



MIDSOMER NORTON HIGH STREET HERITAGE ACTION ZONE CASE STUDY

TOWN HALL TRANSFORMATION

MARCH 2024



INTRODUCTION

Midsomer Norton's High Street Heritage Action Zone (HS HAZ) is a four-year partnership programme between Historic England, B&NES and Midsomer Norton Town Council. Through this programme we have enhanced Midsomer Norton's conservation area to create a more attractive, engaging and vibrant High Street.

This scheme has seen a £3.7m investment in the High Street, with key work strands including:

- Restoration of the Grade II Listed Town Hall and reinstatement of the Market Hall;
- Creation of a Market Square through the 1,000sqm public realm scheme;
- Creation of a shopfront Design Guide for the Town Centre;
- Public Realm improvements to High Street;
- Shopfront Improvement to various properties;
- 3 year Local Cultural Programme.



Midsomer Norton was one of more than 60 high streets across the country that were successful in receiving funding from Historic England. It was awarded £888k as part of Historic England's High Streets Heritage Action Zone (HS HAZ) Programme (2020 - 2024) with additional match funding from Midsomer Norton Town Council, Bath and North East Somerset Council (B&NES) and West of England Combined Authority (WECA).

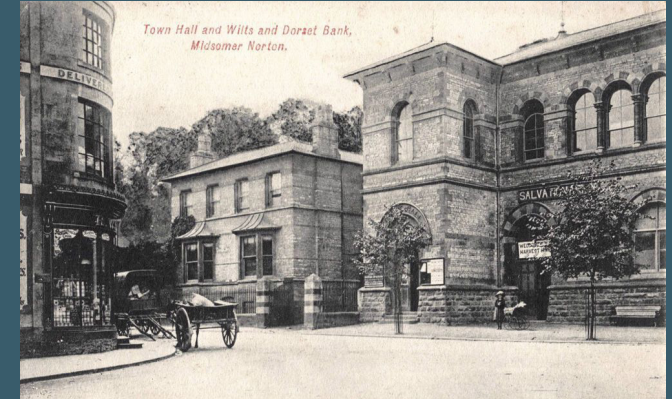
TOWN HALL TRANSFORMATION

How we got here

Midsomer Norton Town Hall was built in 1859, and was originally used as a market hall. The building was one of four constructed at a similar time on the High Street by John Harris Smith, and was Grade II listed in 1979. For over 150 years, the space has hosted valuable community uses as the main civic building of the town. Over time, the condition of the building deteriorated, and was subdivided into a warren of small rooms and offices, leaving the Town Hall in a poor state with no remaining Market Hall.

Transforming the Town Hall

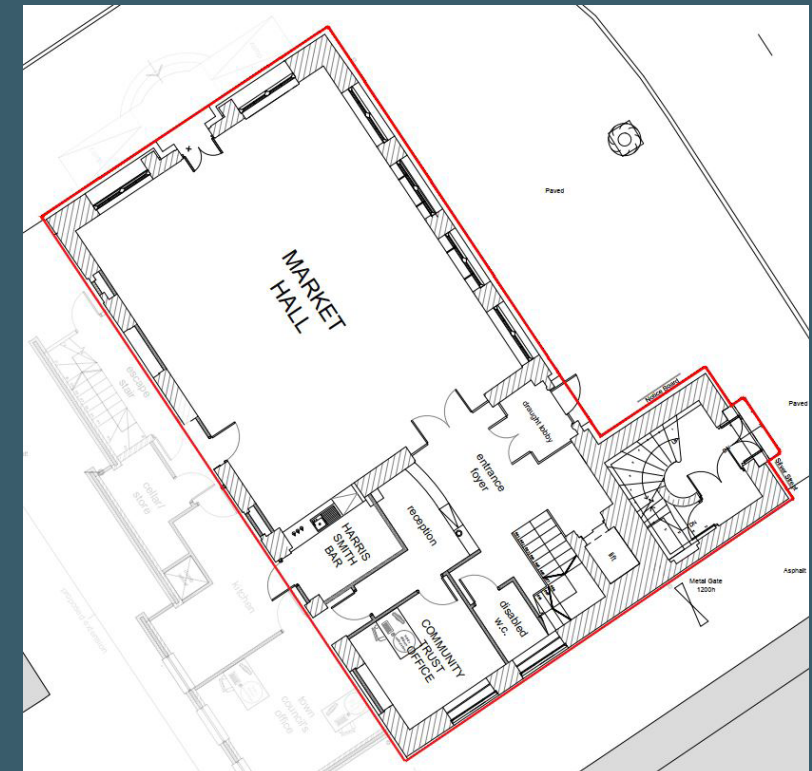
Delivering on an early aspiration of the Town Council, when it was established, the Town Hall improvement project will reinstate the original double height Market Hall and remove the 20th century additions that have been detrimental to its function and character. The Town Hall has been transferred back into community ownership as part of the project.



THE PLANS

The Town Hall will now be able to:

- Host a variety of indoor markets, complementing the offering of the adjacent Market Square, which is also in development.
- Provide a large community space that can be utilised by local groups
- Host a local cinema and be available to hire for private events
- Be a catalyst for investment and improvement on Midsomer Norton High Street
- Improve the condition of Midsomer Norton High Street, which is part of the 'at-risk' Midsomer Norton Conservation Area
- Improve facilities on Midsomer Norton High Street, most notably providing public toilets
- Create a welcoming and flexible space for all



THE WORKS

The restoration of the Town Hall is now drawing to a close and the re-opening being planned. The entire building has been meticulously refurbished with modern subdivisions removed and a new internal steel framework installed. The main hall has now been restored to its original double height, returning the grandeur that the building's interior once had.

Listed Building Consent

The reinstatement of the historic Market Hall and improvement to the services provided within the building required Listed Building Consent, given it is Grade II listed. At each stage consent has been granted by the Local Planning Authority for the works, confirming that the proposals appropriately conserve the buildings significance as a whole and features of special architectural or historic interest. The value of the project to the community was an aspect that attracted particular weight in these decisions.



SUMMARY



DELIVERED BY
Bath & North East
Somerset Council
Improving People's Lives



Midsomer
Norton

FUNDED BY
HM Government



Historic England

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