

Reference Number: 2023/1029

17 January 2024

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

Thank you for email of 29 November 2023 requesting under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA), information relating to the Foxton War Memorial Hall. Please see outlined below a response to your request.

**[REDACTED] was disappointed to read the Foxton War Memorial Hall article on Stuff. [REDACTED] believes this is an asset to the district and would prefer if it was restored to give it added value. He said once sold, it is lost forever. [REDACTED] has asked if there is any further information available to explain how the council reached the decision to sell be emailed to him.**

The decision to dispose of Foxton War Memorial Hall was made as part of the 2018 Long Term Plan and the future of Community Halls was one of the key topics that was consulted on with the community as part of this process. Following the

Please see attached, the consultation material that was shared with the community relating to the disposal of the Foxton War Memorial Hall as part of the 2018-38 Long term Plan.

After extensive hearings and deliberations, with substantial community input, the following resolution was passed: "THAT Council does not retain the Foxton Memorial Hall in the final Long Term Plan 2018-2038"

The Expressions of Interest process (EOI) relating to the potential sale of the Foxton Memorial Hall is yet to be concluded, and therefore information concerning who has put forward an expression of interest is commercially sensitive in nature. As such, it is necessary to withhold this information for the following reasons:

- s7(2)(h) enable any local authority holding the information to carry out, without prejudice or disadvantage, commercial activities
- s(2)(i) enable any local authority holding the information to carry on, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations (including commercial and industrial negotiations).

You are entitled to seek an investigation and review by the Office of the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

Horowhenua District Council publishes responses to Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA) requests that we consider to be of wider public interest, or which relate to a subject that has been widely requested. To protect your privacy, we will not generally publish personal information about you, or information that identifies you. We will publish the LGOIMA response along with a summary of the request on our website. Requests and responses may be paraphrased.

If you would like to discuss this decision or any of the information provided as part of this request, please contact Brent Harvey (Group Manager Community Experience and Services) on [brenth@horowhenua.govt.nz](mailto:brenth@horowhenua.govt.nz).

Ngā mihi



Brent Harvey  
**Acting Chief Executive**

# Challenge #3 Property Ngā Whare Tūmatanui

## The future of our Community Halls

For us to be more efficient in managing our property portfolio, we are focusing on managing property essential to core services. In light of this, there is a desire to concentrate on services valued by the community, reduce ongoing operating costs, renewals and new debt on non-core properties.

In support of our goal to focus investment on core property, Council is considering no longer providing Community Halls (which are non-core property) for hire or lease. This is due to a significant drop in use of the halls and the increasing costs of maintaining and earthquake strengthening them.

Council owns and manages a number of community halls in Foxton, Shannon, and Levin. Some of the halls are available for public hire and a number of others are leased to community organisations.

The halls that are available for public hire are:

- **Foxton Memorial Hall**  
Located on Clyde/Main Street, Foxton and is earthquake prone.
- **Shannon Memorial Hall**  
Located on Grey Street, Shannon.
- **Levin Memorial Hall**  
Located on Queen Street, Levin and is earthquake prone.

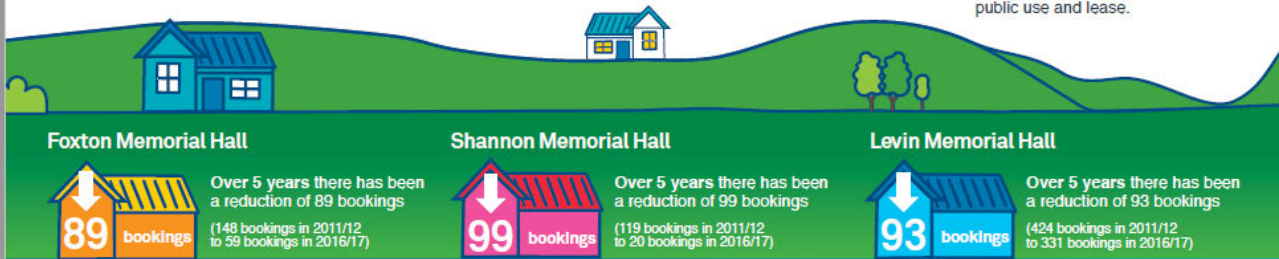
Council has an annual budget of around \$80,000 to manage and maintain these halls. However, we have seen a reduction of use and consequently income from these properties. Income from rent is down around 38% between 2015 (\$21,000) and 2018 (\$13,000).

And the halls that are leased to community organisations are:

- **Foxton Coronation Hall**  
Located on Avenue Road, Foxton and is currently leased to the National Museum of Audio-Visual Arts and Science (MAVtech) for nominal rent. This building is earthquake prone.
- **Courthouse Museum Rose Garden, Foxton**  
Located on Main Street, Foxton and is leased to Foxton Historic Society for an annual peppercorn fee. This building is also earthquake prone and is currently closed for this reason.

Many of the halls require seismic strengthening due to being earthquake prone.

We want your views on whether we should continue to provide halls for public use and lease.



16 **Got Questions?** Contact Arthur Nelson, Property and Parks Manager on 06 366 0999.

## Options

### 1 Status Quo

This option involves retaining all the Community Halls. This would cost \$3,106,667 to earthquake strengthen and maintain. The impact on rates is \$0.86 for every \$10,000 land value.

### 2 Retain halls available for public hire but not leased properties

This option would see the halls that are available for public hire retained as Council property but not the leased properties (Coronation Hall and Courthouse Museum). This option would cost \$1,821,569 to earthquake strengthen and maintain. The impact on rates is \$0.51 for every \$10,000 land value.

### 3 Retain leased properties but not halls available for public hire

This option would see the leased properties retained as Council property but not the halls available for public hire (being the memorial halls in Levin, Foxton and Shannon). This option would cost \$1,284,817 to earthquake strengthen and maintain. The impact on rates is \$0.36 for every \$10,000 land value.

### 4 None of the community halls are retained as Council property and are disposed of

This option would see none of the community halls retained as Council property and Council start a disposal process. This option would lead to reduction in capital lending of approx. \$3,000,000 and an operational saving of \$1,600,000 over the 20 years of this LTP. This would mean a reduction of \$0.51 for every \$10,000 land value.

### 5 None of the community halls are retained as Council property and are disposed of, or if necessary demolished

This option would see none of the community halls retained as Council property. Council will start a disposal process, or if necessary, demolish one or more buildings. This option would have the same financial impacts as Option 4 but there also may be demolition costs.



## Preferred Option

In the light of declining use and the significant remediation costs Council's preferred option is **Option 4**.

This will reduce potential debt and rates over the term of the LTP. There is no impact on Level of Service as there are other facilities available for hire and lease. We may see the buildings repurposed as important features of the urban townscape and potentially provide additional commercial space in town centres to assist in meeting projected growth demand.

Note: the cost of renewals for the Community Halls have been factored into the draft financials, due to the uncertainty around when they might be sold.



### **Resolutions arising from the 2018-38 LTP Process - Property**

We asked whether Council should retain the Memorial Halls in Foxton, Shannon and Levin, and the Courthouse Museum and Foxton Coronation Hall as Council property.

- *THAT the decision to retain/or not to retain the Levin Memorial Hall be deferred until the Taitoko/Levin Town Centre Strategy is completed.*
- *THAT the decision to retain/or not retain the Courthouse Museum in Foxton be deferred until 30 September 2018 pending a report to Council that identifies the means of retaining the heritage and character of the building through a sale or transfer process.*
- *THAT Council does not retain the Foxton Memorial Hall in the final Long Term Plan 2018-2038.*
- *THAT Council does not retain the Coronation Hall, Foxton; with no action being undertaken until a feasibility study on the future use of the facility is presented to Council by 30 December 2018 AND FURTHER THAT Council agrees to the Terms of Reference for the feasibility study with the MAVTech Trust and Foxton Community Board.*