

Answers to questions on FGCC forwarded by NN.

Q1. Has the Town Council discussed the plans for a £600k Community Centre for Forest Green in the context of the changes that have taken place since the idea was first agreed, and if not will that discussion take place? (examples that the questioner gave of changes were Forest Green FC's financial problems, the threat to the school's SDC funding, and the likelihood of public funding in general being reduced overall after the election.)

A. No. The school has limited availability, and only of the large hall for community use, in the evenings and at weekends. The key demand for the use of the FGCC is during the day. The FGCC has not been designed to provide space for sporting activities. These are provided for in the Nailsworth Recreation Centre within the school. The FGR Stadium was built and is run as a commercial facility. There has been nothing said by the owners to suggest that they see community use at prices that community groups can afford, as part of their business model. From the outset, the demand for the FGCC has been for dedicated space, owned and managed by the community for the community. Neither the school nor the Stadium can provide this.

Q2. Are the facilities available in Forest Green at the school and FGR fully used?

A. These are questions for the school and the management of the Stadium.

Q3. If there is spare capacity at Forest Green FC, has the Council explored with FGFC agreeing sensible prices on the spacious meeting rooms and car park at the Club for locals to use instead of the new centre?

A. If there is spare capacity at the Stadium currently, there are not spaces designed for community use; they are not currently on offer at prices community groups can afford; they would not be in permanent community ownership and control; and when the economy picks up, pricing would reflect the commercial market, thereby squeezing out community use.

Q4. How does the Council propose that residents of the lower part of the town, whether drivers or non drivers, access the planned new centre, particularly in the evenings?

A. The same way that residents in Forest Green currently access activities in the town centre in the evening; by vehicle or walking. The Town Council has made representations to Gloucestershire County Council (the Local Transport Authority) and to Stagecoach (the bus operator) to provide more evening services and to lower the price for the journey up and down the hill.

Q5. Would the Town Council be prepared to consider a residents' parking scheme near the proposed centre to offset the combined pressure on local parking caused by the combination of football matches and the new Centre?

A. FGR have 22 home league games a season. Most are on a Saturday afternoon. The hire information circulated for the FGCC will make clear when these games are and that users should assume no on-street parking will be available when a game is scheduled. The Matchday Parking Scheme introduced by Gloucestershire County Council cannot be fully implemented and its impact assessed until all the roads are adopted, included in the scheme and subject to enforcement undertaken by SDC and the police. Other than when FGR are playing at home, there are sufficient on-street parking spaces which do not block any access or constitute a traffic or pedestrian safety hazard, to meet the anticipated demand from users of the FGCC.

Q 6. How many people took up the opportunity to buy a £5 piece of cladding for the new building?

A. There have been 19 sold to date, following the single announcement of the opportunity. No promotion has been undertaken, as the Working Party has concentrated on making applications for grants.

Q7. If a tender for the Centre has been accepted (1) is it fixed cost or cost plus, and (2) is it for a building to the same specification as that which was approved by Council on September 21st?

A. The Town Council has undertaken a tendering process and chosen the lowest priced contractor. They will be required to deliver the construction and fitting out they tendered for, to that price. The only change to the building design since the Town Council decision to proceed on September 21st 2009, is the substitution of photo-voltaics for a sedum roof. This is because PV is more cost-effective since the announcement of the electricity feed-in tariff.