

# Proposal for Development Kirkcolm Community Hub Business Plan

## Executive Summary

Faced with the prospect of the Village Hall closing, the Community Trust with the support of Community Council have decided to pursue the purchase and conversion of the closed Village Shop and to take over the running of the Village Car Park.

Sustainable, flexible, cheaper to run, easier to maintain and heat this facility provides a community meeting and information point for the foreseeable future and will add a point of interest in the Village through the shop / cafe / gallery to attract visitors and potentially to provide employment . The retention in community hands of the Car Park will provide income to sustain the Centre and flexibility to create a community resilience facility , electric charging points for vehicles and will give community control over future development on the Car Park.

Whereas the Village Hall presented a liability to be managed going forward, the Community Hub gives us the opportunity to work on a multiplicity of activities that are essential to the community's cohesion, health, resilience and wellbeing .

It gives Kirkcolm Community ( Parish population 750) the opportunity to work on things that it can control rather than things (such as the physical deterioration of the Hall) that it cannot and as such is a much more positive and manageable option.

### 1 Background

In 2017 the Community Trust was established to enable developments that could not be undertaken for reasons that require some form of Charitable status. This was a direct outcome of the Community planning process that took place in 2017 with Creetown Initiative. Although established by the Community Council, the Trust is a separate entity and now a 2 Tier SCIO managed by Trustees appointed by membership.

In 2018 Dumfries and Galloway Council announced (along with other villages) that our Village Hall would close in March 2019 should there not be a community entity offering an alternative management agreement leading to a change of ownership.

In May 2019 the Trust signed a 2 year agreement to take over management of the Hall with a full Community Asset Transfer ( CAT ) aimed for within the 2 year period. The CAT related to the Hall and the adjacent Car Park. The Trust has since been managing the Hall.

Much progress was made including turning around a 90% deficit ( hires v costs ) with the Hall currently breaking even. This was due to the Trust not using staff, reducing other costs drastically and increasing usage .

A surveyor had been appointed and via Creetown Initiative a surveyor-architect was also engaged.

By the end of 2019 they had reported some concerning facts about the Hall

While the Trust knew that the Hall was old and needed renovation we now found that there was significant structural work required to give the Hall any prospect of a long term future. The costs

of this were triple what was anticipated. In discussion with Creetown Initiative and DTAS we concluded that this was not a viable prospect in the current financial circumstances for donors to consider.

This was reported to a well attended community invited EGM of the Trust in January where the Council also reported that they had no intention of handing over liabilities through CAT processes. With reluctance we reported that we would be withdrawing from the CAT for the Hall but pursuing a CAT element that related to the take over of the Car Park as there were other assets there that remained vital not just to the Hall but to any other community meeting facility .

## 2 Basis For Planning

In 2017 a comprehensive Community Plan for the period 2017 to 2022 was completed by **Creetown Initiative** . Amongst other recommendations this document made the case for the establishment of the Community Trust .

The Community Council and the Trust share the plan. Several recommendations, such as the development of core paths to improve access to the countryside and the development of a play park, implemented by the Community Council and the Trust's engagement with the Hall evidencing the influence of this planning document on both groups .

The document showed a community with above average numbers of old and elderly people (60-75+) at 30.6% and below average numbers of young people at 18.5% of the population

There is a familiar rural tale of increasingly large number of older incomers and drift from young people to places of larger population such as Dumfries and Glasgow.

468 questionnaires were delivered with a completion rate of 22.8%.

Amongst some of the outcomes were the following

97% wanted to keep a shop and post office  
57% wanted to improve and upgrade meeting places in the Village

Top priorities were :-

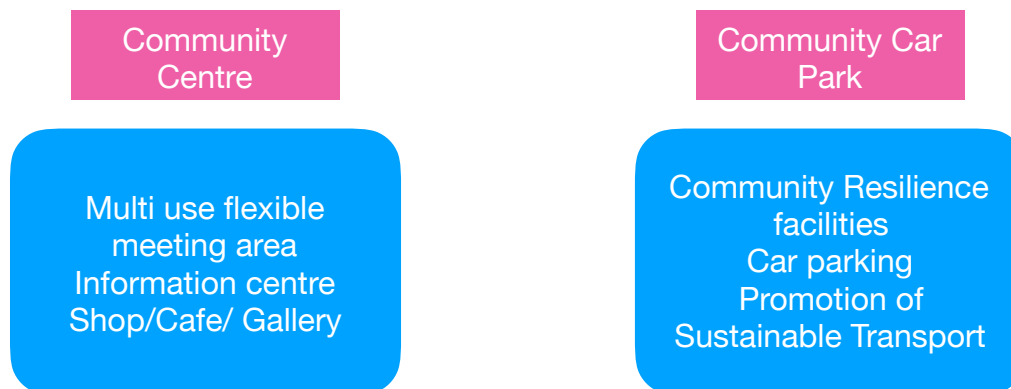
- Improved opportunities for Income Generation
- Attractive and tidy Village
- Support to existing services
- Improved Village Hall
- Better Connectivity
- Play areas and improvement to walking and Cycling opportunities.

## 3 A Viable alternative

Directly opposite the Hall is an empty shop, quite a big shop with 3 areas that can be converted into 4 spaces . Given that nearly 90% of the activities in the Hall were for less than 20 people it was felt that the bulk of the activities could be carried on within the shop area.



This is forming the core of what we are referring to as the **Kirkcolm Community Hub** which will consist of two key areas of the Community estate, the shop ( community centre ) and the car park



## Positive and Negatives

### 3.1 Positives -Tangible

- Refurbished building suitable in size and type for 90% of former activities
- Warmer, easier ,cheaper to heat and maintain
- Central and thus accessible to most villagers
- Retail opportunity created
- Flexible in use
- Car Park in community ownership cannot be inappropriately exploited
- Provision for a greener more sustainable transport future
- Garages to rent
- Community resilience stores based there
- Assets such as BT building can be rented out to subsidise the Community Centre
- Delivers against Income generation directive
- Potential job creation
- Delivers against DGC green development credentials

### 3.2 Positives -Non Tangible

- Increased sense of ownership of the village space
- Signs of regeneration raising community spirit

### 3.2 Negatives

- Sentiment - the Hall was important to many people's lives
- Size - the Hall took all of the activities possible - the Community Centre will be smaller -creative thinking will be needed
- Hall may deteriorate and become an eyesore if not sold quickly
- Cost of shop purchase ( approx £60k)
- Cost of shop refurbishment ( Approx £40-60k )
- Cost of garage repairs
- Cost of resurfacing the Car Park and electric charging points

## **4 Changes anticipated in Shop and Car Park**

### **Shop**

The Shop will be converted under architect instruction into 4 distinct areas but all interlinking in an open plan manner

- 2 areas will be created from one large space to create smaller and larger meeting area
- There will be a utility area with an office/meeting room and kitchen
- A public area will be created that is a Cafe /Gallery and Shop.

Depending upon the survey of the roof, and planning permission a solar energy array will be placed either upon the Shop roof or the Car Park to give sustainable energy to the functions of both areas.

### **Car Park**

- The Car Park will be resurfaced and generally tidied.
- Defunct and derelict garages will either be removed or repaired
- A workshop area could be created and rented out
- A Community resilience area will be created for Community Council Storage
- 2 or 3 electric recharging points will be put into the car park
- We will seek funding to base a small electric minibus on the car park

**The Car Park was essential to the Hall and will be essential to the Shop not only providing income. It is also required for parking for community activities, it serves the needs of some residents on Main Road who have access their gardens and parking and it has development potential for the future but development the community wants, not imposed.**

## **5 Impact for the Community**

### **5.1 Meeting Place**

Essential to maintain activities, Feasibly there could be 4 activities at one time if all areas are utilised

### **5.2 Health Mental Health and Well being**

Some are direct through activities in the Centre

Some are implied; elderly people will come to the centre for meetings but also just daily to “ do the messages” and increase interaction thereby.

Some are directed ; the office area can be used as confidential place for health professionals, CAB, Councillors, Counsellors to use whilst in the village .

This will connect with the **Transforming Wigtownshire Programme** by providing a private and confidential digital hub terminal as well as being a “ signposting “ place for materials that can point the community to viable support networks for health, wellbeing and social care .  
( Discussion have already taken place with TWP )

### **5.3 Tackling social exclusion**

Sat 6 miles from Stranraer might not be an issue for those with transport but with few public transport links we can attract professionals to come to us but also through a community transport

scheme via an electric vehicle in the car park we can also arrange regular trips for people at times that suit them rather than current transport links

The Hub will provide meeting places of both a formal and informal nature to suit the needs of different community members .

#### **5.4 Promoting informal social links**

The Cafe points inwards and outwards giving a place for locals to meet and for visitors to come to

#### **5.5 Creating opportunities for Young people**

Both directly via the youth club and other activities but also through inclusion in intergenerational interaction

#### **5.6 Climate Change ( Local Action )**

By reducing the need for people to hold onto gas guzzling cars by using sustainable energy sources and by promoting the same via example . This helps to implement Dumfries and **Galloway Council's Climate Emergency Directives** through helping the community to embrace low carbon practices.

#### **5.7 Promoting Heritage, Natural Heritage and Tourism**

The Hall and the meeting rooms will have a wealth of local history pertaining to the village as a planned settlement, looking at farming locally and especially at Ryan Bay as the world's largest flying boat base in its time. ( Will link with the displays at Wig Bay )

Ryan Bay is also an internationally known birding site and is not promoted locally at present , but should be with accessible links for this from out of the area for those who would wish to visit. Feasibly this will also provide business for the Pub and local B+B .

This will be a resource also for the local school

#### **5.8 Sales /Retail**

The Gallery element will reopen to those craft providers ( makers) who used to sell through the shop prior to its closure and which proved attractive to local and visitor shoppers alike. ( Some already contacted and interested )

Post Office would operate from the Shop - essential to local elderly especially ( Discussion taken place )

Depending upon interest the shop could either be rented out to a local provider or run by volunteers ( In discussion with Plunkett Foundation )

#### **5.9 Volunteering opportunities and Job Creation**

Many of the former in the Hub but also there may be work opportunities in the Shop/ Cafe /Gallery

We would like also to tie the Hub into a part time community worker post at some point in the near future.

The centre will need a cleaner and handy-person .

### **5.10 Dealing with Digital inequality**

Both for older people young people. Classes for Senior computer and tablet users are currently well attended while it has been noticed that some young people in the village still have no access to IT in their homes and it would be good to offer something to bridge that inequality gap

## **6 Viability**

Part of the logic for the Hub relates to transferring the current users of the hall to a new facility and part is due to the additional anticipated uptake provided by a space that is warm, welcoming and easy to access as opposed to a Hall that it is either freezing cold or baking hot, damp and in breach of disability access requirements !

### **Current use**

- Brownies
- Post Office
- Guides
- SWRI
- Church
- Yoga Classes
- Councillor surgeries
- Political Elections
- SLIC Computer club
- Bingo
- Quiz
- Annual Old folks Dinner
- Annual Easter tea room
- Children's parties

( All but the Tea Rooms and old folks diner can be accommodated in the Community Centre . For these two events we would need to think out of the box and consider other approaches)

### **Possible or in planning**

- Art group
- Photography Group
- Monthly lunch club for older people
- Local History Group

Given that the Hall went from 90% loss to breaking even in less than year and the Centre would be easier to heat ( Electricity took 75% of outgoings in the Hall) and would be more welcoming to new groups it is anticipated that income should significantly exceed outgoings and could be ploughed back into the Community by supporting new activities.

## 7 SWOT

### Strengths

Much more cost effective (Max approx £120k v £700+k)  
Easier cheaper to run  
Hall and car Park interlock  
Viable for funders  
Can be run by volunteers

### Weaknesses

Doesn't meet 11% of the Hall's current use  
Hall could become an eyesore  
Hall holds many memories

More accessible by far  
Centre Warmer and "cosier" so more welcoming  
Can have information points to drip feed information and health wellbeing messages  
Climate Change contributions  
Volunteering and employment

Someone can buy the Shop sooner  
Someone can buy the car park and exploit it

### Opportunities

### Threats

8 Data

**750**  
Population

**30.6%**  
over 60

**78**  
Miles to  
County  
Town

**22**  
Former  
Shop  
“Makers”

**1**  
**Community Hub**  
**2**  
**Assets**

**97%**  
Want a  
local Shop

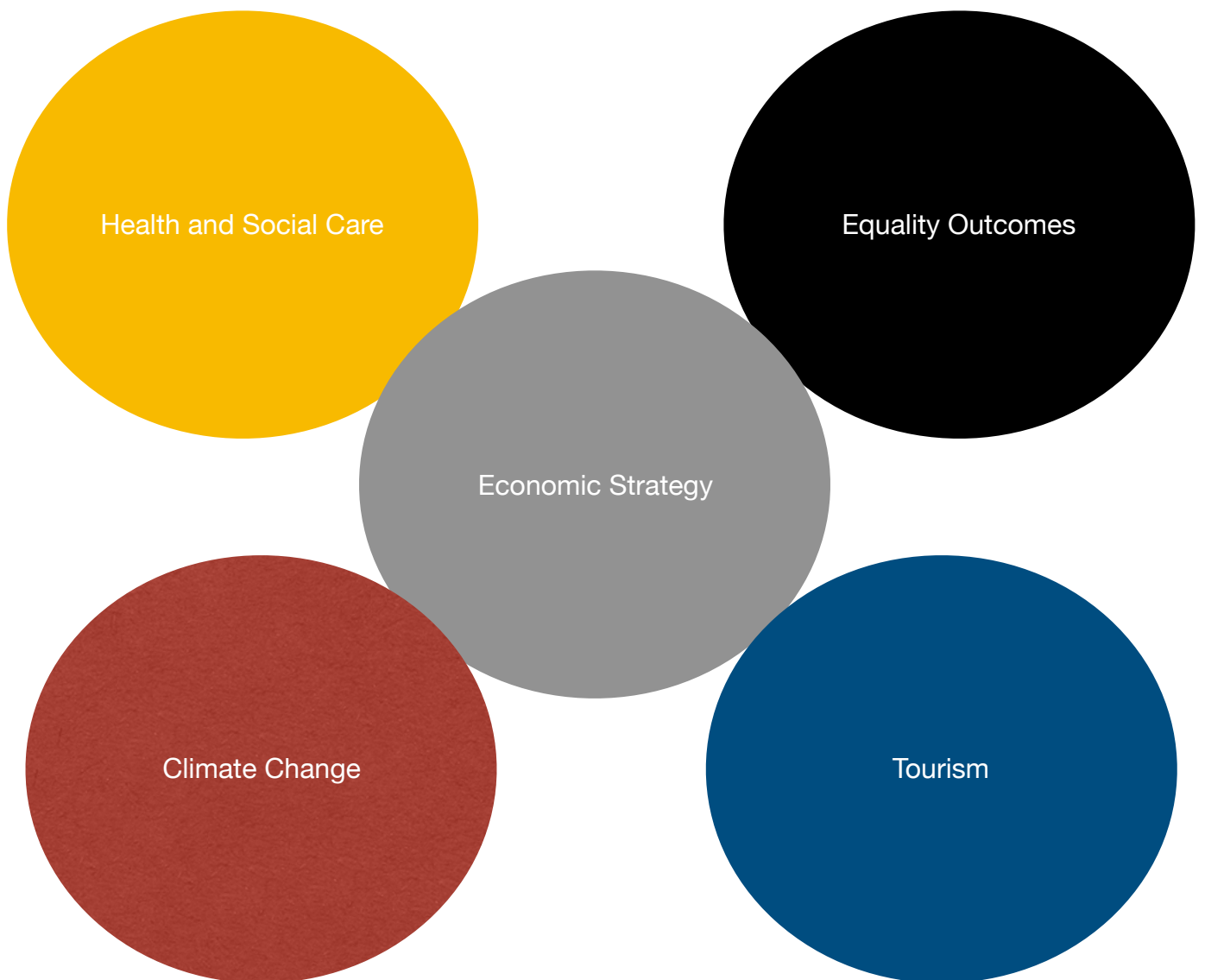
**57%**  
Want better  
meeting  
facilities

**4**  
Groups in  
Planning

**14**  
Current  
User  
Groups



9 Policy Connectivity



## 10 Conclusions

When the surveyors reported in December 2019 that the Hall required complete rebuild the costs skyrocketed to potentially over £750k and advisers warned us that this was considered outside of the scope of donors to consider.

A subsequent Extraordinary General Meeting of the Community Trust in January 2020 was both well attended by the local community and was quorate of Trust members and heard the logic for no longer being able to consider the Hall as a viable project. An alternative vision was put to the meeting that proposed the Community Hub based upon the Shop and the Car Park. There were no dissenting voices heard to this vision which was later communicated to the community. Again we have had no dissenting concerns expressed and the vision is backed by both the Trust and the Community Council.

The Community Plan undertaken that both the Community Council and Community Trust work with told us very clearly that we have a growing cohort of more elderly people in the village, very few opportunities for young people, geographical isolation and that social exclusion was a serious issue.

The Community Council has worked to improve some elements of infrastructure especially around making our shorelines accessible but has also worked to support community groups locally.

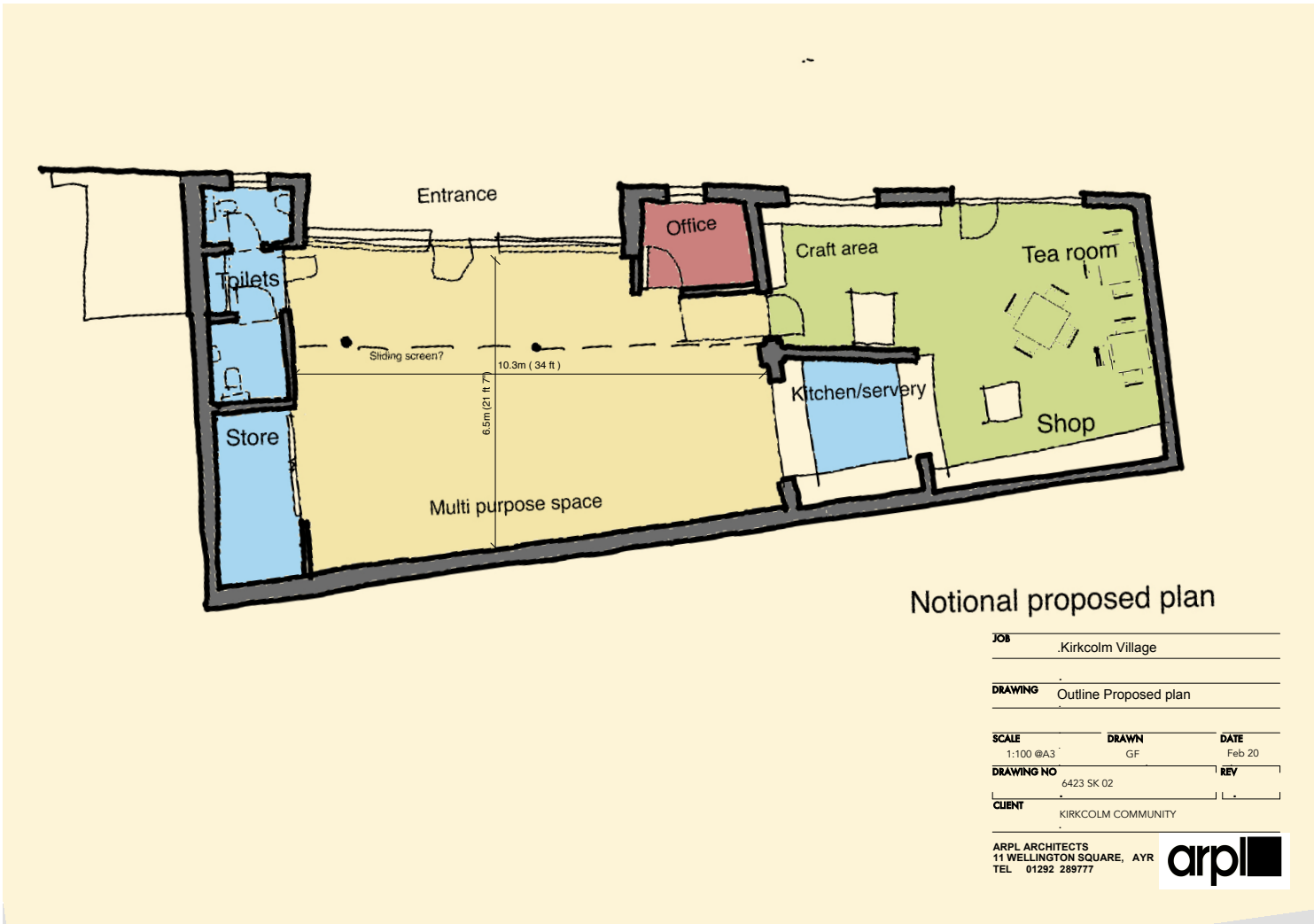
A fact driven conclusion of not being able to take the Hall forward was painful but in retrospect inevitable. But where there is adversity there is also opportunity and possibly the barriers to creative thinking come down leading to a more locally owned and thus a better fit to need.

Buying the shop and converting it into a Community Centre makes sense, having a Community Asset Transfer on the Car park protecting it from unwanted development and exploitation is essential. Managing both as Community Hub that is visible evidence of regeneration brings hope to our village.

***But managing both together interlinking the accessibility and sustainable energy opportunities that both offer, creates the assets that inform a viable business case that addresses the needs outlined in the Community Plan.***

**The Kirkcolm Community Hub is the future for our village and is a project supported jointly by the Community Trust and the Community Council**

## Addendum 1 Shop conversion ( For Community Consultation )



This is a projection for community consultation not a final drawing . That will be created following a community asset planning session once the status of both assets is secured.

## Addendum 2 Projected Costs and Funding Sources

Cost Area	Source
<b>A Purchase Element of Shop</b>	
£60k	Land Fund
<b>B Conversion to Community Centre</b>	
£40-£60k	Local Funds to D+G + Foundations
<b>C Car Park</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Resurfacing</i></li><li>• <i>Rebuild of Garages</i></li><li>• <i>Community Resilience Asset</i></li></ul>	
Sponsorship Local Funds and via CC Windfarm income	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Climate Change / Green elements</i></li></ul>	Funding organisations with this specific interests

### Sustainability

Should a private rental source to run the Cafe /Shop not be forthcoming we will be working with the Plunkett Foundation to acquire skills to run this through voluntary support.

Community Centre sustainability is via Car Park rentals and Community Centre lets.

All of the current lets in the Village Hall will transfer to the Community Centre ( discussions have been held) and since these are sufficient to break even in the Hall which is very costly to run in terms of heating there is evidence to believe that with substantially less outgoings in the Shop / Community Centre then this is also a route to sustainability .

We work with Creetown Initiative as advisors on sustainability and business planning and they have an exceptional track record in this area .

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Accurate at 26.2.20  
Source Kirkcolm Community Trust

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