

The projected costs for the refurbishment of the Barn are £870,000. The Town Council, in conjunction with the Trust, submitted our first bid for funds to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) in December 2005. Over the next few months their criteria for awarding funds changed and we had to submit a new bid in October 2006. As a result of this they awarded £500,000 to the project in March 2007. They broke this into 2 stages: Stage 1 was £27,000 as a contribution towards costs for developing the project e.g appointing architects and other professional advisers and getting planning approval for the scheme.

The work done since the funding award has been intensive and wide-ranging: including surveys on archaeology, birds and bats and asbestos. Every beam has been measured and the architects have itemised exactly what work is required on each one.

Following Stage 1 and further development of the business plan we were required to submit a Stage 2 document to document that we had met all the requirements for HLF to release the rest of the £500,000. This was submitted on 14 November 2008, and we expect to get the confirmation of their funding in March 2009.

This has not been an easy process. The HLF depends upon funding from the National Lottery, and income from that has been substantially decreasing for a number of years. As money has become tighter the competition for funds has become greater, and the technical requirements for successful bids have become much stricter. We estimate that our three documents to HLF have totalled about 200,000 words!

**Bob, what follows are extracts from the Stage 2 bid which may be of use on the web-site. It is all pretty turgid in terms of style, but it's the only way I know!**

## 1.1 Nailsea Tithe Barn

Nailsea's mediaeval Grade 2\* Tithe Barn is one of the very few historic buildings in the town. It is situated opposite Holy Trinity Parish Church in the original centre of the mediaeval village and approximately one mile from the present day town centre. The Tithe Barn and Church are the only two remaining mediaeval buildings in the town. The Barn has significance within the local community and is therefore an important resource to members of the community.

The Barn was converted and extended for use as a school from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and currently consists of a series of large rooms opening off each other, with ancillary accommodation of toilets, store rooms and kitchen. In latter years it was used as a day centre for people with learning disabilities.

After a long history as a school, and its subsequent use by Social Services, the Tithe Barn fell into decline in the 1990s. Despite its poor state of repair and lack of modern facilities, the Tithe Barn has developed an important role as a community resource. Its careful restoration and adaptation will bring significant benefits and will provide a much needed resource for Nailsea.

The original Barn is believed to have been built around 1480. It features ancient oak timbers which were fashioned to create an impressive structure. For many years the beams were hidden behind a suspended ceiling as their existence was not known.

In the Victorian phase of the development windows were added and the original thatched roof replaced by tiles. The Barn was substantially altered around 1805 with the addition of a classroom. A further classroom was added at the beginning of the 20th century.

During the course of the restoration project it has been confirmed that it was indeed a Tithe Barn and the site of the juxtaposing tithe Barn doors have been located in the building. We believe therefore that the Barn was used for the collection of tithes from the early 1500s until the late 18th century.

It is well documented particularly in the Vestry records that Hannah More and her sister Patty came to Nailsea in the 1790s, and approached the Vestry to propose setting up a school in the village. This was in response to her concerns about the deprivation and lax morality evident amongst local villagers at the time.

The Tithe Barn flourished and became one of Hannah More's three Great Schools. Indeed the Barn has been the site of the local school right up until 1985. It then became a day centre for people with learning disabilities. The costs of maintaining the site forced the local council to close the building in 1999 with a view to selling it to developers. The local church began a campaign in conjunction with the Town Council to save the

Barn for general community use and in 2005 the Nailsea Tithe Barn Trust was formed as a registered charity.

Whilst the building is still being used today, it is in a very poor state of repair and without substantial investment it will be necessary to close the site for health and safety reasons. It is only more recently with research that the history of the Barn has become known and popularised in the community. With investment it will be possible to realise the heritage potential of the building and in particular reveal the ancient oak timber structure which will create a magnificent hall for the community to use and appreciate.

In addition the Barn currently poses physical access barriers because of changes in levels. It is environmentally unsound because of heavy heat loss and inefficient electrical and gas services.

## 1.2 Progress to Date

The project was initiated in 1999 when the Nailsea Tithe Barn was identified as a possible site for residential development in Nailsea. Given its historic importance, and its potential to provide an important community asset, Nailsea Town Council, supported by the community of Nailsea, secured the Tithe Barn for the town.

The vision of the Town Council was shared by members of Holy Trinity Church and the idea of a full restoration of the Barn was born. From the outset there was complete agreement that the priority was to create a building which would be used by as wide a cross section of the community as possible.

With a successful Stage Two application we will be able to begin redevelopment work in spring 2009 with view to reopening the Barn in October 2010. There is very strong interest both in the history and the community use of the Barn.

Research has revealed the existence of the Headteachers logs for the 1880s and 1940s which provides valuable insights into education and living conditions in those periods. We have also been able to collect artefacts to support school visits to the Barn and have begun to collect oral history from older members of the community who used to attend the school at the Barn in the early half of the 20th century.

Since 1999 a lot has been achieved.

- We have kept the building open, demonstrated its potential and achieved an affordable design with planning permission and listed building consent.
- The original management committee which later became the Tithe Barn Trust has ensured that ongoing maintenance has preserved the Barn from further decay and enabled it to be continued to be used albeit on a limited basis because of health and safety concerns. A number of significant repairs have been required e.g roof, electrics and alarm systems.
- As a result the Barn is still in active use every day of the week, with youth groups in the evening, school visits during the daytime, and music

workshops and dance classes, Sunday school and occasional Barn dances at the weekend. The Trust has also obtained basic furniture and staging to support the activities at the Barn.

- More importantly the Trust has commissioned feasibility studies in respect of the long-term development of the Barn and undertaken public consultation about the best use and development of the building. There have been specialist surveys in respect of the Barn (e.g. structural and archaeological) which have guided the proposals. At every stage the Trust has been mindful of the potential cost of renovation and has utilised quantity surveyors to give an accurate representation of the project cost.
- The initial architects appointed to the scheme were replaced after the successful application for HLF Stage One funding. This was because there were doubts about their capacity to deliver a programme within the timescale we required. The validity of this decision was later confirmed when the firm ceased trading. Following competitive tendering new and experienced architects were appointed who drew up an excellent scheme which was ambitious and exceeded the budget we had identified for the project.
- However we were given positive encouragement to apply for Community Asset Transfer funding which if it had been successful would have more than accommodated the expensive scheme the architects had devised. Planning permission and listed building approval were achieved for this scheme.
- The Trust were clearly disappointed not to achieve asset transfer funding and in response to this identified a cheaper option which was within budget but still achieved the Heritage realisation objectives and access improvements the Trustees were seeking. This option has been developed by the architect and has been approved by North Somerset Council.
- One of the positive benefits which we have achieved through developing plans for the Barn is a detailed structural survey of each beam. The architectural surveys also helped us understand the history of the Barn.

### 1.3 Key Milestones to date

Summarised below are the key milestones for the project to date.

<i>Milestones to date</i>	
Project initiated with campaign to save Nailsea Tithe Barn for community use	1999
Nailsea Town Council granted a 125 lease from North Somerset District Council	September 2001
Holy Trinity Church undertakes initial phase of community consultation	2001-2002
First phase fund-raising completed	2003
Niall Phillips Architects appointed	May 2003

Listed Building status upgraded from Grade 2 to Grade 2*	2003
Feasibility Study completed	September 2004
Further community consultation undertaken	November 2004
Nailsea Tithe Barn Trust formed	November 2005
Heritage Lottery Fund application and project development	2004-2008
Heritage Lottery Fund Stage 1 approval	March 2007
Architecton Architects appointed	April 2007
Professional advisors appointed	April-June 2007
Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent	February 2008
Trust 3 <sup>rd</sup> AGM and public meeting	September 2008
Revised Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent	November 2008
Heritage Lottery Fund Stage 2 application	November 2008

## 2 Project Need

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### 2.1 Introduction

In developing project proposals for the Tithe Barn, the identification of potential demand for the project has been a vital part of the process.

The main purpose of restoration and modernisation plans for the Tithe Barn is the creation of a facility for the benefit and use of an extensive and diverse cross section of the community.

Given that a significant part of the restoration cost will come directly from tax payers and local residents themselves it has been essential that the Tithe Barn project is considered to be important by the community itself, that it is valued within the context of other competing projects and is also able to demonstrate value for money. Furthermore, the intention from the outset has been that the restored Barn should be managed on a self-funding basis in the future.

### 2.2 Assessing demand

In assessing the level and nature of the demand for a restored and modernised community facility, the project team have undertaken the following key activities:

- Researching the expectations of existing users of the Barn.
- Identifying and discussing with potential users what they expect.
- Analysing the existing market for facilities within Nailsea and wider afield, especially in relation to room charges.
- Communicating with residents through: public meetings, publicity at community events, press coverage and feedback, writing to local organisations asking for their views on the project.
- Talking to key user groups such as schools, youth groups, disability groups, special interest voluntary groups and charities.
- Discussions with District Councillors and District Council officers on the provision of services for the elderly, people with special needs and people with disabilities and how the restored Barn can provide a service.
- Commissioning a professional feasibility study which included assessment of demand.

### 2.3 Meeting needs and generating interest

In order to generate and sustain interest in the project, a number of key events have been organised during the project development period. These include:

- **Open meetings** - On the 8th November 2004 the Tithe Barn sub-committee arranged a major open evening at the Barn, with displays and leaflets. This was followed by a community meeting which 150

people attended in the nearby church. The Barn project was positively received. There have been three further open day events since then.

- **Fundraising promotional events** - As part of the ongoing promotions, fundraising events have been held at the Barn to generate interest. These have included Barn dances, folk nights and sea shanty nights, a "school reunion" and history presentation in spring 2006 and the Arts and Music Festival in 2007 and 2008.
- **Community Showcase/ Victorian Fair** - The Tithe Barn Trust has ensured that representatives have been available at local events with promotional material and displays. This has included three Community Showcases and three Victorian Fairs in which there has been a lot of positive general interest expressed.

The Trust is confident that events such as these will continue to secure the interest, support and ultimate use of the Tithe Barn by as wide a range of community groups as possible.

## 2.4 Project Description

The proposed development of the Barn will create three high quality community spaces: a beautiful hall (for up to 150 people) with an open timbered roof; and two community rooms for 30 people each. As a separate exercise Nailsea Town Council is refurbishing an outbuilding for use as office and meeting space.

The hall will be used for bigger functions (such as day conferences, wedding receptions, Barn dances); entertainment and activity sessions; day centre space and youth clubs and the smaller rooms will be used as more intimate places for meetings and teaching.

## 2.5 Project Objectives

The principal objectives of the project at the Tithe Barn are as follows:

- To retain the Tithe Barn in a beneficial ownership.
- To undertake the capital works necessary to fully repair and upgrade its fabric and to ensure its future care and conservation.
- To maximise public access to and use of the building.
- To maintain and develop the current community use of the building.
- To develop uses and activities in the building which generate sufficient revenue to secure its future operation and maintenance and/or to find alternative sources of revenue funding.
- To interpret the historic and architectural significance of Nailsea Tithe Barn for local people and visitors.

## 2.6 Project Rationale

The partnership is aware that any management of public assets needs to realise social or community benefits without risking wider public interest

concerns and without community purposes becoming overly burdened with asset management. The ownership of the Barn by the Town Council with the Trust taking responsibility for community usage and heritage development balances these concerns, with both organisations playing to their respective strengths.

The pressures on maintaining venues as a focus for community activity are also a resonant theme for the partnership. In Nailsea, where many residents have to commute to work outside of the town, the provision of a new focus for the community and potential job opportunities in the restored facility will make an important contribution to the on-going efforts to develop a long-term sustainable economy.

The overall strategy for the restoration and re-use of the Tithe Barn comprises a number of key elements that can be summarised as follows:

- The use of the Tithe Barn's location in the heart of one of the large residential areas of Nailsea and its proximity to Holy Trinity Church, an established centre of community activity.
- Using the Tithe Barn's historic importance and architectural quality to raise its marketing profile in order to attract the widest possible interest in the project to repair and enhance the Tithe Barn both in the local Nailsea community and elsewhere in the district.
- Developing the Tithe Barn and its facilities to a very high standard and quality commensurate with its architectural and historic importance and its status as one of the most historic and significant buildings in Nailsea.
- Rationalising and extending the existing use of the Barn by the local community combined with a variety of commercial uses, which would complement the community ethos of the building. These uses might include childcare, health outreach services, adult educational activities and social services. In addition the building will be used for weddings and receptions, social and community functions, conferences and meetings, exhibitions and shows, public functions and inquiries and other events.
- Refurbishing and adding to the building to provide improved access, circulation, kitchen and WC facilities to support the above uses, and to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Acts of 1995 and 2005.
- Establishing a structure for the management of the Tithe Barn on behalf of the management committee of Trustees and the Town Council and establishing structured relationships based on formal documentation between the principal potential users of the building.
- Having policies and procedures in place to ensure best practice in the management and operation of the Barn.
- Establishing provision for a dedicated salaried individual responsible for management and marketing the Tithe Barn.
- Ring-fencing all income generated by the Tithe Barn for expenditure on its operation, management and future repair and upkeep. The Barn will be run as a not-for-profit enterprise.

## 2.7 Realising Heritage Potential

The Tithe Barn trustees are highly motivated to realise the heritage potential of the Barn in ways which are both innovative and exploit the many associations the Barn has with the history of Nailsea. The trustees began with an "ideas storm" generating a whole range of potential starting points for heritage development. These included historical facts about the Barn; for example its use as a school, famous people associated with the Barn (e.g West Country singer Adge Cutler) or themes linked to the Barn (e.g agriculture and farming). Each of the starting points were used to develop a heritage map that sketched out various possibilities for activities and the different audiences who might be engaged. These heritage maps were then refined and heritage projects were developed from the most promising ideas.

### **Experiences from the Experimental Phase**

During what we like to consider as our experimental or action based learning phase 2005-8 we have tried a number of projects based upon our original heritage development plans and maps. As we are moving into the next development phase of the Tithe Barn, we are evaluating what has gone well (most of it has) and what has been less successful.

Particular highlights have been the school visits, the use of artefacts, the interest promoted by the display use of historic class registers and school reports, guided visits around the Barn, and the Theatre Orchard production ('Nowhere'). We have also developed a PowerPoint presentation which has been used with a number of outside groups to great success particularly when our DVD of ex-school pupils has been shown to add some local colour. The PowerPoint presentation is a historical exploration of the Barn during its different historical stages and has been developed to include information about tythes, the management of the mediaeval community by the Vestry, the impact of the Poor Laws, and insight into education in the Victorian times.

An additional PowerPoint has been developed based on the family tree and school records related to one pupil called Cinderella Lock who was a gypsy hawker who attended the school in 1873. This opened up a number of lines of inquiry including possible contact with descendants of the Lock family today. Other families appearing in the Victorian registers have been found to be living locally and have been traced and contact established.

We have not been able to complete the history guide to the site because tracking reliable primary historical sources research has proved challenging. This work is ongoing. Also some of the displays and posters we have used had suffered because of the ongoing surveying work taking place at the Barn. We have also not made progress with our intention to collect oral history as we realised this was a more specialist task and requiring thought and dedicated attention and investment in technology. (We have now obtained a high-quality digital recorder and have a volunteer keen to be trained to undertake this work. This will include a study of evacuees living in Nailsea during the second world war to be completed in conjunction with local school children).

We have also strengthened the Heritage profile within the Trust following the appointment this summer of Rod Lees as a trustee. Rod is an active member of Nailsea Environment and Archaeological Trust (NEAT).

### **Planning for the future; activities and heritage projects for the long-term.**

We have realised that we need to anchor down key areas for heritage realisation and ensure our ambitions are focused and deliver core projects linked to the Barn. We have identified a number of principles which we need to keep in mind when developing further activities and projects.

- 1) Keeping it simple
- 2) Ensuring accessibility (including low cost)
- 3) Involving networks
- 4) Having a participative and interactive approach
- 5) Capturing imagination through innovative approaches

We have begun developing some strong networks with others including the Nailsea and District History Society, NEAT, the local primary and secondary schools and the library. Also, we have established initial linkage with the National Trust site at Tyntesfield which itself is under development. (This is interesting because the children of a number of workers who worked on the estate in the 1900s attended the Tithe Barn when it was a school and have memories of living on the estate).

In planning our activities we have recognised that the Tithe Barn has a dual role both as a heritage site and a social and community centre. These roles are mutually compatible and offer the opportunity for synergy. For example, casual visitors to the Tithe Barn will be exposed to information about the Barn which will whet their appetite to know more. Similarly the historic associations of the Barn are making it a very popular place for people to wish to come to, and we have had many enquiries already from people who wish to hold wedding receptions and family celebrations at the Barn.

### **The three strands of development**

We have identified three strands to consider in order to develop the facilities at the Tithe Barn.

#### **Strand 1: The Barn as a Community Centre**

This strand recognises that the Tithe Barn will be attracting many visitors during the course of every week, some regular and some occasional. It is important that when they come to the site they have an opportunity to know about its history and more information is available. We are therefore planning to have an attractive information board on the front garden by the entrance with highlights of the Tithe Barn's background. We will then put in place A0 sized display boards in each of the three main rooms with something particular about our knowledge of the use of the room and pointing out key architectural features and estimated date of construction e.g. the beams in the main hall, the mystery of the mezzanine window in

the Heritage room. All the display boards used will be durable, colourful and of high quality.

We will also have a threefold guide to the Barn readily available for visitors to take away and it will include a simple tour guide to use pointing out some of the key areas of interest e.g. the location of the original Tithe Barn doors.

### **Strand 2: The Barn as a Heritage site**

This strand recognises that Tithe Barn is an interesting place to visit and that more can be learned from closer study and the use of artefacts and records associated with the Barn. We have designated the School Room classroom as our principal heritage room where most of the displays and artefacts will be kept and where we will provide desks and chairs for children to work at. There will be five additional display boards in this room. One will provide a timeline of the Barn, another will explain about the importance of the church in medieval Nailsea (tithes and the vestry), two will focus on education and one will focus on famous people linked to the Barn.

In addition to the material provided for the occasional visitor the School Room will provide access to a range of resources including extracts and copies from school records, extracts and copies from the vestry accounts, a simple library of locally related history books, the full range of publications of the Nailsea and District History Society, photographs and a more detailed historical guide to the Barn.

We are particularly keen to use multimedia resources as these promote accessibility and offer the potential for interactive interrogation. However the problem is that technology and software are changing quickly and the security of such equipment needs to be carefully considered given the experience of thefts of computers from public buildings like schools. At this stage we have relied upon personal laptops and the use of bulk storage hard drives and disks to store data. However in the longer term with the development of the Town Council office we plan to identify a community room linked with their office which will provide computer-based and Internet facilities which will be secure and appropriately maintained.

It is our intention to develop the Tithe Barn website to create links within it to a wide range of resources that we are now collecting electronically. These include the school records, audio, photographic and video material, for example oral history accounts and photographs of the stages of the renovation. This piece of work requires careful and dedicated time and will be one of the tasks undertaken by the Heritage Development Officer during their two-year appointment. We already have a website which is currently being set up by a specialist company and is being maintained and developed free of charge. The advantage of web-based material is that it will be accessible by many people in and away from the Tithe Barn. Children who have been on a school visit can go back to school and continue their work. Nailsea Secondary School which has specialist media technology status has expressed interest in contributing to this part of our work.

As we also want the Tithe Barn to be a place where people come to study (particularly local schoolchildren) we have begun to develop a range of

appropriate activities and worksheets linked to the expectations of key stages in primary education.

We also plan to have a mini walking tour around the Barn site and including the local church and a West Nailsea tour which takes in the Kingshill area where there are other buildings of interest e.g. the Old Tannery and Wesleyan Chapel. These places have particular links to the Tithe Barn's history as a school. A simple prototype was trialed during the first arts and music festival in 2007 and proved very popular.

As well as inviting people to the Tithe Barn for historical events we wish to reach out to into the community by visiting groups and providing displays at other venues including the library and Tyntesfield. We already have in place PowerPoint presentations and have been fortunate to acquire a projector and screen. To raise the profile of the Barn we are planning to produce four high-class portable roller displays using pictures and bullet points which can be available in the Barn or elsewhere when talks are being given. One display will have a simple timeline of the Barn, one will depict the architecture, one will focus on education and one more focus on famous people.

### **Strand 3: The Barn as a catalyst and a source of inspiration**

As well as providing specific access to its history and its place in the community, the Tithe Barn offers tremendous opportunities as a catalyst for creativity and the development of arts and drama material linked directly or indirectly with the history of the Barn. For example Backwell Camera Club put on a very high-class exhibition called "Heritage Through a Lens".

Members of the club were invited to the Barn to take "unusual" pictures of the building which captured the essence of heritage. The prints were professionally mounted on A3 boards in the Barn for public display as part of a competition. This stimulated a lot of interest and drew a lot of visitors to the Tithe Barn. A full copy of all the prints has been made digitally available to the Tithe Barn Trust and some will be used as the basis of greeting cards for fundraising in the future.

Prior to the first Arts and Music Festival a community-based theatre group (Theatre Orchard) were commissioned to develop a play based loosely around the history of Nailsea and the Barn. This became a participative community-based venture including many people who had never been involved in theatre before. There were children and elderly people working together to realise the production. This included historical accounts, audiovisual backdrops, acting and musical performance. It was a sell-out. This year Theatre Orchard has been asked to develop a theatre production based upon the Headmaster's log of the 1880s which gives a strong insight into the Tithe Barn when it was used as a school in the latter part of the 19th century.

Further examples include an "Adge Cutler and Cyder night" in which local farm ciders were available for consumption. Adge was the founder of the Wurzel's "Scrumpy and Weston" style of music and was a pupil at the Barn. A book by a local amateur historian on local cider making (including Nailsea) was promoted and a DVD the Trust commissioned about Adge Cutlers life and music was shown. (At one time Nailsea was a major

commercial cider producer as Coates Cider Company was based here. One of our future ideas is to hold a reunion for local Coates workers at the Tithe Barn which would have the opportunity of capturing some of their stories as part of Nailsea's history.)

We also have an ongoing project called music and memories for people with dementia and their carers. The environment of the Barn is proving to be ideal in helping people feel at ease and we have used reminiscence material and artefacts during some of these events. On one occasion we showed the DVD of people talking about schooldays at the Barn and this generated discussion in the group and plenty of laughter! Following that we sang everyone's favourite old school hymns around the piano.

### **Addressing HLF expectations:**

#### **Section One: Where we are now**

Since our Stage 1 application to HLF we have tested and realised many of our ambitions in respect of heritage development. We have involved a wide range of people including schoolchildren, the elderly, a specific group of carers and people with dementia, and people with learning disabilities in a range of activities related to the history of the Barn. Our Arts and Music Festivals have brought many hundreds of people to the premises and raised the profile of the Barn and generated volunteers. We have also developed strong links with the local History Society. We have worked with local schools and established a pattern of visits and developed programmes of study. The trust structure has been strengthened and in addition to the trustee with special responsibility for learning we have people who have expertise and enthusiasm to develop the heritage side of the project.

The analysis above shows how we have thought carefully about bringing together a number of strands in order to realise the Heritage potential of the building. Our experience time and again is that when the general public visit the Tithe Barn and see the oak timbers in the roof there is a "wow factor" and they wish to know more about the history. This is the reaction with the beams is poor repair and only partially revealed, so the impact of the restored Barn can only be imagined.

What is clear however is that it takes a lot of work to develop high-quality resources. It also takes time and effort to translate primary resource material into accessible formats the people to use. The Heritage development officer will be critical to carry forward our ambitions and deliver sustainable quality product. Also the barn itself which is in poor condition needs attention in order that the Heritage aspects can be better revealed, especially the roof structure. Although we have made a reasonable job of producing home-made colour displays and photographs about the history of the Barn clearly a more professional production is essential.

#### **Audiences**

We have strong evidence of potential audiences for the Tithe Barn. The activities at the Barn provide for a living, ongoing heritage with the site maintaining its tradition of educating and supporting people in the community. The public meetings we have held about the Barn have

attracted significant audiences and the recent presentation to the Nailsea History Society was to a packed room. There is an appetite to learn more, particularly as there has been significant press interest in the development of the Tithe Barn project and front-page stories over recent months in local newspapers. Our work with school visits has been very successful and well received. The local primary head teacher is very positive about what has been achieved. Holding the arts and crafts as Arts and Music Festivals at the Tithe Barn has brought people into the building who may never have visited otherwise. We have made particular effort to engage people who went to school at the Barn especially The Class of 53, named after the last year that the Barn served as a secondary school.

From all the evidence we have there will be no difficulty in attracting people to the site and the feedback we have had demonstrates a genuine interest in the history of the place.

We recognise the potential for the Tithe Barn to bring people together and reduce social isolation particularly those with disabilities. One suggestion is using the Barn as a "community café" on some weekdays. At the present time much needs to be done to improve the quality of access and support people with visual and auditory impairments.

### **Activities**

Currently we offer tours of the Barn and hold open days, give talks at public events as described above and promote arts and drama opportunities related to the history of the Barn. There have been school visits and projects undertaken in relation to the Barn. We were particularly pleased that the Barn was used during the summer of 2008 for a holiday programme for disabled children.

We believe that as a Trust we have shown the capacity to be innovative and resourceful in devising and supporting activities at the Tithe Barn.

We have taken notice of the good practice of others in providing information during redevelopment and have therefore see this as an additional activity stream we need to build in once the Tithe Barn moves into this next phase. The plan is to establish the information boards in the Trinity Centre (which is adjacent to the Barn) and the local library and provide updates through public events and our website.

### **Section 2: Strategic decisions about involving people**

We see the opportunity of the Tithe Barn development as a means of bringing people together to achieve success through the realisation of a community project. Our current mailing list of volunteers contains over 50 names. We have fostered community ownership through our 'Sponsor a Beam' fundraising campaign and have 64 individuals and groups who have donated a total of around £6,000 by sponsoring a beam. We have also benefited from a great deal of goodwill from local companies who've been prepared to offer support with the website, or with the production of promotional materials for zero or low-cost.

The Trustees have clear roles and designated responsibilities and one trustee is responsible for coordinating volunteers and management of our historical researcher.

The board of trustees, all of whom are volunteers, has been in place since 2005 and has demonstrated that it is competent and adaptable and we anticipate that when the project is fully redeveloped we will have to adjust our responsibilities away from technical requirements e.g. from an emphasis on building and project management towards ongoing realisation of our vision and ensuring effective day to day running of the Barn. We have had to deal with conflicts of interest in respect of people who wish to use the Barn, and manage difficult decisions in respect of funding and building development. This demonstrates the capacity as a Trust to manage a complex project, deal with issues as they arise and to progress with resolve despite set backs.

### **The process of development**

In our original application we explained how we saw a broad range of people using the Tithe Barn. We set about testing our ambitions by undertaking activities to see if they worked and inviting feedback afterwards. We have been able to demonstrate that children have really enjoyed the stimulus of visiting the Barn as part of their daytime schooling and that people with dementia have had fun and been able to use their latent skills and long term memories to positive effect. The Barn is regarded by many as their home and their space. Trustees have taken time to visit youth groups to explain about the project and listen to their ideas and thoughts (young people don't want it to be a museum or so posh they can't run around in the main hall!). School pupils from both the primary and secondary schools have contributed art to both festivals with their own pictures, including pictures inspired by the Barn. These ranged from paintings of Hannah More to chalk sketches of the Tithe Barn beams. Back in class they have developed stories based upon the now famous "Cinderella Lock" and used the headmaster's wartime log as a primary source of evidence in their work on evacuation.

We have been keen to include people with learning disabilities in the project because Tithe Barn was once a home to a day care centre. They set up and ran displays at both festivals; their photographs of the Barn and people using it were particularly useful in seeing how the hall was once laid out. The community project run by people with learning disabilities have also helped us by providing soup and sandwiches to visitors and we hope that their drama group will be moving to the Tithe Barn when it has been redeveloped.

The Arts and Music Festivals were seen as major events to promote the existence of the Tithe Barn and on the Saturdays when the art and craft displays were taking place there were in excess of 500 people attending the Barn in the course of the day with around 200 people being on the site at any one time.

We have networked with other organisations particularly the local history societies who have a strong and active interest in the heritage of the town and have been impressed by the dedication and commitment of the trustees.

Examples of meeting the *HLF's learning aims* include both schoolchildren and adults who have attended the presentations about the Tithe Barn plus

those have attended the open events and tours of the Barn. In addition many people are acquiring new skills by being involved.

Examples of meeting the *participation aims* include children coming together to form a maypole dance team specifically linked to the Tithe Barn. They rehearse each spring over four months and have given dance displays both at our own festivals and other events. There were 24 children involved and this project was run by two volunteers.

As described above some 40 people were involved in the Theatre Orchard programme and for many this was the first time they had been involved in a public presentation. This project even involved elderly people living in a local care home.

The music of memories events involve a number of volunteers who support people with dementia on a Sunday afternoon by providing activities, entertainment and making refreshments, and reassuring people if they become anxious. Many events have included young people performing, which they have found very rewarding. One girl has replicated our project at Exeter University and is running a programme there with the local Alzheimer's society.

We have made strong links with North Somerset Council Adult Social Services and they have recognised the Tithe Barn could be very significant in providing the opportunities for older and disabled people to have support and social contact. We have met with the Older Persons project manager and have given her a tour of the Barn. She sees enormous potential once the development has occurred.

Nailsea has a small black and minority ethnic community although the local convenience store some 50 metres from the Barn is now run by an Asian family who have very limited English. Following recent harassment by a group of youths, volunteers linked to the Tithe Barn project supported the shop owners in making a complaint to the police this has led to a bond between some of the Tithe Barn volunteers and the family at the shop. As a result the shop is now advertising events at the Tithe Barn and people at the shop have asked about the project and we plan to arrange for them to make a visit with a view to developing a link.

We are giving careful thought to barriers to participation and these are more formally addressed in our Access Policy. What we wish to see is a wide range of people not only using the Barn but interacting with each other. Promoting social cohesion is a key priority for North Somerset and Nailsea Town councils. What has proved to be an underlying opportunity for integration has been people's fascination with its history. Young and old are fascinated to hear that some of the stories from the Victorian times and to compare and contrast with their own experiences.

### **The Five Step Process**

Considering the five step process for development, we have thought about the who and what, and believe we have a good understanding about our audience. Our "three strands" analysis explains our approaches to the different groups who will be coming to the Barn in its role as both a community building as well as a heritage site (i.e. from the general visitor to the "historical" enquirer). We have identified a range of differentiated heritage resources and opportunities to meet a continuum of need. There

will be something for those with casual, passing interest and more for those who want to study. Our priorities have been on the basis of listening to people's needs, consultation and discussing with the local councils their research and priorities. We have also undertaken our own action based research.

We also recognise that as a Heritage site the Tithe Barn is not extensive with lots of rooms to explore and that visits alone provide only limited satisfaction for people simply coming to and touring the Barn. In order to really make the experience meaningful our strategy is to develop education based programmes for school children and promote innovative heritage linked events for the wider community e.g. to date we have provided school reunions, storytelling, discovery trail hunt and barn dances.

### **Interpretation**

The heritage realisation scheme above recognises that there should be a range of mediums offering interpretation in response to the differing needs of visitors and users of the Barn. The role of the Heritage Development Worker will be critical in ensuring delivery of high quality and attractive materials within the first two years of the project. Our intention is to provide the following:

**Interpretative Panels:** there will be one outside the Barn and a total of 8 panels inside, one explaining something about each room with five additional panels in the heritage room.

**Guides:** we will have two guides available. The first will be a threefold, glossy colour guide with a basic explanation about the Barn, suitable for the casual visitor and handed out at external talks or available at the library. Initially we will produce 3,000 of these and they will be freely available. There will also be an easy-read large print version.

The second will be the history of the Barn. This will be in the form of a simple booklet, A4 folded, around 12 pages. This will be low tech as it will always be a work in progress and we will make a nominal charge of 50p for this. Again an easy read version large print will be made available.

**Roller displays:** these will be 4 high quality displays with photographs and text which are portable for use at public events, schools and the library. Primarily used as awareness raising and to supplement talks and presentations.

**General displays:** these will be simple notice board displays used during the development phase. We have had a lovely model of the rafters built showing the structure.

**Education based activities:** these are work sheets and activities requiring research and creative expression. They are already being developed within the nearby primary school. Tracing Cinderella's family history and skipping to Victorian rhymes are examples.

**Events and activities:** we have already seen the enormous potential in having a programme of events at the Barn and we plan to engage professional interactive consultants to help us develop and realise these. Ideas for the future already include "A Day with the Tudors" with dressing up. We have also in our minds a mediaeval banquet, the Coates' Cider Reunion, a Harvest Home, Hawk display and arts and drama events. Some

of these will also help us raise funds, some will help us develop our understanding of the history of the Barn and Nailsea. Others will simply be fun!

**Artefacts and library:** we have already collected some simple artefacts and books, which can be used by children and adults alike. These include an old school desk, a bell, and old "flash cards". (We have recently been given a 6x 4 foot picture of Nailsea circa 1900 and an display size aerial photo of the Barn taken in 1945).

Storage will be built into the heritage room to make these secure.

**Web-based material:** we intend to make extensive use of the website which will be the repository of our research material. This will include our oral history accounts, and photographic and scanned images. We believe computer based material is versatile, can be accessed widely and remotely from the Barn and with good investment can be made interesting and interactive.

**PowerPoint Presentations:** although PowerPoint is not always appreciated we have developed two presentations which have proved popular and will continue to use these as a basis for providing talks to local groups.

**Commissioned DVDs:** we have already commissioned two DVDs about the history of the Barn, both of which have been used extensively and proved popular ('Tithe Barn memories' and 'Adge Cutler'). We plan to commission more, including a record of the renovation programme.

**Photography:** we have engaged a local professional photographer to provide a record of the renovation which we intend to show as a slide show with a commentary. In addition we have a collection of old photographs and the "Heritage through a Lens": an artistic interpretation of the Barn in 2007 which can be used as a slide show. We have used slide shows as a backdrop when people are visiting the Barn to promote extra interest.

**Promotional Material:** one of the companies (Mytechmedia) which supplied the printing for the Arts and Music festivals is offering us a range of promotional material to our own design at cost prices (T shirts, badges, mugs, jigsaws, greeting cards). These can be used not only for promotion but as a means of reinforcing the Barn's heritage. An objective for the 2009 festival is a T-shirt with an image of the rafters on the front and a timeline of the Barn's history on the reverse.

## 2.8 Project Action Plan

When planning the Tithe Barn restoration project, five stages of action were identified as set out below.

- **Stage One: Feasibility.** This was completed by the architect in September 2004. Following consultation with a wide range of groups, sufficient interest was discerned to justify the project. The Tithe Barn Trust was set up in November 2005 to drive the project forward in conjunction with the Town Council.
- **Stage Two: Maintaining Profile/ Pre HLF Stage 1 Decision.** This was undertaken by the Trust Management Committee, ensuring

attendance at community events and maintaining the profile through fundraising activities. This is ongoing.

- **Stage Three: HLF Stage 1 – Stage 2.** This involved the appointment of all the professional advisers and moving the project forward to RIBA Stage E. Planning permission and Listed Building Consent was achieved. The fundraising activities increased as did negotiations with potential users of the restored Barn.
- **Stage Four: Restoration work and operational planning.** This stage includes the tender process for the capital scheme, project management and the detailed operational planning for the opening and running of the Barn. The promotion of the building, marketing and agreements with hirers is a key part of this stage.
- **Stage Five: Operational management.** This stage includes regular review of utilisation profile in line with targets set by trustees.

## 3 Restoration Design and Project Management

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### 3.1 Current condition

The Tithe Barn is constructed from rubblestone walls and has a seven bay, arch braced oak roof structure that survives largely intact.

It was converted to a school by Hannah More in the late eighteenth century, and in the Victorian era, the Tithe Barn was considerably altered and extended. The most notable change is the enlargement of most of the windows removing its immediate appearance as a Tithe Barn.

Having been used as a school up until the early 1970's, the Tithe Barn then became a Day Care Centre and since 2000 has been used as a community centre. The building has been poorly maintained during its time as a school with several crude insertions and alterations made. Its general appearance is now dilapidated.

### 3.2 Design Report

#### 3.2.1 *Progress Report*

Following the award of an HLF Stage 1 Grant in March 2007, the building aspects of the Tithe Barn Project have been developed as described below.

Professional consultants for the building project were appointed during early to mid 2007, including Architect, Quantity Surveyor, CDM consultant, Structural Engineers, Mechanical and Electrical Engineers, Ecologist, Archaeologist and Approved Inspector (for Building Regulations). Details of these appointments are listed later in this section.

Detailed survey work has been carried out as follows:

- A detailed digital measured survey of the building was completed in April 2007 by Anthony Brookes, Surveyor, to allow the architects to develop their design. This included the mediaeval timber roof structure.
- A **Bats and Birds Survey** was carried out by Country Contracts in June 2007. This did not find any evidence of a bat roost in the building. A copy of the report is included in **Appendix A8**.
- A Type 3 **Asbestos Survey** was carried out by Shield Environmental in July 2007. Areas of asbestos present in building were identified and noted for future removal. A copy of the report is included in **Appendix A9**.
- A desktop **Archaeological Assessment** was completed in September 2007 by the Bristol and Region Archaeological Services. A copy of the report is included in **Appendix A10**.
- A detailed **Client Brief** was prepared in May 2007 and discussed and agreed by Trustees. This provided a valuable opportunity to think through and discuss aspirations for the completed building and to take into account the previously prepared Access Audit and Access Plan. A

copy of the brief (updated November 2008) is included as **Appendix A11**.

- The Architects had informal consultations with English Heritage and North Somerset Council's Conservation Officer, prior to submitting the Planning and Listed Building consents. These have been supportive of the proposed scheme.
- The scheme has been discussed at public meetings (including 16<sup>th</sup> September 2008) and on an individual basis with immediate neighbours to the Tithe Barn. Plans have also been displayed in the Tithe Barn.
- The scheme previously submitted for HLF Stage 1 approval was reviewed and developed by the architects to RIBA Stage D. Costs for this scheme were estimated by the Quantity Surveyor at £1.4m excl.VAT.

Although this cost estimate was significantly higher than the approved budget, the Trustees decided to continue with the scheme as there was a possibility that other sources of funding might become available which could make up the shortfall (i.e Community Asset Transfer Funds @ £850K). The Architect submitted the scheme to North Somerset District Council for Planning and Listed Building Approval which was received in February, 2008.

In the event the Trustees were unsuccessful in an application for Community Asset Transfer Funding, and the proposed scheme was therefore reviewed with the estimated cost reduced to an affordable level.

- The revised scheme has been developed to RIBA Stage E and was submitted for Planning and Listed Building Consent in September 2008.

### *3.2.2 Project Scope*

The building work proposed involves the conservation and refurbishment of the mediaeval Tithe Barn and its curtilage in Nailsea, North Somerset.

### *3.2.3 Purpose and Objectives of the Project*

The purpose and objectives of the building project are:

- To conserve and repair the historic Barn building to ensure its continuing use for community purposes for the foreseeable future
- To improve appreciation and understanding of the mediaeval origins of the building by removing the unsightly later suspended ceiling to reveal the original roof structure.
- To improve access to the building (including providing a more welcoming entrance, removing interior steps between rooms and providing an accessible toilet).
- To replace and renew out-of-date or unsafe fittings and service installations and to generally refurbish the building to provide a safe and welcoming environment for future users.
- To provide heritage interpretation within the Barn.



### *3.2.4 Resources and Procurement*

The following professional consultants have been appointed to date:

Architect	Architecton	The Wool Hall 12 St.Thomas Street Bristol BS1 6JJ
Quantity Surveyor	Press & Starkey	9-12 Stonehills House Welwyn Garden City Hertfordshire AL8 6NH
CDM Coordinator	Health and Safety Associates	10 Boxwell Park Bodmin Cornwall PL31 2BB
Structural Engineer	Fenton Holloway	43-45, Park Street Bristol BS1 5NL
M&E Engineer	Cross Consult Ltd.	6 Larch Close Lady Byron Park Nailsea BS48 1QN
Ecologist	Country Contracts	Hillcrest West Horrington Wells Somerset BA5 3ED
Archaeologist	Bristol and Region Archaeological Services	St.Nicholas Church St.Nicholas Street Bristol BS1 1UE
Approved Inspector (Building regulations)	Rexon Day	Wessex Court Ashley Avenue Upper Bristol Road Bath BA1 3DS

### 3.3 Description of the Proposed Building Works

#### 3.3.1 *Design Proposals*

The project will repair the existing Grade II\* listed mediaeval Tithe Barn in order to provide improved community facilities.

The design intention is to regain the sense of the original Tithe Barn. Where intervention / alterations are required, the new elements will be of a recognisably contemporary design but making reference to and following the rhythms of the original. The repairs are intended to have a minimal impact on the historic fabric and will use locally sourced traditional materials such as lime mortar and oak timber framing.

Several alterations have been made over the past 200 years, during its time as a school, and its appearance as a Tithe barn has been lost. The design intention is to regain the sense of the original Tithe Barn. This will include the repair and presentation of the medieval roof structure, presentation of original wall surfaces and hopefully reopening both main cart doors and lost ventilation slots.

The building has been poorly maintained during its time as a school and several crude insertions and alterations made. These alterations will either be removed or replaced with new designs in keeping with the existing structure.

The tender documentation will place emphasis on contractors who have a positive apprentice scheme where traditional craft skills, such as carpentry repairs can be learnt.

The chronology of design activity is detailed in the **Options Appraisal** included as **Appendix A16**.

In brief the design activity has included: survey of the building, brief analysis, asbestos survey, wildlife survey, access plan condition survey, outline and detailed design. The options were refined in conjunction with client consultation, the model was refined in parallel with the design options, landscape design produced, cost estimate produced (by Quantity Surveyor), a structural assessment was carried out, strategic services design agreed, archaeological desk top assessment produced and initial on-site archaeological analysis carried out, and detailed repair of roof structure prepared. Planning and listed building applications were submitted.

The project will be implemented in line with the Trust's **Access Policy and Audit**, which is included as **Appendix A17**, and its **Access Plan (Appendix A18)**

### 3.4 Floor Areas

Once complete, the Tithe Barn will comprise the following areas.

<i>Nailsea Tithe Barn – Floor Areas</i>		
Room	Area (m <sup>2</sup> )	Area (ft <sup>2</sup> )
Main Hall	117	1,259

Victorian Room	57	614
School Room	38	409
<b>Total: Lettable</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>2,282</b>
Service spaces	63	678
<b>Total net floor area lettable + service spaces</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>2,960</b>

## 4 Conclusion

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The business plan for Nailsea Tithe Barn demonstrates that investment in this important community asset would meet a clear and defined need and be sustainable in the long term.

The Trust has identified a number of key project strengths, the combination of which makes for a strong project proposal. These are as follows:

### **An established partnership**

The partnership structure is well established and broad ranging, including the Town Council, Tithe Barn Trust, Holy Trinity Church, other community and statutory organisations and North Somerset District Council.

### **A fully developed capital project**

The investment in professional advisers has already been made. The planning application has been submitted based on detailed input from English Heritage, the County Archaeologist, the District's Access Officer for Disabled People and Conservation Officer, specialist conservation and biodiversity experts, local residents and current and potential users of the building.

### **A robust and deliverable Business Plan**

The Town Council and the management committee of the Trust have developed a business plan which is based on existing experience of hiring facilities to community groups within Nailsea. It is underpinned by realistic utilisation levels and operational management by Town Council staff.

### **Matched Funding**

The decision by the Town Council to sell its existing administrative and community building (Church House) to Nailsea Baptist Church ensures that the required funding for the project is in place. However, the Trust is committed to raising further income from the local community and grant giving bodies, in order to further strengthen the financial position of the project, and to provide further investment in upgrading the facilities at the Barn.