

NANTYGLO & BLAINA TOWN COUNCIL

CYNGOR TREF NANT-Y-GLO a BLAENAU

The following item contains information that is of a **confidential nature and is therefore Exclusive to Members of the Town Council** and must not be discussed outside of the meeting (Public Bodies Admission to Meetings Act 1966)

Salem Chapel Public Consultation– March 2021

Nantyglo and Blaina Town Council

Salem Chapel – Public Consultation

Public Consultation:

Members of the public are invited to participate in the public consultation being carried out by Nantyglo and Blaina Town Council in respect of Salem Chapel, High Street, Blaina.

Introduction:

Salem Chapel is a Grade II listed chapel located opposite Blaina Post Office in High Street, Blaina and has previously been regarded as important to the regeneration of the town centre. In 2002 it was purchased from the Baptist Union by the then Town Council for community use and to continue to allow the Baptist Union to use the chapel as a place of worship.

A long term lease was subsequently agreed with the Nantyglo and Blaina Charter Group, through which the Charter Group became responsible for the day to day running and maintenance of the Chapel. In 2009/10, the Charter Group successfully applied for a number of grants and a part refurbishment of the building was carried out. In 2011, the Charter Group successfully applied for a further grant which funded a Chartist Exhibition in Salem Chapel.

In 2015/16 a building inspection identified extensive dry rot in the ground floor of the chapel. A full structural survey was subsequently commissioned by the Town Council and this revealed other serious concerns such as damp and defective rendering.

Current Situation:

Following a period of discussion with the current Town Council, it became apparent that the Nantyglo and Blaina Charter Group would not be able to provide a significant funding contribution to the cost of the repair work (whatever their proportion of responsibility under the leasehold agreement). Consequently both parties have agreed to terminate the lease by mutual agreement. Similarly, the Baptist Union has relinquished their right to hold any religious services in Chapel.

The chapel is now in need of extensive repair/refurbishment with an estimated cost in excess of £50,000. Regrettably and despite repeated efforts, the Town Council has not been able to secure any substantial grant aid from external funding bodies to carry out the repairs required.

Clearly a solution must be found, particularly as some existing costs (insurance, inspection, utilities, etc.) still have to be paid. However, the Town Council would be reluctant to levy an increase in the annual precept to fund this work, as this would further burden the local community by increasing the local council tax at a time when many families are struggling as a consequence of the Covid19 pandemic.

Consultation:

The Town Council are seeking the views of the local community in respect of the future of Salem Chapel and would welcome this via the attached short questionnaire, which can be returned by email to clerk@nantygloandblainatc.co.uk or please contact the Town Clerk directly for a paper copy.

The public consultation will be available for a period of 4 weeks commencing on Monday 15th March 2021 and will end on 12th April 2021.

Results of the consultation will be published on the Town Council's website in May 2021.

Public Consultation:

Questionnaire – Salem Chapel

Q 1: Have you ever visited or used Salem Chapel at any time?

- Yes (please give details i.e. when; how often and for what)
- No

Q 2: Do you think that there is a need for such a facility as Salem Chapel in Nantyglo and Blaina?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Please give your reasons for your answer

Q 3: Should this key building in the centre of Blaina High Street be saved as a community use building?

- Yes
- No

Q 4: As the cost of the necessary repairs to and the running costs for Salem Chapel are expected to be costly, would you be prepared to pay extra council tax for this to be carried out?

- Yes

- No (go to question 5)

Q 5: If you answered yes to question 3, how much extra council tax would you be prepared to pay each year? *Please note that this is payable in 10 monthly instalments not 12)*

- 50p per month extra
- £1.00 per month extra
- £1.50 per month extra
- Other – please specify

Q 6: Please state what you would like to see Salem Chapel used for:

Cont. overleaf

Q 7: If refurbished, how likely would you be to visit or utilise Salem Chapel if there is a function that would interest you?

- Daily
- Weekly
- Fortnightly
- Monthly
- Occasionally (but less than monthly)
- Rarely
- Never

Q 8: Given that the estimated cost of repairs required would be in excess of £50,000, do you think that the chapel should be sold or leased to another organisation or company so that the required repairs can be carried out with no cost to local council tax payers although, if done this way, you may be charged to use it?

- Yes
- No

Q 9: If you answered yes to Q8, should the chapel be:

- Sold
- Leased (via a long lease – terms to be agreed)

If you are interested in the purchase or entering into a long lease for Salem Chapel, please complete the attached form in the first instance and return to the Town Clerk, Nantyglo and Blaina Town Council, Blaina Institute, High Street, Blaina, Gwent. NP13 3BN.