

Dear Sirs,

I am responding on behalf of the Bethel trustees to the entry regarding the Bethel Building in the Southborough and High Brooms community plan under non designated heritage assets.

There are a number of issues that are specific to the building that we would like to make you aware of.

Your entry describes the Bethel as a public building. Its original use was as a church but the last worshipping community ceased using the building over 20 years ago. However the Bethel trust's charitable status contains a number of very restrictive covenants which mean the buildings only permitted use is for religious services and the proclamation of the gospel. The buildings public use is therefore severely limited by these covenants and it cannot let as a hall for public use.

The current use as a food larder was a temporary response to the growth in extreme food poverty during the covid crisis and strictly speaking falls outside of the permitted use of the building.

The trustees are currently in consultation with the Charities Commission about the future of the trust and the building as there is no likelihood of religious worship resuming in the building.

Gordon Blanchard

Bethel Trust Secretary