

The Gather Redesign Project - January 2025

Dear Jane

I am contacting you on behalf of the The Ennerdale Hub Board with regard to our plans for the redesign of the kitchen and the downstairs space at the Gather in Ennerdale Bridge.

As you know the Gather is a very popular spot for the local and wider communities, and provides a comfortable cafe with teas, coffees, cakes, sandwiches and light snacks.

We also provide a small shop for local produce and other essentials, as well as an being an outlet for local artisans, crafters and artists.

Our current kitchen is too small and no longer fit for purpose.

There is insufficient preparation space, a very small sink which is currently in a state of near collapse, and no storage.

The working environment is uncomfortable and unsafe for more than one or two people due to lack of space, no natural light, no adequate ventilation, and the necessity to have to walk through the public part of the cafe to get stock and supplies from the far side of the building.

We have commissioned Day Cummings Architects based in Cockermouth to produce a set of plans to improve the kitchen area, and make use of space within the current footprint which is somewhat underused.

The kitchen redesign will also facilitate better circulation for patrons of the Gather within the cafe space, but primarily will provide a better working environment for the Gather staff, and allow us to continue to provide coffees, cakes and light snacks in a more convivial environment for everyone.

We engaged with the local community and shareholders, as well as staff at the Gather, to produce a wish list to add to a list of essential requirements to ensure compliance with building regulations, LDNP, and other organisations with regard to accessibility for all potential visitors to the Gather.

We are now in possession of these plans, and have again engaged with shareholders and the local community by holding two open evenings when we invited interested parties to come along and look at the plans, express any ideas or concerns, and to make any further contributions they thought would be useful to the final design.

These plans remain on display at the Gather for anyone to view.

We intend to fund the project by approaching various charitable organisations and external grant sources, and will engage with a series of fundraising enterprises throughout 2025.

Not only is this a very exciting project for the Gather and for the wider Ennerdale area, but is also necessary in order for the Gather to maintain the current level of service.

Cakes and soups will still be made by local volunteers in their homes, and community involvement in the daily running will be maintained and very much encouraged, but without investment and redesign, we will continue to struggle to meet the requirements of the Gather users and the Gather will go into decline, which would be a terrible loss for the Ennerdale valley.

I would be grateful if you would circulate this letter to the parish councillors, several of whom have already engaged by coming to the open sessions. We would be very glad of the councils support during the planning process, and if councillors have further queries, I would be very happy to answer them

With Regards

Ann Green on behalf of the Ennerdale Hub Board