

To whom it may concern - Elphin Village Hall

I write in wholehearted support of Elkcal in their attempt to purchase our Village Hall building (formerly Assynt Primary School) in Elphin.

When I first got involved with setting up the original meeting between Elphin residents and the Assynt Foundation (then the legal custodians of this building), I did hope that one day this fine edifice would come into community ownership. So I am extraordinarily pleased to see Elkcal taking steps to make this happen.

That initial meeting was on a wet and chilly winter evening, but there was a good turnout from Elphin Village regardless of the grim weather, and the poor heating in the Hall! It was a lively and interesting meeting. Assynt Foundation representatives seem a bit taken aback by our enthusiasm for taking over the building! It ended with folk agreeing to set up a steering committee to take matters forward.

Seven of us volunteered, and we met several times - covering a wide range of issues. We undertook a community survey of every resident to find out what folk wanted to see happen to, for and within the building. Finally, after several months, we organised a very successful open meeting, with presentations covering Village history, potential Village Hall development, practical matters like heating etc. Our steering committee was authorised to recruit new members and look at the legal framework needed to set up a proper structure, including a management committee to take over the building.

Several more meetings and lots of discussion lead to the setting up of Elkcal.

Life threatening illness took me away from involvement at this point. But Elkcal did successfully take over the building. Lots of different community activities have gone on over the years. Most have proved very successful. Elphin Chicken Day is now an established tradition!

There were some disagreements with parts of the community at times, and Elkcal did suffer from a static board for a while. But, over the past few years, the influx of several new families to our remote Highland community has really enlivened the village. This has brought a real stability to Elkcal, plus lots of new and exciting plans for use of the Hall.

After the isolation of the pandemic, it's been great to see Elkcal pick things up and take a very positive attitude to organising a good programme of community events again. The whole community itself has benefited from having this facility. This is a much friendlier and more cohesive community environment than showed up on that long ago winter evening in the school.

The Hall itself looks much more loved and cared for, being owned by its community can only be even more beneficial to us all.

You have my entire support in pursuing this purchase for all of us here in Elphin, Knockan and Ledmore. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of any further help.

Rosie Christmas