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# Rumours fly over future of listed Telford memorial hall

[Telford \(/news/local-hubs/telford/\)](/news/local-hubs/telford/) | [News \(/news/\)](/news/) | Published: Jan 14, 2014

[gallery] It is filled with the memories of more than 140 years of parties, meetings and dances. But today the future of Anstice Memorial Hall in Madeley was being questioned.



There was a time when the historic hall was packed to the rafters for social get-togethers, including this archive picture of a Christmas party back in the 1920s.

But a meeting of Madeley Town Council was told there is a major question mark over the future of the hall, including rumours that it could be closed down and turned into a pub.

The building was opened in 1870 in memory of businessman John Anstice and has been at the centre of the community ever since.

But in recent years its condition has caused concern, amid claims that the hall is not being used to its full potential.

The meeting was told that talks had been held between town councillors in Madeley and trustees of the hall in an attempt to deal with financial difficulties surrounding its running.

Among the rumours circulating is that the listed building could be sold to the Wetherspoons pub chain – but there is still confusion in the community over who owns it. An asking price of £250,000 is rumoured.

Members of the public lobbied Madeley Town Council last night, where the rumours were debated, pleading for help save the building in Anstice Square.

Pensioner John Edwards told the meeting: "There have been a lot of rumours about people buying it. I know there is a charter left by the people who built it that it is for the working men of Madeley."

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He said many people in Madeley believed the building had been given to the town by the Anstice family, but it is run by a private club. There are fears the trustees could now sell the building with the money distributed among the members, the meeting was told.

Councillor Paul Watling said the town council and Telford & Wrekin Council had been trying to work with the trustees and committee of the Anstice Memorial Club to get it onto a more secure footing and to help with the costs of looking after the building.

Councillor Watling said it was rumoured that the club was in financial trouble but attempts to help had so far failed. He told the meeting that problems with the club's constitution ruled it out from almost all of the grants which would be available.

He said: "We have been working for quite some time to make inroads with the trustees to bring them into the community work the town council does. We are working on the rumour, as you are, that they are in financial trouble. We weren't prepared to give them money because we weren't comfortable with the constitution. But the borough council has sent them very detailed information about what they need to do. Unfortunately we have had no response."

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Mr Adrian Shaw, who runs soul nights at the club each month, said the building had not been run to its full potential.

He said one of the constitutional issues was that women generally were not allowed to join – only the wives of male members – and they were not allowed to vote.

Councillor Arnold England said some councillors had joined the club to try to help the trustees turn it into a genuine community building again, but had not succeeded. As a private members club, he said, the council had no say in what happened to it.

None of the trustees could be contacted today.