

**STRICHEN TOWN HOUSE Trust SCIO**

Scottish Charity Number: SC049749

**BUSINESS PLAN, Phase 1 to support Asset Transfer of Toilet Block**

**July 2022**

**Prepared**

**With support from**

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## 1 Executive Summary

This Business plan has been created to map out the development for Strichen Town House.

The Strichen Town House Trust SCIO (STHT) was incorporated in November 2019 to restore, enhance and further develop the Category 'A' listed Town House building, an integral part of the 1764 planned village of Strichen.

After several years of preparing the necessary groundwork starting with the Asset Transfer of the Town House from Aberdeenshire Council to the Strichen Community, Community engagements, appointment of an architect and submission and approval of the proposed building plans, followed by the Covid Pandemic, the STHT are now in a position to move on to the next stage of the project.

This plan outlines the multiple proposed uses of the Town House as a Heritage Centre, Community Meeting place. Subject to further Community Consultation, STHT will consider the potential re-homing of the Anderson & Woodward Library Trust library facilities, with extended opening hours, within the re-furbished building, which would run in partnership with the Aberdeenshire Council Library Service.

**The existing unused village conveniences, following completion of an Asset Transfer Agreement with Aberdeenshire Council, will be demolished to enable the STHT to provide for an extension to the existing Grade A listed building, providing new public conveniences, and full access to all levels of the Town House.**

The research carried out shows that there is a significant degree of community engagement with the building and strong cultural heritage interests in Strichen and Buchan generally. A proposed catchment area of a 25-minute drive takes in a population of 36,000 people, which is relatively settled and importantly supports an overlapping community of interests in the arts and cultural heritage of all kinds.

The Strichen Community have taken the responsibility for the ongoing management and development of this iconic building, which will form a dedicated heritage and learning venue, a repository of living tradition, where work can be done, knowledge and skills acquired. It should provide cosy learning spaces, with dedicated facilities for displays of archived materials and cinema, so historic recordings, live music, film, still photography can be viewed and discussed in a beautiful and characterful space.

The facility will be available to hire for special events and as a venue for community cinema and performance. The markets for the facility in parts of the year, albeit localised, will be steady, and the development has the potential to meet the running costs of the building on a long-term basis.

Three-year financial projections are included at Appendix 2, which indicate that the building could be viable and self-sustaining.

A funding strategy has been developed with a range of appropriate funds identified which could potentially fund the capital expenditure required.

Experience at other community-owned facilities in the North East, eg MACBI in Mintlaw, and elsewhere demonstrates that the model outlined is achievable, generating an income stream and engaging local people with their social and physical well being, their heritage and the built environment.

This Business Plan will be revised once the future of the Strichen Library Service has been agreed within the Community following widespread consultation.

## 2 Our Vision, Mission and Aims

Our vision is for the historic Grade A Listed Town House at the centre of Strichen to return to its original role as the centre of Strichen life, providing the hub for coordinating all things Strichen. The incorporation of the village library facilities including the archives of all heritage materials for the village since its foundation in 1764, meeting areas for small groups, and **provision of public conveniences** for local residents and visitors.

### Our mission

To bring the Town House back into a well-maintained public asset with access for all, with the building of an extension containing lift provision for access to the 1<sup>st</sup> floor and public conveniences integrated into the ground floor. We intend the Town House to become the central hub for Strichen and its surrounding area for village activity and a major hub for many aspects of Buchan's Rural Heritage by working together with the various heritage organisations within Buchan.

### Our aims are:

- To restore, enhance and further develop the structural integrity of Strichen Town House Grade A Listed building.
- Build an extension to the SW end of the existing building to provide full access to all parts of the building, remove the current steel fire escape and to replace the existing unused public toilets.
- To provide a well-insulated building which can provide cost effective meeting rooms, heritage display areas and archive facilities for heritage documents of the Strichen and wider Buchan area.
- To bring the First Floor Hall back into public use and return the room to its original historic design and period features, with full safe access to all classes of visitors.
- To provide a central hub for providing all local residents and visitors a source of "what's happening" in the area, from Community Group activities, to Community Council and Aberdeenshire Council consultations.
- To generate an income from the letting of meeting rooms and provision of the Strichen Library Service sufficient to ensure the Strichen Town Hall can provide a first-class community facility, cost effectively, and maintain the iconic Grade A Listed building for future generations.
- To ensure the ongoing management of The Strichen Town House Trust SCIO represents the needs of the Strichen Community. Representatives will be elected annually at the AGM from the user groups within the village.
- **Complete an Asset Transfer for the Aberdeenshire Council owned redundant public conveniences and incorporate an extended opening hours facility within the new extension.**
- In the longer term, following Community engagement and agreement, The Strichen Town House SCIO would enable the transfer of the library currently based at 59, Water Street to the Town House Trust. This could also potentially involve the Asset Transfer of this property owned by Aberdeenshire Council.

### 3 Keys to Success

The following achievements will ensure our success in this venture:

- Secure the Asset Transfer of the redundant toilet block which controls the access to the proposed extension to the Town House.
- Secure the long-term structural integrity of Strichen Town House, the Grade A Listed iconic building in the centre of this planned village.
- Establish the Town House as the central hub for Strichen activities, and an attractive meeting place for residents and visitors to the area to facilitate networking opportunities.
- Create an archive of documents and exhibits relating to Strichen’s local history and traditions.
- Inspire the people of Strichen and the surrounding area.
- Provide the local community with comfortable, well equipped meeting rooms for local clubs and groups, such as the Buchan Heritage Group and Buchan Field Club.
- **Provide modern public conveniences available for local residents and visitors to replace the Aberdeenshire Council owned building that has been closed for several years.**
- Provide employment opportunities to manage the building together with supporting its role as a heritage centre.

### 4 Organisation Summary

The Strichen Town House Trust SCIO is incorporated in Scotland as a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (a SCIO). It is registered as a Charity in Scotland, Charity Number SC049749.

It was registered in its current legal form on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2019, having previously been part of the The Strichen Community Park Company (Company No. SC163826, Charity No. SC024518).

#### 4.1 Legal Entity

Strichen Town House Trust SCIO CS004318

Charity No. SC049749

#### 4.2 Registered office:

Strichen Town House

██████████  
██████████  
██████████

All members of the local community are eligible to become members of the Company. At 15/07/22, **316 members** of the public are signed up Members of the Strichen Town House Facebook page.

Prospective Trustees are nominated and appointed at the AGM which takes place each August.

Directors meet monthly, or more often when necessary, and lead both permanent and ad hoc working groups where necessary.

4.3 Strichen Town House Project Team at 31/12/2021

This Project is managed by the Trustees of The Strichen Town House Trust SCIO:

Name	Role	Skills/Experience
[REDACTED]	Trustee	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	Trustee	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	Trustee, Chair of STHT SCIO	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	Trustee, Treasurer of STHT SCIO	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	Trustee	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	Trustee	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	Trustee, Secretary of STHT SCIO	[REDACTED]

<p>[REDACTED]</p>	<p>Trustee, Fund Raiser of STHT SCIO</p>	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>
<p>[REDACTED]</p>	<p>Architect - Annie Kenyon Architects</p>	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>

4.4 **Professional advisers**

**Accountants**

Leiper and Summers  
4 Charlotte Street  
Fraserburgh  
Aberdeenshire  
AB43 9JE

**Bankers**

Virgin Money  
43, Broad Street  
Peterhead  
Aberdeenshire  
AB42 1JB

**Solicitors**

Masson & Glennie  
Broad House  
Broad Street  
PETERHEAD  
AB42 1HY

## 5 Project Background

### 5.1 Strichen Town House

The Town House is category 'A' listed by Historic Environment Scotland (Aberdeenshire HER NJ95NW0012) in terms of merit, which is defined to be of national importance, either architectural or historical. Built, circa 1816, to mark the inheritance of the Strichen Estates by Thomas Alexander Fraser, later 12th Lord Lovat, it was intended as a symbol of confidence in the planned village founded by his great grandfather in 1764.

The development of the Town House, or 'Town Hall' as it is locally known, is inextricably linked with the development of the village of Strichen itself in the heart of rural Buchan. It originated as a planned 18th century town next to the North Ugie Water, where flat land and waterpower allowed industrial activity, mainly in the textile industries, to be established.

Built as a gift to the village, the Town Hall has been at the centre of village life for the last 200 years. Its role has shifted according to the needs of the day, first providing an arcaded market stance then enclosed to accommodate a circulating library, schoolroom (for both Sabbath and day schools), cinema and drill hall.

The building was designed by Architect John Smith (1781-1852), later Superintendent of Work for Aberdeen City and responsible for the redevelopment of Union Street and Union Terrace. It is an unusual example of Scottish town house architecture, harking back to both fortified c.16th tollbooths and to classical c.18th models, listed in the RCAHMS<sup>1</sup> gazetteer of tollbooths and town houses.

The community holds the bell and clock, which are housed in the tower, in particular affection. Thomas Mears of London cast the bell in 1818, and J Gaitly made the clock in the same year and, once installed, these quickly came to regulate the timing of trading and other events in the village.

Extensive graffiti to the wall of the clock room records over 100 years of history; including the end of the Boer War, the two World Wars, the signatures of tradesmen and bell ringers, and events in the life of the Village. The Town House became the focus for Armistice Day celebrations in 1919 as the site of the war memorial.

The village itself is a well-ordered grid-pattern settlement of main streets, lanes and regular feus, developed on the inspiration of Lord Strichen in 1764. His vision was to create a settlement "to promote the arts and crafts of this country and for the accommodation of Tradesman of all Denominations; Manufacturers and other industrious people to settle within the same".

Strichen House and its immediate estates lie half a mile to the South-West. This once very grand house now stands as an empty ruin. A stable block, kennels cottage and doocot associated with the house remain.

From its 18th century beginnings and 19th century growth, Strichen became established and appears to have fulfilled its original vision on a small scale. Grey granite walls and slate roofs unified building for industry, as dwellings or for public use. The town was established within a setting where agricultural activity developed and remains the dominant surrounding land use. Its rail link to the wider world, finally closed in 1979, and the place name "Market Stance" reflects its role as a market town where agricultural production, buying and selling brought people and other business to it.

## 5.2 Ownership, Condition and Prospects

Strichen Town House came into public ownership when Strichen Estate sold it to the Parish Council in 1926. In 1975, ownership was passed to Banff and Buchan Council and thence to Aberdeenshire Council in 1996.

A range of groups has used the Town House but, due to lack of investment and care over a period of over 40 years, it has become dilapidated and is no longer conducive to regular wider community use. Only the downstairs is currently in a usable condition. In 2009, it was declared surplus to requirements by the local authority. The Strichen Town House Group was established in 2012 as part of a Community Council led initiative to save the building from being sold on the open market, and being lost to community use forever. Aberdeenshire Council agreed to pass the building to Strichen Community Park Company, for a nominal sum in February 2014, under the legislative procedure of at that time.

In December 2016, Strichen Community Park Company obtained the title of the building, with the project to carry out the tasks of securing the Town House's structural integrity and developing it to be a multipurpose, accessible asset for the village, being taken forward by a sub-group of the Strichen Community Park Company.

In November 2019 the Strichen Town House Trust SCIO was formed with the Working Group members becoming the Trustees.

The title of the building was transferred from Strichen Community Park Company to The Strichen Town House Trust SCIO in October 2021.

Annie Kenyon Architects Ltd were appointed to move the project forward with the submission of a detailed Planning Application to Aberdeenshire Council to develop the building with an extension to **provide full access to both floors, public toilets and additional storage space, with the provision to demolish the existing toilet block currently owned by Aberdeenshire Council.** This received approval on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2018.

Assistance for this initial stage was provided with a grant from North Aberdeenshire Leader.

The Covid 19 Pandemic, together with the impact of Brexit on Scottish Government funding policies, have both caused the project to be paused. However, going forward the Trustees of The Strichen Town House Trust SCIO are now preparing to source the substantial funding required to carry out the proposed development of the building and bringing this iconic building back into full use for the population of Strichen and the surrounding area.

**The adjoining public conveniences form part of the proposals to extend & re-furbish the Town House. An Expression of Interest for the Asset Transfer of the semi-derelict Public Conveniences to The Strichen Town House Trust SCIO has been made to Aberdeenshire Council. The Buchan Area Asset Transfer Group have considered this EOI & recommended to be determined following the formal submission and validation of a full application and business plan.**

Subject to further Community consultation and agreement, a proposal from Aberdeenshire Council Officers that the Town House might house the Library, should the current building at 59, Water Street be closed, is being considered. Utilisation of some of the Anderson & Woodman Library Trust (Charity SC000850) cash assets, subject to the support of its Trustees, would to enable the transfer of Library Services to the Town House. The Library in Strichen would then operate in a similar fashion to the Mintlaw Library which is based at the MACBI Centre or the Ballater Library shared with the Tourist Information Centre.

The current Library building, owned by Aberdeenshire Council since the 1975 transfer to Banff & Buchan District Council, could also be subject to the Asset Transfer provisions and a request could be made by any eligible body for the Water Street Library Building, whether surplus to need or not.

## **6 Current Proposals**

We propose to develop the Town House into a dedicated heritage and learning venue and the central hub for village activities. The heritage archive displays will be regularly reviewed and changed using reserve materials held by the Aberdeenshire Museum and Archives Department, including cinematic material, historic recordings, live music, film and still photography within the characterful setting of the Town House.

The Group believes that the approved plans (B/APP/2018/0494 & 0495) offer the optimum combination of physical access to the building, aesthetic acceptability of the extension of a Grade A listed building, planning permission and provision of public amenity. See Appendix 1a, 1b & 1c.

### **6.1 Proposed Incorporation of Public Conveniences into the Project:**

**Following agreement being reached with Aberdeenshire Council over the Asset Transfer of the public conveniences they will be demolished to facilitate access to The Town House. Planning approval has already been given.**

### **6.2 Proposal to Incorporate the Library into the Project:**

Aberdeenshire Council Officers have for some time promoted the proposal that the Strichen Town House might return, in part, to its role in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century as the base for the Library founded, funded and established by Messrs Anderson & Woodman, who settled the Anderson and Woodman Library Trust on the village, for the benefit of the people of Strichen and District.

The Statutory Instrument 1979 No 1277 (S107), see Appendix 3a, clarified how this endowment should be managed with “The Anderson and Woodman Trust Scheme 1979”, having succeeded the previous Anderson and Woodman Trust Scheme 1970a. At this point the heritable property, 59, Water Street, was transferred to the District Council, which was able to then transfer by sale, or lease of part or all of the property, with the sum realized being added to the capital of the Trust.

This proposal will only go ahead with the support of the Strichen Community, and will be subject to a wide consultation within the village, following the publication of the Strichen Community Action Plan that closed on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

The Business Plan will then be updated with a 2<sup>nd</sup> Phase to consider the impacts of such a major change to the village’s infrastructure.

### 6.3 Proposed use of Extended and re-furbished Town House Building:

It is proposed that the two floors of flexible space, one upstairs and one downstairs, which will accommodate:

- Archive materials belonging to the people of Strichen and currently held in the care of the Anderson Woodman Trust in Water Street and Aberdeenshire Council Archive and Museum Services store.
- Publicly accessible toilets.
- Moveable or non-intrusive heritage displays.
- Digital projection - photos and film.
- Temporary exhibitions.
- Performance area for events, eg chamber or folk music.
- Small events e.g. weddings, funeral breakfasts/teas, family parties, etc.
- Exercise and therapy classes (run by private instructors) in the ground floor space.
- Venue for meetings, talks and lectures.

All furniture, room dividers, shelving and display cabinets will be movable from one space to another and where appropriate, reconfigurable to suit different spaces and functions.

In addition to day-to-day heritage use, the facility will be available to hire for special events and will be run by the group as a venue for community cinema and performance, thereby providing an income stream with which to support the running of the building.

The two public spaces, will be furnished to maximise their potential uses, and with modern fittings and furniture it is hoped the flexibility of the space can be maintained.

#### **Downstairs Space**

The original arcaded market space, with the windows added in the late 19th century, and the floor area punctuated by 2 cast iron pillars.

Identified uses:

- Meeting room
- Computer work spaces
- Heritage displays – objects, photographic, audiovisual
- Cinema
- Performance venue
- Multiuse – Pilates, exercise, tai chi, yoga

#### **Upstairs Space**

An elegant space with tall windows and ornate plaster ceiling, once used as a schoolroom. This space will seat 40.

Identified uses:

- Cinema
- Heritage displays – objects, photographic, audio visual
- Group Reading and Research
- Quiet Study Area

- Kids' Club
- Pensioners' Club
- Computer work spaces

#### 6.4 Purpose of the Building

The Town House will build upon, and provide a showcase for:

- The history, social and industrial heritage of the planned village, both Strichen particularly and as a wider phenomenon in North East Scotland
- Local artefacts currently held by the local authority
- Archive material held by local trusts and voluntary groups
- Displaying cinematic and photographic archives
- The Doric Festival, and the spoken culture of the area generally
- The development and natural history of the District and Community Park

It should provide a learning resource for:

- Understanding the built environment and traditional buildings
- Industrial history of Strichen and the surrounding area
- Living culture reflected in music and spoken traditions

and in so doing:

- Embrace living, as well as material, dimensions of heritage
- Extend the local tourism offer, encouraging visitors to stay longer in the area
- Sustain cultural infrastructure, ownership and access in Strichen and the wider area.

#### 6.5 Opening Hours

The building will be open to the Public 10:00 am-5:00 pm five days a week, subject to Community Engagement and feedback.

**Access to the public conveniences will be maintained between 8.00am and 10.00pm.**

## 7 Market Analysis Summary

### 7.1 The Domestic Economy

The primary market for Strichen is the one on its doorstep.

#### Primary Catchment

Strichen's peripheral location explains why the planned village's original form, function, main routes and landscape setting remains generally intact, and has strengthened its role as a service centre, retaining essential shops and services, a large community hall, football ground and a thriving primary school, Nursery and Playschool, to say nothing of a variety of community groups and activities.

Strichen's other principal strength is as a centre for living culture. There is strong interest in the Doric tongue and the village's Ritchie Hall is the focus for the long-running annual Doric Festival. There is in addition the Buchan Heritage Society, which is the custodian of a large photographic collection, and a number of other archive resources held by the library.

The village population in 2011 was 973<sup>1</sup>. Strichen's age profile does not depart significantly from the Scottish average and its health and well-being profile<sup>2</sup> is rather better, having lower incidences of teenage pregnancy, smoking-attributable deaths, lone parent households, income support claimants or economically inactive households. Around one-third of the working population works at home or within 3 miles of the village. Around a quarter is in a skilled trades occupation – nearly double the Scottish average, and a relatively high percentage (12.4%) are in manufacturing.<sup>3</sup> Educational attainment is below the Scottish average – 35% of people over 16 years have no educational qualifications.

Around 20% of Strichen households are without a car.

There is a Sheltered Housing Development of 16 units, and a Cornerstone Housing Association Unit providing for 6 to 8 people with disabilities. Strichen, along with other central Buchan villages has been zoned for additional housing in the next few years.

## **Secondary Catchment**

This area represents a geographical area that extends about 10 miles or 15 minutes drive from Strichen – the distance one might travel for a special interest or facility at least once a week. This includes the settlement of Fraserburgh to the North (pop. c. 12,700). This area has an approximate total population of over 36,000<sup>4</sup>. Improvements in road access, particularly the opening of the Aberdeen Bypass and dualling of the A90 between Balmedie and Ellon in 2019, has brought the village closer to Aberdeen (40 minutes car travel time) and has opened the area further to the Aberdeen commuter catchment and a trigger for a further rise in population. Peterhead, though slightly outside this catchment area, has a population of around 20,200 and is only a 20 minute drive from Strichen, but provides more facilities than Fraserburgh, particularly since various banks have consolidated their presence in the area.

The area's age profile<sup>5</sup> does not depart significantly from the Scottish average and its health and well being profile<sup>6</sup> is around the Scottish average, lower incidences of teenage pregnancy, smoking-attributable deaths, lone parent households, income support claimants or economically inactive households in the rural hinterland, being balanced by small areas of higher deprivation in Fraserburgh.

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<sup>1</sup> 2011 census figures

<sup>2</sup> Banff and Buchan Health and Well Being Profile, NHS Scotland 2012

<sup>3</sup> 2011 census figures

<sup>4</sup> 2011 census figures

<sup>5</sup> 2011 census figures

<sup>6</sup> Banff and Buchan Health and Well Being Profile, NHS Scotland 2012

The population of Grampian as a whole is changing:

- The population of children aged 0-14 years is expected to decrease from 2006 by about 12% by 2031.
- The population aged between 15-64 years is expected to decrease by 5% from 2006 estimates
- The population of those aged 65 years and over will increase by 51% from 2006 levels<sup>7</sup>.

The area to the North of Strichen is relatively self-contained economically compared to the rest of Aberdeenshire with few leaving the area to work. The foundation of the local economy has traditionally been fishing and agriculture, but in the last 30 years the economic base has broadened, with Peterhead serving as an important oil and gas service centre, and the development of the St Fergus gas terminal. A relatively high proportion of the working population is self-employed. While there are significant flows from the south of the area to Aberdeen City (19%), both Fraserburgh and Peterhead remain key employment centres.

Since 2014 employment within the Oil and Gas industries has seen many redundancies, but the number of unemployed remains as a low percentage of the total work force.

The dualling of the A90 to Aberdeen, and building of the Aberdeen Bypass in 2019, have opened more opportunities for employment for the work force, and the viability of all industries.

The Transition from the Fossil Fuel Economy to the Renewable Energy Economy, based in the St Fergus to Boddam Area, with the Acorn Project pilot plans for Carbon Capture and the development of a new Hydrogen fired power station, with associated massive development of infrastructure including the generation of Hydrogen fuel and the electricity distribution network to link the Renewable Energy generators to the National Grid, are major projects within the UK. These developments will have a profound impact on employment across North East Scotland over the next decade.

**Further research is now required following the Covid Pandemic and the time that has passed since the previous Community Engagement events, to enable more accurate costing of the proposed plans. The Strichen Community Action Plan has carried out an initial survey of the Community in June 2022. When the results of this survey are collated and further village engagement is carried out to follow up the survey, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Phase of this Business Plan will be developed.**

## 8 Community Research

In order to determine current community priorities and expectations of Strichen Town House, a survey was drafted and distributed to households in Strichen and the surrounding area during May 2014.

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<sup>7</sup> Traffic Lights for Aberdeenshire Multi-member Ward -Central Buchan (0204) NHS Grampian 2009

113 were completed and returned. An 11% return represents the views of approximately 250 people within the primary catchment<sup>8</sup>, falling roughly into line with the population profile for the area outlined in the previous chapter.

Of respondent households, 38% have an involvement in heritage activity.

When asked what respondents felt their household might benefit from in the Town House, a number of suggested options were given.

Responses were as follows:

- Exhibitions 74.3%
- Cinema 67.3%
- Performances 66.4%
- Extended opportunities for learning (classes, tuition) 60.2%
- Displays 59.3%
- Access to local archive material (books, papers, records, pictures) 53.1%
- Talks or lectures 49.6%
- Somewhere to meet 46.0%
- Internet access 23.9%
- Somewhere to study independently 15.9%
- Reminiscence group 13.3%

Additional suggestions included:

- Top Floor – Cinema; Bottom Floor - Strichen Heritage Centre and Foreign Language Centre
- Place for young people to use in the evening
- Crafts
- Youth group like they used to have years ago.
- soft play for younger children.
- Cafe/ Coffee Shop -The lodge is always too busy and it's difficult to get a seat most days.
- Commercial
- Cinema should be upstairs
- Cafe
- Health - Gym classes, i.e. one for adults, one for senior citizens and one for young people.

When questioned about what types of heritage most interested them, 110 responded as follows.

- The history of Strichen 77.3%
- Pictures and photographs 73.6%
- The history of Buchan generally 69.1%
- Local culture 54.5%
- Natural history 52.7%
- Genealogy – researching your ancestors and family 48.2%

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<sup>8</sup> A reasonable but not spectacular rate of return for a rural area and village such as Strichen. Rates of return probably reflect the fact that the immediate crisis facing community ownership of the building had recently been averted.

- Local personalities 35.5%

Additional comments included:

- Art and Culture
- Old photos
- Health and Fitness
- Pilates/Yoga

When asked if people might see a way in which they might actively support the development, 53 responded positively.

Other offers of help included:

- Caretaking
- In any way I can
- Commercial suggestion - small fitness centre for the village
- Commercial - mini gym, fitness centre, physio etc.

34 people (approximately one third of respondents) gave names and contact details in order that they might offer help in the future.

## **2022 Update**

Ongoing community engagement will continue to inform local residents about progress and the logic of options selected, maximising co-operation and complementarity with other groups and amenities.

To this end, prior to the Pandemic, we have conducted regular open days and events, in March and May 2017, March and October 2018 and several social events throughout 2019, which were well attended. The group has also recorded reminiscences from residents about their memories of the building since the 1930's.

In June 2022 a further survey was carried out for the Strichen Community Action Plan. The results from this survey and subsequent village consultative meetings will be used to develop Phase 2 of this Business Plan and the potential agreement within the village to incorporate enhanced Library Service facilities within the Town House.

The incorporation of the Library Service within the Strichen Town House will depend on the outcome of a village wide consultation. There would be significant benefits for such a move, with the Town House becoming the Central Hub within the village, providing the signposting for all events and the "go to place" for all information on activities taking place.

## **9 Market Trends**

### **9.1 Communities of Interest**

Within a radius defined by a 45-minute drive from Strichen, a number of intersecting communities of interest exist in the North East of Scotland, which seek to embrace living, as well as material, dimensions of heritage and culture.

Dissatisfaction with television, Internet and the steep rise of petrol prices means people are looking to engage actively with cultural activity closer to home.

**Staycations:** the restrictions imposed on all travel, during the Covid Pandemic, resulted in holidays being taken within the UK, rather than abroad to sunnier climes. The popularity of Scotland as a “destination” increased enormously, and the opportunities for providing visitors with cost effective attractions needs to be taken at this time. This change in holiday taking is looking to extend for several years with the impact of inflation and global security issues.

**Traditional Skills** – there is a growth of interest, both at a professional and enthusiast level in traditional skills of all sorts, but in particular, with over 400,000 traditionally constructed buildings in Scotland, the need to invest in training the skilled tradespeople of the future is very real; the desire to understand construction and maintenance skills is also on the rise. This is evidenced by the well-established Scottish Traditional Skills Training Centre at Fyvie, providing training in a range of built heritage skills.

**Heritage Tourism** -The importance of and rise in tourism centred round industrial heritage, coupled with the concept of homecoming and genealogy is well documented.

This is evidenced in strong annual numbers visiting Aden Country Park<sup>9</sup>, The Museum of Scottish Lighthouses, the extensive (and volunteer run) Fraserburgh Heritage Centre, the Salmon Bothy, Portsoy and the Genealogy Centre in Peterhead

**Arts and Culture** – there is a growing number of Festivals rooted in art, craft and culture:

- The well-established annual Doric Festival in Strichen – May (30 years old)
- The ‘Coast’ Arts Festival in Banff & Macduff, now the ‘Coastal Fringe’ – May (18 years old)
- The Scottish Traditional Boat Festival in Portsoy - June/July (30 years old)
- ‘The Haal’ Folk festival in Portsoy – May (12 years old)
- North East Open Studios Programme – involving more than 300 artists and craftspeople opening up, showing and selling from exhibitions and workshops all over the north east for nine days each September (20 years old)

## 9.2 Rural Cinema

The centralisation of the economy on the big cities, has seen many smaller entertainment venues close. However, over the last decade there has been a resurgence in smaller, lower cost venues, as a consequence of local initiatives. A renowned example of this is the re-development of the Aberfeldy Cinema, by the local Community, for the Local Community.

There has been a strong rise in the phenomenon of Rural Cinema – the result of a widespread disaffection for the expensive multiplexes, at distant metropolitan centres, and a new appreciation for cinema-going as a social experience. Audiences for this tend to be very localised with many small venues in the North East and elsewhere in Scotland easily filling fortnightly or weekly screenings of both mainstream and local/arts films<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> Aden Country Park Development Plan, Aberdeenshire Council March 2013

<sup>10</sup> Practical information can be obtained from the British Federation of Film Societies, North East Arts Touring (NEAT) and Development Trusts Association Scotland (DTAS)

North East Arts Touring (NEAT) completed a successful rural film screening network pilot titled NEAT FLICKS. This pilot came about initially through a scoping study that was commissioned by Aberdeenshire Council to establish the extent of rural cinema and film provision in the locality. The results of this study were used to provide evidence for a funding application to Esmee Fairbairn to fund the pilot project and for a part time project co-ordinator. The study also formed the basis of a successful Application to 'Awards for All' for two sets of mobile cinema equipment. This has further expanded to meet demand with 6 sets of equipment now available to service 18 different groups across Aberdeenshire and Moray. This equipment would be available to the Town House initially, prior to any outlay on equipment of their own, as well as access to many local organisations across the area for advice.

### 9.3 The Wedding Industry

In April 2015, Scotland was named the most popular wedding destination in the United Kingdom, as Scotland held 5.4 marriages per 1,000 in UK in 2014. With nearly a quarter (24%) of all marriages in Scotland involving couples from outside the country. This wedding tourism industry brought in £80 million to the Scottish economy in 2014 alone.

- The average cost of a UK wedding now totals £25,090 – with the largest cost being venue hire, followed by the honeymoon and the food.
- Serious planning of the wedding averages at 12 months (2016 UK figures).
- Budget trimming tends to occur less than 6 months before the wedding with venues being booked 1-2 years in advance with a substantial deposit, so risk of cutting back is less.
- 48% of couples are paying some of the bill with help from both sides of the family; 36% will be paying for the entire wedding themselves; value for money is more important than ever.

The North East of Scotland together with the rest of the UK is now suffering a depression in disposable incomes (the consequence of inflationary pressures resulting from the Covid Pandemic and the massive rise in oil and gas costs as a result of the Russian/Ukrainian conflict), but this will result in couples being more inclined to stay close to home, and restrict unnecessary and unaffordable costs.

A minority of couples marry in church and many are looking for a distinctive ceremony venue.

The Town House will be able to provide a setting for family wedding parties that will be affordable and will meet the special requirements for such events.

### 9.4 One Off Events

There is a consistent need for self-catered space for family parties and funeral teas, within the village. Following two years of these activities being severely restricted, cost-effective facilities to meet these needs has returned.

**Further research is now required following the Covid Pandemic and the time that has passed since the previous Community Engagement events, to enable more accurate costing of the proposed plans. The Strichen Community Action Plan has carried out an initial survey of the Community in June 2022. When the results of this survey are collated and further village engagement is carried out to follow up the survey, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Phase of this Business Plan will be developed.**

## 10 Market Segments

### 10.1 Visitors

Visitors to Strichen Town House will fall into a number of general groups:

- Adult visitors from nearby
- Adult visitors from further afield
- Families, mainly from nearby
- Groups
- Enthusiasts and experts
- Children on educational visits

### Library Services

The proposal to incorporate the Anderson and Woodman Library Trust facility with Strichen Town House is not considered in this Business Plan. However, following further consultation within the village, this proposition will be considered under the Phase 2 Business Plan, together with the financial implications of taking on this role.

### Adult visitors from nearby

This category comprises those from the immediate area, a radius of around 5 miles.

Our consultations indicate that many users know quite a lot about the area's history and even when their knowledge may be sketchy, local people show pride in the genealogy of local families, local heritage and are keen to learn more. They appear to be generally content with the idea of a multi-use heritage centre but are looking for additional attractions and more for children and young people to do making local history and culture more accessible. New displays and interpretive media in the town house should add to the knowledge of all these visitors, offering them greater understanding and appreciation of the story of Strichen, and encouraging them to find out more. Their first visit to the library and archive should, ideally, prompt them to return at a later date. This suggests that the interpretive offer should include sufficient flexibility to allow for updating seasonally and to tell changed or different stories over time using, for example, temporary displays.

This group is likely also to use the other facilities presented by the improved access, public conveniences and other improvements to The Town House.

### Adult visitors from further afield

This category of visitor is likely to have a lower level of local knowledge of the Strichen, and wider Buchan area. For obvious reasons, they are likely to have a lesser innate affection for the heritage of the area, although their interest is not necessarily any less. For many it will be their first visit to the Strichen area, and they may well have been encouraged to visit through promotion by other heritage organisations or through family ties.

Good interpretive media should add greatly to their experience and, similarly, should prompt them to return. In this regard, the flexibility and adaptability of the interpretive media –of whatever kind is installed –is as important as it is for local visitors.

## **Families**

This category is really a sub-set of general visitors but is likely to be driven – to a considerable degree – by the need for parents and/or grandparents to involve their children and to keep them busy and entertained. There is a clear demand that more be provided for children to do and to find out about and, by implication, better interpretation that can help parents and grandparents undertake explanations of their own.

The interpretation throughout should, therefore, engage with family audiences through a variety of static, interactive, digital and person-to person media that are directed to children of different age groups. The interpretation for children is less in need of the flexibility that adults require other than in recognising, particularly, seasonal changes. Interpretation that does not embrace the needs and expectations of children will not fulfil the brief.

This group is likely to use the cinema, library facilities and opportunities for room hire for parties and funeral teas.

## **Groups**

This category comprises those parties composed, for example, of affinity groups, most of them likely to be middle-aged or elderly. Other than those with an expressed knowledge of, and interest in, local history, they fall broadly into the same category as general visitors in terms of targeting the interpretation and retaining its flexibility. Managing and interpreting to groups will demand special skills and arrangements.

This group is likely to use the cinema facilities, and may be interested in venue hire.

## **Enthusiasts and experts**

This category comprises those who have a deeper knowledge and understanding of the architecture of the planned village, the agricultural history of the area as a whole and the intangible aspects of the story. Access to supportive information will be of interest in providing another 'layer' that will add to what they already know and pique their interest to discover more. Specifically, digitised archives of folk material of all kinds will fulfil the needs of many visitors with an enthusiasm, or strong foreknowledge, of the story of Strichen and the wider history of the area.

This group is likely to be interested in the local archives currently held by the Anderson and Woodman Library Trust.

## **Children on educational visits**

Formal environmental education overlaps with interpretation with a family focus and can use many of the same media. There are already facilities at the Farming Museum at Aden for children on formal visits and many groups of schoolchildren already visit the Park. As for children on recreational visits, more needs to be done to engage youngsters and, when on school visits, to link the interpretation to the Curriculum for Excellence. This will require working with schoolteachers and other educationalists.

This group is also likely to be interested in the library and local archives currently held by the Anderson and Woodman Library Trust.

## 10.2 Venue Hire - Weddings

The upstairs room with its graceful arched windows and fully restored ornate plaster ceiling will be of a very high quality as a space and should be marketed as a venue for wedding ceremonies.

1. Local residents - couples staying close to home; friends and family in the area
2. Visitors - coming from overseas, or elsewhere in the UK

According to the General Register for Scotland in 2005, 25% of all marriages in Scotland took place with neither party being resident in Scotland. This means that with our unique wedding venues there is a sizeable opportunity for guests to engage with other tourist activities in the areas that the weddings take place.

According to VisitScotland, the Scottish tourism wedding market can be segmented into four core groups:

- those with Scottish roots
- those who want to get away from it all
- those with another connection to Scotland
- those taken with the romance and celebrity of Scotland

Bookings for weddings surge around Christmas, New Year and Valentine's Day.

## 10.3 Target Market Segment Strategy

Our target market will be principally the first 5 groups who will provide a year-round footfall

The day tripper market will take time to build up although well placed editorial coverage within the North East press and promotion through listing with VisitScotland will help boost this.

While we are keen to do what we can to add to the tourism offer for the area, we accept that visits by tourists will be incidental to our business plans.

## 10.4 Service Providers Analysis - Community Heritage Resource

Our 2014 feasibility study established that the concept of a community or social enterprise heritage attraction is now a well-established and accepted one in the UK and certain models work particularly well within rural North East Scotland.

An 'off the beaten track' location is not necessarily a disadvantage, particularly if like Strichen it is a distinctive attractive setting. It becomes a destination in its own right, rather than relying passing trade.

Historic buildings can deliver concrete social/community benefit, and in order to justify their existence, operate without subsidy; however, it is unlikely to generate significant profit.

Integral to our plans are the involvement of volunteers as auxiliary archive staff. Volunteering is fun, and helps build community awareness, engagement and support for the facility. Strichen has a track record of involving volunteers on the maintenance and improvement of the Park environment - this heritage resource would encourage people with different skills to get involved.

**Further research is now required following the Covid Pandemic and the time that has passed since the previous Community Engagement events, to enable more accurate costing of the proposed plans. The Strichen Community Action Plan has carried out an initial survey of the Community in June 2022. When the results of this survey are collated and further village engagement is carried out to follow up the survey, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Phase of this Business Plan will be developed.**

## **11 Strategy and Implementation Summary**

### **11.1 SWOT Analysis**

An analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are detailed below:

Strichen Town House (STH) has a valuable stock of strengths that will help it succeed. These include: a good profile and support in community; access to knowledgeable and friendly volunteer staff; the uniqueness of the Town House and a clear understanding of the market need.

These Strengths are valuable, but it is also important to realise the weaknesses we must address. The principal weakness is the risk of placing an additional burden on existing committee members.

STH's strengths will help it capitalise on emerging opportunities which include, but are not limited to: the provision of Heritage Centre providing a base platform for the large number of current visitors who are interested in local culture and history; the growing numbers of walkers, day trippers and domestic tourists who will require services; the potential social bonds formed by involving/engaging new community members in providing a daytime drop-in space for others; environmental improvements to the park and village; fostering local culture and generating income for community projects.

Threats that STH should be aware of include the possibility of our offering becoming tired and predictable and visitors becoming bored.

#### **Strengths**

The Town House committee are a well-known, trusted group, with widespread community support.

The Town House is at the centre of the village and represents the village to the wider World.

The Town House will have a knowledgeable and friendly volunteer staff.

The setting and uniqueness of the Planned Village itself.

The attractive ambiance and perceived comfort of the proposed spaces.

Clear vision of the market need.

Year-round Demand within the Strichen community, with year-round footfall of visitors to the Village.

#### **Weaknesses**

Demands on Management - The new business will place extra demands of the time, energy and skills of the management group – It will make a priority to recruit and train additional members of

the management group, to ensure succession issues are addressed. Appointment of a part time manager in the first year of operation will help address this weakness.

The Buchan Area of Aberdeenshire has a limited number of residents, thereby restricting potential numbers of users of The Town House.

## **Opportunities**

There is currently a strong footfall of visitors to the village with an estimated 36,000/annum user visits to the Community Park. The public conveniences at The Lodge are only available for use by the public during opening hours of the Café, currently 10.00-16.00 daily. The Covid Pandemic has witnessed growing numbers of walkers, cyclists, day trippers and families using the Park and the Formartine and Buchan Line Walkway, all potentially requiring facilities out with Café opening hours. The proposed inclusion of extended hours accessible toilets will provide these services.

Strichen has managed to maintain 2 general shops, a Scottish prize-winning butcher, a health centre, pharmacy, vets, primary, nursery and playschools, library, two pubs, two churches and an antiques shop. These operations all generate additional footfall, over and above that coming to the Community Park.

The Town House is at the centre of the village and provides the ideal site to be the village “hub” providing information displays both within the building and outside in the grounds adjoining the street. This “hub” role will support all local businesses, safeguarding jobs and income for the local population.

Additional volunteer roles have the potential for Social bonds to be created. These could involve/engage members of the community who are currently available in the village. A study of other facilities in the North East has revealed that a supply of willing volunteers tends not to be a problem, the work is highly sociable and once the benefits are visible, attracts a stream of able helpers.

Provision of a ‘drop in’ space for local residents during the day which is totally accessible and child friendly.

The refurbishment of the Town House will provide significant environmental improvements to this iconic building at the heart of the village, with energy efficiencies incorporated in all elements of improvement. The refurbishment of the Town House will improve the aesthetics of the Village Centre making it more welcoming.

There is considerable scope to develop and celebrate local culture, providing a focus for art, landscape, history and heritage, working with other local heritage centres at Fraserburgh, Mintlaw and Peterhead, together with local heritage groups such as the Buchan Field Club and the Buchan Heritage Society.

Provision of the heritage archive will provide unique appeal for visitors interested in the links between the historic planned village layout, the heritage of the area and the Community Park

within the local market. Working in conjunction with the Heritage Centres at Fraserburgh, Peterhead and the Aden Centre will provide a local circuit for heritage-focused visitors and those interested in culture, so the greater the number of complementary local attractions, the better.

There will be additional opportunities to generate income for community projects and developing the amenity further.

The development of “staycationing” over the period of the Pandemic, has shown that opportunities will arise, just as the area will become the centre for “transitioning” from fossil fuels to renewable energy for Scotland.

With the recovery from the Pandemic, overseas tourists will return, and with an ever-increasing interest in family roots in North America and Australasia, provision of easily accessible archives for these visitors will help ensure a steady flow of visitors.

## **Threats**

It will be essential that exhibits and activities within the Town House and any notice boards are continually refreshed, to ensure they remain up to date and relevant.

Competition with other venues within the village, the Ritchie Hall, the Legion, pubs, will potentially limit some income streams from room hire.

The Economic uncertainties arising from Brexit, the Covid Pandemic and the Transition from the Fossil Fuel Economy of the North East to Renewable Energy Economy, will all have medium- and longer-term impacts on the finances of all residents and businesses in the area.

Staffing provision will rely largely on volunteers from the local Community. It will be essential that a pool of suitable individuals is recruited. If grant aided support can be raised, it is proposed that in the first year of operation a part time manager is appointed to address this threat.

## **SWOT Analysis Summary**

Strichen Town House (STH) Project has a valuable stock of strengths that will help it succeed. These include: a good profile and support in community; access to knowledgeable and friendly volunteer staff; the uniqueness of the Town House and a clear understanding of the local market.

The main weaknesses of the Project are the limited population in the Buchan Area and the dependence on a team of volunteers for most management roles. Appointing a part time manager initially will help address these concerns.

There are potentially many opportunities for the Town House Project, some reflecting the impact of the Covid Pandemic and the strengthening of the “staycation” market, some the transition from a Fossil Fuel economy to a Renewables’ economy, the North East of Scotland being one of the main driving forces in the UK. The heritage of the area and the historic archive within the Anderson and

Woodman Library Trust provides a major draw for many families from around the World, seeking their own personal family heritage.

The position of The Town House, in the very centre of Strichen, provides many opportunities to provide the local population and visitors a central hub for the area and available public conveniences over an extended time period.

The major threats for the Project are the current economic uncertainties facing the area following the Covid Pandemic and the changing fortunes of the main economic drivers of the area, together with the dependence on a management team dependent of volunteers and limited income resources.

### **11.2 Competitive Edge**

Strichen Town House has the ability to provide internal and external customers with a high quality flexible heritage venue year round, at competitive pricing, while also providing the essential library service to the community and the provision of a central information hub for the village.

As the organisation is based on the efforts of volunteers, there will be the challenge to the group to maintain the same high levels of customer service and quality that they will demand. However, the commitment to the success of this project and the provision of part time managerial support for the induction and management of volunteers, should overcome many of the issues. The size of the building will limit the number of volunteer staff required at any one time, which will enable adequate supervision and quality control over the services.

### **11.3 Marketing Strategy**

Effective promotion of the project is crucial to Strichen Town House's long-term success and sustainability. During our research it was often said that reputation is the most important marketing tool. It was acknowledged at an early stage that established and effective local communication networks and word of mouth recommendations play a vital role in promoting businesses of this type, especially in the rural North East.

Communication therefore forms a significant part in this plan, complementing more traditional approaches to marketing and promotion.

The Town House already has its own Facebook page with over 300 members, and as the refurbishment moves forward, On-Line communications will be embraced more widely.

The restoration, refurbishment and provision of fully accessible public conveniences, with associated extended hours, will be carried out to a very high standard. Strichen Town House will present an image of immediate cultural interest and high architectural quality, friendliness and accessibility.

Promotion of the improvements of available facilities will be broadcast widely through social media, Visit Scotland, Aberdeenshire Council services, local hotels, halls, community centres and local shops.

Signage will be clearly visible during hours of operation and designed to highlight and complement the Town Halls architectural character.

The Town House will have official brown signs from the Mintlaw to Fraserburgh road, the Peterhead to Banff road and the New Deer to Fraserburgh road. Signposting will be erected within the village, from the Community Park and from the Formartine and Buchan Way, to attract visiting walkers and cyclists.

Advertisements and listings will be placed in the regional tourist guides and publications, where this can be done at reasonable cost. The early application, application for Membership, and grading with Visit Scotland will also ensure inclusion in strongly marketed websites and listings.

Flyers will also be placed at tourist information centres and information points and other spots likely to have tourist traffic.

#### **11.4 Fundraising Strategy**

Strichen Town House is committed to balancing its operating budget and operating on a solid financial foundation. These efforts are based on a mixture of revenues from staging events, fundraising, partnerships with local businesses and charitable gifting. The charitable status of STHT (Charity number SC049749) will be used as a basis for reclaiming tax against any monetary gifts donated by eligible tax payers through Gift Aid.

All revenues will be closely tracked and expenses will be closely monitored.

Strichen Town House will reduce reliance on donation-based revenues and look toward revenues from venue customers to support the programme. The goal is to become self-sustaining, involving local people in the process of maintaining a profitable and competitive entrepreneurial venture that benefits our community. However, fund raising will be part of the ongoing management strategy, to enable a sound financial base to be built, that will no doubt be the need to ensure regular maintenance of this iconic, 200-year-old, A-listed building, which can be carried out routinely, to avoid the dereliction that was allowed to take place over the last half century, whilst under Local Authority control.

The imminent assessment of the June 2022 Strichen Community Action Plan Survey will lead to further consultation within the village on the future direction of the use of the Town House and potential to incorporate the Aberdeenshire Council Library Services within the building.

Once these consultations are complete this Business Plan will be updated with a Phase 2 assessment on potential significant changes in responsibilities within the village, and their impact on medium and long term viability of the Project.

## **12 Staffing and Operational matters**

The Town House will provide several interrelated components, which should be managed in a coherent and flexible way, so that costs are realistic, while ensuring quality management and service to customers. Use of the building will be maximised by actively promoting to potential user groups. It is proposed to employ a part time co-ordinator/manager for the first year of operation, reviewing the situation once systems have been established and tested. Funding for a Co-ordinator will be raised separately from the capital project.

In year 1, the staffing structure would consist of:

- A Part-time Co-ordinator (0.4 FTE) who would have overall responsibility for establishing new systems, raising levels of activity, organizing bookings, administration and motivation - and for marketing, employed only in year 1 - annual salary of £30k pro-rata

- Supported by a cleaner/caretaker (ongoing)—initial annual salary of £6,000.
- All other activities – exhibition set-up and take down, additional staffing will be undertaken by a rota of volunteers.

### 12.1 **Booking Systems**

A diary and a calendar system could both be managed online. It would be the responsibility of the manager to test and check booking systems for efficacy.

### 12.2 **Monitoring**

Monitoring the usage of the hall will be carried out to provide the necessary management information to support the various funding streams being sought.

The Management Committee will actively support all formal monitoring visits for funders.

### 12.3 **Child Protection and Vulnerable Adults**

It is the responsibility of the Management Committee to ensure that adults working with children and vulnerable adults, whilst using the hall's premises, have the necessary qualifications and will nominate an individual to be the Co-ordinator for the Protection of Vulnerable Groups Safeguarding.

### 12.4 **Access**

- Options include a door entry system and key system that only permits access to specific areas, with access to the public conveniences being enabled to be open for an extended period.

## 13 **Financial Forecasts**

A detailed breakdown of projected income and expenditure for Years 0 to 2, to November 2024, is included at Appendix 2.

It must be noted that The Strichen Town House SCIO will not be VAT registered and therefore will not charge VAT on its income streams, but also will not be able to reclaim VAT on any expenditure, including the costs incurred in extending and renovating the Town House. This will increase costs by 20%, and therefore increase the funding to be raised by 20%.

The delays that have occurred as a result of the Covid Pandemic and determination of whether or not the Town House will take over the housing of the Strichen Library facility means that these impacts will be considered fully in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Phase of this Business Plan, when further research and consultations have been carried out within the Community, and agreement reached on the way ahead with the future use of The Town House. In the meantime, Phase 1 of the Business Plan has made a realistic 3-year budget that goes to the point of the completing the building of the extension and re-furbishment of the Grade A listed building.

As a result of the various delays in moving the Project forward, it is anticipated that income growth will start in the latter part of 2023, with Capital Expenditure matching grant receipts during 2023.

### 13.1 Phase 1: Revenue Targets by Component—Year 3, November 2024

The following sections outline potential levels of revenue for each component.

	Potential	Per month	Assumed % of capacity at year 3
Private hire e.g. fitness or relaxation (upstairs)	£30 per hire (2.5 hours)	12	50%
Community group hire (upstairs or downstairs space)	£20 per hire (2.5 hours)	12	50%
Occasional Venue Hire (upstairs)	£100 per hire (8 hours)	2	50%
Cinema Events Promoted by Strichen Town House	8.00 per average spend (includes refreshments)	Oct-March, 7 shows, 40 attendees	80%
Grants	£5,750 per year		
Manager/promoter Grant (2 years)	£14,000 per Year		To cover 0.4 staff units
Fundraising/events	£5,000 per year		100%

### 13.2 Method

Charges made to customers are in line with those that currently apply at other community halls or similar facilities in Aberdeenshire and elsewhere in Scotland, which seem to vary little.

For most activities, we assume income will be generated on a pay-as-you-go basis.

None of the proposed activities require specific staffing therefore all staff costs are included as overheads.

Other overheads within the income and expenditure are based on typical operating costs for this type of facility, including a calculation of utilities based upon square meter of the facility.

### 13.3 Phase 1: November 2024: Year 3 Revenue

ITEM	AMOUNT
Hire of Halls, Upstairs and Downstairs	£2,880
Venue Hire	£960
Cinema showings: 6 showings, 40 attendees @ £7.00/head	£1,680
Manager/Promoter Grant	£14,000
Grants Awarded	£5,750
Donations/ Fundraising	£5,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£30,270</b>

### 13.4 Phase 1: November 2024: Year 3 Overheads

ITEM	AMOUNT Year 2	ASSUMPTIONS
Manager/Promoter Salary	£14,000	Fully supported by grant (HLF?)
Cleaning staff wages	£5,200	Started year 1@ £10.00 per hour, 8 hours /week, 52 weeks; 5%/year rise
Heat & Power	£4,800	Based on best current estimates
Water Rates	£0	Current SG Exemption continued
Public Liability Insurance	£3,600	Based on current costs, plus annual increments of 5%
Additional to SCPC Professional Fees (Accountant/Solicitor)	£1,400	Based on estimated current costs
Rural Cinema Screening Costs	£900	50% of average spend (includes refreshments)
Other costs – licenses, fire safety disclosures etc.	£3,700	Based on community facility costs in the North East and elsewhere
Major Repair Fund	£2,000	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£29,480</b>	

Note profit shown before depreciation, debt service and taxation. It can be concluded that the building, with careful management, can be viable at Year 2, November 2024.

This assumes revenue funding would be available to support staff costs during the developmental phase.

## 14 Capital Cost Projections and Funding Sources

- 14.1 Annie Kenyon Architects Ltd (AKA) were instructed in 2017 to provide detailed plans to enable a consultation within the village, and seek guidance from the various authorities on the feasibility of the design of the extension.
- 14.2 Following these consultations, AKA submitting an application for full planning consent to Aberdeenshire Council, which was approved on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2018. See **Appendix 1a, 1b, 1c**.
- 14.3 The costs of this stage of the Project were met from a successful application to the North Aberdeenshire Leader support programme. A grant of £15,502 was awarded, with other additional costs met from reserves derived from fund raising.
- 14.4 **Appendix 3a** provides the breakdown of estimated costs for the proposed repairs, renewals and improvements to Strichen Town House, as per the Planning Approval **B/APP/2018/0494**. These costs were prepared by John Pascoe (QS) in January 2019. Following the time lag and subsequent high inflationary pressures, John Pascoe agrees that component costs of the build will rise by 30% by December 2022 and a further 10% by December 2023, with similar increases in subsequent years, see Appendix 3b.
- 14.5 **Preliminary Cost Assessment (Appendix 2a & b)**

Fabric Repairs to Existing Building (based on AKA Planning Approval B/APP/2018/0494)

	Jan 2019 QS Estimate	Dec 2022 Inflated 30%	Dec 2023 inflated 40%
<b>TOTAL SUBSTRUCTURE COSTS 1A</b>	£17,460	£22,698	£24,968
<b>TOTAL SUPERSTRUCTURE COSTS 2A-2H</b>	£158,111	£205,545	£226,099
<b>TOTAL FINISHING COSTS 3A-3C</b>	£61,314	£79,708	£87,679
<b>FITTINGS &amp; FURNISHINGS COSTS 4A</b>	£7,000	£9,100	£10,010
<b>TOTAL SERVICES COSTS 5A-5N</b>	£71,794	£93,332	£102,665
<b>TOTAL EXTERNALS COSTS 6A-6B</b>	£10,050	£13,065	£14,372
<b>TOTAL ESTIMATED BUILD COSTS</b>	<b>£325,729</b>	<b>£423,448</b>	<b>£465,793</b>
<b>ALLOW 10% for CONTINGENCIES</b>	£32,500	£42,250	£46,475
<b>ALLOW 13% FOR PRELIMINARIES: SUPERVISION, ADMIN, TRANSPORT, SITE ACCOMMODATION, FACILITIES, etc</b>	£42,250	£54,925	£60,418
<b>PROJECT TOTAL:</b>	<b>£400,479</b>	<b>£525,137</b>	<b>£617,976</b>
<b>VAT Charged at 20% on All Costs</b>	<b>£80,096</b>	<b>£111,110</b>	<b>£123,595</b>
<b>TOTAL PROJECT COST INCLUDING VAT</b>	<b>£480,575</b>	<b>£624,748</b>	<b>£687,222</b>

In June 2022 the condition of the slate roof was assessed because of concerns that slipping slates were visible from the street, which is indicative of potential issues with the 200-year old structure.

Following a professional inspection using a cherry picker and ladder for access, It was recommended that the roof slates be stripped and replaced, with the existing valley gutters, which caused the dry rot issues in the first-floor hall a decade ago, being replaced with the down-spouts improved to minimise risks of water ingress to the building.

This roof repair work must take priority over all internal repair work.

**Estimated cost of roof repairs: £40,000 December 2022**

#### 14.6 Funding Sources

For the purposes of this Business Plan the potential costs of incorporating the Library Service within the Town House are not considered. This assessment will be made if the proposed public consultation agrees that this is appropriate and feasible.

Current Assumptions for the Project assume that the December 2022 costings will apply, with expenditure commencing in Autumn 2022 with Completion in Winter 2023-24:

**Financial Year Nov 2022:** Roof Repairs and Security Works: costs: £25,500  
Funded by Developer Obligation fund and Community Ownership Fund

**Financial Year Nov 2023:** Roof Repairs and Listed building works: Costs: £130,000  
Funded by Heritage Environment Scotland (40%) & others.  
Demolish Toilet block: costs: £7,000  
Funded by BAI

Main Project, construction of extension and finishings within The Town House: Cost: £375,000

Main Funder proposed: Heritage Lottery Fund (95%) & others.

**Financial Year Nov 2024:** Main Project, construction of extension and finishings within The Town House: Completed Cost: £125,000

Main Funder proposed: Heritage Lottery Fund (95%) & others.

**Total Costs to be Funded: AWLT Costs: £30,000 Building Costs: £590,000 Total: £625,000**

A summary of some of the main potential grant sources is included at Appendix 5.

It is proposed that the bulk of funding will be sought from the Heritage Lottery Fund, with additional small grants that will help with minimizing costs in the longer term with insulation and LED lighting of the building, to improve the Carbon Footprint. Other grants to improve communications, IT Systems, promotion and marketing will be applied for when available.

The imminent launch of the Community Led Local Development Fund by the Scottish Government, may provide additional “pump Priming funds towards the initial roof repair work.

The recent launch of the Community Ownership Fund by the UK also presents further opportunities to apply for funding.

An expression of interest has been submitted to Historic Environment Scotland for 40% funding of appropriate costs. A full application has been invited to be submitted by HES.

An application for support has been submitted to The Barcapel Foundation, and a response is awaited.  
An expression of Interest is to be submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund towards the main costs of the Project.

## 15 Indicators of Progress

### Actions Completed:

Produce leaflet, small website showing accommodation and charges	IN HAND
Continue fundraising activity for further development	ONGOING
Apply for funds to commission a detailed architectural options appraisal	Completed and funded through LEADER 2019
Use feasibility study to assemble a detailed brief for architect	COMPLETED, Plans Approved by Aberdeenshire Council 18/05/2018
Commission Architectural Options Appraisal	Completed with Planning Approval 18/052018. Confirmation that "Purification" of Planning Conditions met with Archeological Report, 11/03/22.
Apply for Building Warrant including demolition of Public Conveniences	Completed
Notify Aberdeenshire Council of proposed start of building works before 18/09/22	Submitted April 2022
Submit Expression of Interest to Historic Environment Scotland: June 2022 for 40% grant of £220,000	Eoi accepted and approved by HES. Preparation of grant support for Grade A listed building work begins.
Submit Expression of Interest to Barcaldine Trust: June 2022 for £20,000	Awaiting Response

### Short and Medium Term Actions:

Continue Community Fundraising	ONGOING
Apply for funding to Buchan Area Initiative demolish Public Conveniences once Asset Transfer in place	March 2023
Assist Strichen Community Council with developing the Community Action Plan following survey of June 2022.	Hold public meetings to determine Community views on way forward with The Town House.

Submit Expression of Interest to Community Ownership Fund	Submission of Expression of Interest to be made in July 2022.
Submit application to Community Led Development Grant	Submit application when scheme opens in July/August 2022.
Apply to the Heritage Lottery Fund for major part of funding	Submission of Expression of Interest to be made in July 2022. Full application to HLF, subject to their response to EOI in September 2022.

**Long term Actions:**

Raise funds for supplementary building work elements.	2023 ONWARD
Embark on phased programme of improvements in Autumn 2022, with a completion estimated to be in Autumn/Winter 2023.	Subject to successful applications for grant funding.
Apply for funding of Development Manager	March 2023
Employ a development manager to set up proactive management of the building.	Subject to Grant Support for first 12 months from June 2023.