

FAQ'S - Friar Park Millennium Centre extension and refurbishment project: information sharing event.

1. What is being proposed?

The Friar Park Millennium Centre is undergoing some changes to improve the service offer available to the community, as well as expanding the capacity to serve more people. This involves refurbishing the main building to bring a modern look whilst improving space efficiency through some internal reconfiguration (i.e., relocating rooms) and providing an extension to the building.

2. Why are you engaging with me?

The centre is at the heart of the Friar Park ward and plays an important role within the community. We are engaging with you to share information about what is planned.

3. Why is it happening?

During the consultation for the Friar Park Urban Village Masterplan in December 2022, residents told us how important the Millennium Centre is to them as a local accessible place that residents find inviting and safe. Residents told us that they were concerned about how the Millennium Centre would cater for a growing population.

The Millennium Centre is available 7 days a week. A variety of services and activities are run by staff and partner organisations which include: offering a warm and safe space, parent and toddler groups, friendship groups, health services, sports activities, holiday activities and youth groups. Rooms are also available for hire to the community. Last year there were more than 60,000 attendances at the centre. With the project improving the current buildings layout efficiency and addition of a new extension, the centre will be in a stronger position to provide more services and community activities.

4. When will works begin and finish?

Following the public information sharing event, a planning application will be submitted for the extension. Subject to approval, the contractor is expected to start on site in early spring and completing the project in early autumn. Updates on milestone dates will be published on the Regenerating Sandwell website in due course.

https://regeneratingsandwell.co.uk/sandwell_projects/friar-park-millennium-centre/

5. Will the centre still be open for business?

Yes, however it is anticipated that there will be sections of the centre that will need to be closed for a brief period of time during construction.

6. Will I still be able to use the centre whilst the works are taking place?

Yes, the contractor is specialised in delivering projects of similar nature whilst minimising disruption. This means, despite some areas being closed, other parts should remain open. The contractor will be working closely with the Sandwell Council team and Millennium Centre staff to ensure updates are available throughout the construction period.

7. How is the project being funded?

The project is being funded by the Wednesbury Levelling Up Partnership; a funding pot from central government. Details of this funding can be found on the below web link:

https://regeneratingsandwell.co.uk/sandwell_projects/wednesbury-levelling-up-partnership/#:~:text=The%20Levelling%20Up%20Partnership%20focuses,with%20%C2%A320.4%20million%20investment.

8. I run activities at the Millennium Centre, how will this affect me?

Impact on delivery of activities is yet to be confirmed but we aim for this to be as minimal as possible. We will be working closely with the centre's management team to create a phasing plan which will seek to minimise the impact on activities as far as possible. For instance, it could be that an activity will need to be accommodated in a different area of the building for a brief period of time.

9. What new activities will there be?

The project is focused on improving the space for existing activities whilst also creating the opportunity for new activities to come forward. Since work on this project started, a Sandwell Council Youth Club has relocated to the Millennium Centre and meets twice a week. A new job club has been created and also takes place at the centre.

As it currently is, there will be a mixture of free and paid for activities/services. The new extension will provide a flexible space that can be used for a variety of community uses. This can range from but not limited to: classes, workshops, leisure and community celebrations. The centre's management team will be able to advise on the regular schedule of activities taking place. Alternatively, you can find information on the Millennium Centre Facebook page.

<https://www.facebook.com/friarparkcommunitycentre/>

10. I am interested in running activities at the centre, who do I contact?

To enquire about running activities, please contact the centre's management team on either:

Phone- 0121 556 0139

Or

Email - fpmccentremanager@gmail.com

11. I have heard there is going to be a café, how will this be run?

That is right, the plans involve introducing a new café space. The new café will be integral in bringing the community together and expanding the offer the centre have. Plans are being finalised by the centre's management team for how the café will be run but this is likely to be run by the existing staff. Plans are also being developed for how the café can help people develop skills for jobs in the food and drink sector.

12. Is there going to be a library?

There is already a library located within the centre. The project aims to expand this library by slightly increasing its floor space and improving its layout so that it becomes more easily accessible and usable. This includes moving the entrance so that it can be accessed from the new café space. We hope this will encourage more people to engage with the library and its services.

13. How can I share my comments?

This is an information sharing event; therefore, we are not seeking to collect formal comments. The centre's management team and service providers have represented local needs when developing these proposals. Should you want to contact us, you can do so by emailing us at: Wednesbury_LUP@sandwell.gov.uk

14. What is the new extension for?

The new extension will provide a large flexible space that can be used for a variety of community uses. This will be reflected in how it is designed and laid out. This can range from but not limited to: classes, workshops, leisure and community events, parties, prayer groups sessions (from various faiths); as well as events such as music and drama performances and plays. The additional space will help the Millennium Centre cater for a growing population. As is the case currently, there will be a mixture of free to use services and activities and

some activities that you need to pay for. Rooms in the Millennium Centre will continue to be available for hire.

15. I have heard that there is going to be a new business, what is this?

It is expected that the extended space and cafe will increase opportunities for the Millennium Centre to generate income. As the Millennium Centre is a charity, any income generated from room hire, helps with operating costs and goes back into meeting the charitable aims and objectives. The Millennium Centre have been giving consideration to whether setting up a CIC (Community Interest Company) would be advantageous, but there are no plans for this currently.

Key words:

- **Contractor** – a professional business that will deliver the project.
- **Refurbishment** - restoring areas to improve them (i.e., make them look newer).
- **Masterplan** - vision and/or objective of what a particular area is to be developed into.
- **Efficiency** - ability to achieve an outcome with minimal: waste, energy and/or effort.
- **Reconfiguration** - altering the existing layout.
- **CIC (Community Interest Company)** - a company that operates for the benefit of the community it serves.