**17 April 2019**

**Five nominate for Former Winchelsea Shire Hall Community Working Group**

Five people have stepped forward to form the Former Winchelsea Shire Hall Community Working Group, which will meet for the first time before the end of April.

The Community Working Group – to be assisted by experienced facilitator Jen Lilburn – is a cross-section of community members with varying interests, such as arts and culture, business, history and tourism.

The members are Ken Daniels, David Loone, Sandra Jones, Lesley Christie and Michael Tucker.

Council has been formally notified by the owner of the Winchelsea Tea Rooms business that they will not take up Council’s offer to continue operating in the former Shire Hall beyond 30 April 2019.

From 1 May 2019, the hall will be available for short-term community and commercial bookings. Bookings can be made by contacting Council on 5261 0600 or via info@surfcoast.vic.gov.au.

General Manager Culture and Community Chris Pike said Council was looking forward to working in partnership with the community to identify future use options for the hall.

“We’re delighted that these volunteers have put their hands up to develop locally inspired solutions for this important building,” he said.

“The extensive feedback and proposals received to date through surveys, meetings and correspondence will certainly help them with this task.”

The Former Winchelsea Shire Hall Community Working Group will provide Council with a report before the end of July 2019 outlining its preferred future use of the facility.

The establishment of the working group follows a widely advertised Expression of Interest process.

Consultation to date includes individual meetings with community organisations, a community survey with 98 responses, listening post, two drop-in sessions and a stakeholder workshop attended by representatives from groups such as Winchelsea Community House, Growing Winchelsea, Winchelsea Historical Society and Morning Melodies. In addition representations have been made to Council by individuals and groups such as Growing Winchelsea.

**Not for publication:**

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