

## **Hadleigh Guildhall, Future Use Project Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

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### **What is the Guildhall?**

The Guildhall is located opposite St Mary's Church on Market Place, just off the High Street. It is one of the most historically important buildings in Hadleigh and is thought to be one of the finest medieval buildings in the East of England.

Today the Guildhall is the home of Hadleigh Town Council, Hadleigh Market Feoffment Charity and the Hadleigh Archive. It is made up of a series of linked buildings and spaces that have been added over time including the Guild Room, Council Chamber, Dining Room, Old Town Hall and the Grand Hall. These spaces are let out for event hire.

### **Who owns the Guildhall?**

The Guildhall is owned by the Hadleigh Market Feoffment Charity who's sole trustee is Hadleigh Town Council.

The Town Council's Hadleigh Market Feoffment Charity Committee is responsible for major decision-making regarding the building. The building is looked after by the Bookings Clerk and Caretaker who take bookings, manage events and repairs etc. Hadleigh Town Council is effectively a tenant of the Charity, occupying space in the rooms opposite St Mary's Church and pay a subsidy for the use of the space.

### **Are you going to sell the building?**

No.

### **What is going on at the Guildhall?**

Work is currently ongoing looking into the potential repair and alterations to Hadleigh Guildhall. This work has been steadily progressing over the last couple of years with regular updates posted on the Guildhall website.

The Guildhall complex consists of two main conjoined buildings, the Guildhall itself which dates to the latter part of the 15th century and is Grade I Listed, and the Town Hall which dates to the mid-19th century and Listed at Grade II. Further information on the history of the building can be found by searching the Historic England List Entry or visiting Hadleigh Society's website.

The List status of the Guildhall means it is very important historically and the Charity has a responsibility to ensure it is appropriately cared for. The Charity is also aware that the building has a great deal of local significance and this is being taken into account.

Further research on the significance of the building is currently underway and will be published on the Guildhall website when it is complete.

### **Will the outside of the building change in its appearance?**

The exterior appearance of the building is very sensitive, for example, the iconic elevation onto the St Mary's Churchyard. Any alterations to the external appearance of the building would need to be strongly justified and the design team is working to minimise any impact to the historic fabric of the building.

### **Why are you doing this work?**

The historic nature of the Guildhall, its complexity and its sheer size means that it is very expensive to run. Whilst the building does attract some fantastic and very loyal users, sadly it does not generate enough income to cover its costs and has consistently run at a loss since the mid-2010s. This situation is not sustainable and will only get worse in light of higher energy costs and general inflation.

In response to this situation the Charity wants to retain the building's principle use as a flexible community venue and as a base for the Town Council and archive whilst looking at how parts of the building could be given over to other uses to help generate income and reduce running costs. This is why we are taking time and care to look into repairs and alterations as the moment.

**The Town Council had an agenda item in August to discuss moving to a completely different location. How does this affect The Guildhall?**

This work will take a few years, allowing the Town Council to investigate options best for its office space. There are not many options for the council to consider given the space it requires and cost implications would have to be considered separately (Hadleigh Archives are part of the Town Council who also currently occupy a large space within The Guildhall).

**What work is taking place at the moment?**

Specialists in heritage buildings are undertaking feasibility work looking at the potential to repair and alter parts of the Guildhall. This could include the relocation of the Town Council and Archive to the space underneath the Grand Hall and introducing other uses such as self-catering holiday accommodation potentially installed into the space that they vacate.

This current work builds on a round of public consultation and a feasibility study that was prepared last year which is available on the Guildhall website. The Charity/Council signed off this study at a meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2022. This important piece of work established a number of important principles that underpin all of the development work now taking place as follows:

Any proposals must...

1. Balance the need to generate more income with continued provision of widespread public access
2. Respond to known patterns of demand for different spaces within and outside the building
3. Diversify income streams in order to improve resilience and financial sustainability
4. Avoid un-doing major recent investment
5. Respond to heritage significance and sensitivity
6. Improve the delivery of and access to local government and Town Council services
7. Improve public access to the town's archive.

**There was recently grant funded works to redecorate and install a new kitchen – will this money have to be repaid if you're changing the building?**

The architects are planning for minimal disruption possible to enhance the building and its offer including to utilise grant funded improvements in the new designs so as not to breach the terms and conditions of the grants.

**How long will it all take?**

This development phase of the project was approved in a meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2022. Projects on this scale take many years to develop and then deliver. The current programme of work is due to complete by the end of May 2023. If grant funds are then pursued to undertake any works it is likely that there will be another period of project development followed by an application process which will take two-three years.

So, nothing will change for some time and the building will remain available for hirers for the foreseeable future. The Charity will keep everyone up to date with progress and ensure that the needs of the building users are at the forefront of its thinking.

**Who is paying for all of this?**

The Charity and Council have been fortunate to secure two grants from the Architectural Heritage Fund to pay for the majority of the consultancy and survey work that has taken place so far. The Charity is contributing £10,000 of its reserves towards the development phase of the project.

Any major changes in the future will almost certainly be reliant upon securing grant funding, for example from organisations like the National Heritage Lottery Fund.

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