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Future is bright for historic Telford landmark

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More than a year after it closed, an historic Telford landmark has a new owner and a brighter future.



The Anstice Memorial Hall in Madeley

The Anstice Memorial Hall in Madeley – once home to the oldest working men's club in England – has been bought by the town council on behalf of the town for £88,000.

The money came from the Community Pride Fund run by Telford & Wrekin Council to help projects and volunteers revive the places where they live.

The plan is to modernise the Victorian building and then hand it over to a new local charity – the Anstice Community Trust (ACT), which has been formed by a group of volunteers.

It will then be reopened for the people of Madeley.

Rae Evans, chairman of Madeley Town Council, said the hall meant a lot to the area.

Its closure in February last year came weeks after the hall hit the headlines for its old fashioned rules that only allowed men to be members.

There were numerous efforts to find ways to bring it back to life, with the building needing costly renovation and improvements – but the membership rules meant the club did not qualify for certain grants.

Mrs Evans said: "Many residents expressed concern when the working men's club shut its doors last February. The Anstice had been a vital part of community life for over 140 years.

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"People came to see bands, dance, meet future husbands and wives and celebrate their family events here.

"There is much hard work to do to restore it to being that place again. There will be substantial local consultation in preparation for improvement works.

Lyndy Boden, vice chairman of the Anstice Community Team, said: "When we started the Save the Anstice campaign we were just a small group of local residents and business people with a burning passion to fight to keep our heritage.

"It is hard to imagine how far we have come when just over 12 months ago we were just starting with petitions and our Facebook page, which now has 954 members. The support has been overwhelming.

"Anyone who wants to help is very welcome to join us. We, as The Anstice Community Trust, are looking forward to the future of The Anstice and Madeley as a whole."

There will be an open door event on May 31, when anyone interested can take part in guided tours of the building. Contact the town council on (01952) 567280 for more information.

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