the Donate button above.
- DO keep in touch with our progress via this website or the village FaceBook page.

Thank you all so much!

The SCDT Board