

Friends of Ramsbottom Civic Hall

SAFEGUARDING THE FUTURE OF RAMSBOTTOM CIVIC HALL

NEWSLETTER 2016



CIVIC HALL GARDEN EVENT

To 'launch' the courtyard and garden, FORCH is hoping to see everyone at an outdoor/indoor celebration in the Spring.

Subject to Hall availability it will be held in May in conjunction with our (brief) AGM.

Event details to follow, or on
www.forch.co.uk



WHAT NEXT – A FUTURE AS A COMMUNITY GARDEN?

The project to design and develop the Hall's empty plots has now been completed by Bury Council staff. The new planting will complement the Alpine Garden Society's garden which is now well established. The courtyard and the rear of the Hall are now surrounded by garden areas stocked with a wide variety of well-chosen shrubs and plants. In the high-level beds arrangements of large natural stone blocks have been installed as features.

FORCH's vision for the Hall's courtyard to be a fantastic extra facility has now been realised and we are confident that the Hall's very attractive outdoor space will provide much pleasure and encourage bookings. Accessed via the Holcombe Room's French windows, the courtyard is ideal for wedding photography and outdoor/indoor events.

Various local groups have worked along with Council staff on the development of the garden areas: the Hawkshaw Flower Club and *Speakeasy* and particularly the Alpine Garden Society. As we said before, we feel that as well as providing a new facility at the hall, the development of the garden is an important achievement and we are very grateful to all those who have helped.

We are delighted with the garden's development and once more new railings are in place we hope to establish it as a community garden with plans for the maintenance of the area.

LATEST NEWS ON THE PLANNING APPLICATION FOR THE FORMER GRANT ARMS BOWLING GREEN

PROGRESS WITH THE PLANNING APPLICATION	2015	ASSET OF COMMUNITY VALUE LISTING
Planning application 58104 for 24 flats on site refused by the Bury Council's planning committee	← January	(There is some hope that an ACV listing under the 2011 Localities Act will help to protect the site as an open green space in an otherwise crowded town centre).
	March →	Site nominated for listing as an asset of community value (ACV) by Ramsbottom Heritage Society (a registered charity)
New planning application number 58807 (very similar to the previous one) submitted to Bury Council. Over 200 objections were sent in including individual letters and very detailed submissions from FORCH and Ramsbottom Heritage Society. The Friends of Nuttall Park was among the other groups that objected.	← June →	ACV listing of site decided by Bury Council
Planning application 58807 refused	← Sept	
Appeal by site owner to Planning Inspectorate against refusal of permission for planning application 58807 (Heritage Society, FORCH and Friends of Nuttall Park have submitted representations to the Inspectorate.)	← Oct →	Site owner requests oral review by Council of their ACV listing
	Nov →	Bury Council's decision to uphold site's ACV status
	Dec →	Appeal by site owner to First Tier Tribunal against Bury Council's review decision to uphold the ACV status. Ramsbottom Heritage Society 'joined with' ACV appeal.

In the lists above we show the two courses of action which have been pursued by Ramsbottom Heritage Society and FORCH, working closely together, to oppose the development. The details above show the progress of the planning application and Bury Council's listing of the site as an Asset of Community Value (ACV) since the beginning of 2015. At that time, and again after June 2015 so many people, both Hall users and the wider community, sent in their own objections. Without their efforts the application could have gone through

Members will know that the Civic Hall garden shares its border with the bowling green, which is about 7 yards away from the rear of the building. We strongly believe this application (for a 3 storey block of flats for retirement housing) poses a serious threat to the future of the venue. Ramsbottom Heritage Society agree, and are also very concerned about the implications for Market Place with its historic buildings.

The appeals which have been lodged are still keeping FORCH and Heritage Society members very busy!