

STAFF REPORT

TO: Golden Bay Community Board
FROM: Community Services Manager
REFERENCE: P100
DATE: 6 November 2006
SUBJECT: Pohara Hall

PURPOSE

The Board at their last meeting, following an enquiry from a member of the public, resolved as follows:

“THAT Golden Bay Community Board write to the Community Services Manager requesting consultation with Pohara Hall users about the removal of the mezzanine floor and whether it should be reinstated and upgraded to resolve safety concerns.”

So that Board members fully understand the issues the following is provided.

BACKGROUND

- 1 A few years ago the Pohara Hall Management Committee resolved to wind up and asked the Council to take over the day to day running of the Hall.
- 2 Council employed a local person as the Caretaker and key holder and set up a booking system through the Takaka Service Centre.
- 3 Staff then carried out a detailed inspection of the Hall and also reviewed the bookings to determine what could possibly be done to increase the use of this facility.
- 4 A list of work required was completed and included:
 - Repairing roofing iron leaks
 - Solving the problem of leakage through the concrete roofing along the frontage of the Hall
 - Installing a ramp for easy wheelchair access

- Installing an accessible toilet
- Repairing ceilings once roof leaks fixed
- Lighting repairs
- Replace old louvre windows because of the cleaning requirements these create

5 In August staff met with a local builder and the Building Inspector to assess the above list and while inspecting the Hall the safety of the mezzanine floor was questioned. Issues were:

- The steepness of the stairs
- The safety/handrails on the stairs
- The safety/handrails along the front of the mezzanine floor

The question was then asked "Is this floor used in such a way that makes it necessary in the Hall?". During this inspection a group of locals were preparing the Hall for a wedding the following day and they advised staff that most users block off the stairway because of the safety issues. The only use anyone could remember was for sound equipment for some events and sometimes judges for events have used it. Both of these users could be accommodated in other ways, as is the case in other halls throughout the District.

The advantages of removing the mezzanine floor were:

- Considerable cost savings by not having to make the stairway and mezzanine meet the necessary safety requirements
- Lets more natural light into the Hall
- Increases the size of usable space in the Hall
- Does away with the claustrophobic feeling when under the mezzanine floor

At the same time, there were disadvantages if the floor was removed and these were:

- Loss of mezzanine for the two users mentioned earlier
- The area under the floor could be curtained off for food preparation. However, if this was an issue it was simple to install a wire on which to run curtains.

In weighing up the advantages and disadvantages staff, the builder and other locals on the day agreed that the best course of action was to remove the mezzanine floor and concentrate funds on the more important issues such as the roof leaks, an accessible toilet etc.

Since the removal of the mezzanine floor we have received positive comments about the usability of the Hall, the extra natural light and the fact that the stairway no longer needs to be blocked off. Obviously the Board has received a letter of concern from a user who used the mezzanine floor. However, we believe that other options are available for that particular use.

MAINTENANCE AND COSTS

For the Board's information, the roof leaking has been a major cost issue with every nail having to be replaced and butynol gutters built for the concrete portion of the roof which extends the full length of the building and is approximately four metres wide. The total cost of this work was approximately \$18,000.00. Attributing to this was the cost of the replacement nails which were very expensive because the roof is aluminium.

The estimated cost to install an accessible toilet is up to \$10,000.00 (depending on the actual work required), the tidying up of the damaged ceilings and lighting is approximately \$4,000.00 and the cost of replacing the louvre windows could be over \$10,000.00 because of the design of the building. Staff are looking at other ways of solving the dust/dirt problem as this cost is considered unacceptable.

Should additional funds be required for any of this work a report will be prepared for the Board to consider a further allocation from Golden Bay Reserve DILs.

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

At the start of this report I advised that the previous Hall Management Committee had resigned. Issues that probably influenced this decision were:

- Members had been on the Committee for a long time
- New members were almost impossible to attract
- Minimal use of the Hall created little interest
- A lot of the work required, as shown above, was outside the scope of the Committee members

Resignations of such committees is not unusual for the above reasons and also the fact that more people are having to work longer hours and in many cases both members of families are now working.

In the case of the Pohara Hall, this has not affected the running of the facility in any way and with a local person as Caretaker the change has been seamless. Bookings of the Hall are made through the Service Centre which makes it easy for hirers to know who to contact.

SUMMARY

I believe the right decision was made regarding the mezzanine floor and that there is no requirement to re-establish a Hall Committee.

LL Kennedy