

HADLOW DOWN COMMUNITY  
CENTRE

Business Plan

‘Building today for  
tomorrow’

February 2014

A Charitable Incorporated  
Organisation

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## 1. Executive Summary

1.1 Our project is about improving the quality of life for our parishioners by improving the village hall, its facilities and those of the playing field to produce an amenity fit for the 21st century. As importantly is our commitment and belief that the project will provide a far more sustainable arrangement for the future by maximising physical and hard-pressed people resources.

1.2 The focal point of community activities is the current Hadlow Down village hall. It provides a valued public meeting and activity space in the Parish. It is much used but the lack of modern and extended facilities seriously limits future usage and potential efficiency. Whilst continued upgrading and refurbishment of this community facility continues, its physical constraints in terms of footprint, car parking and access support the preferred option of new build and relocation. We face an additional challenge of constraints imposed by recent local planning legislation and raising the required capital to finance the project.

1.3 The Hadlow Down Playing Field provides opportunities for the playing of football, cricket, stoolball and other informal activities. Its usage could be much greater if the poor drainage and the totally inadequate accommodation for changing, toilets and showers were addressed.

1.4 Consultation with every resident was conducted in two separate surveys. The findings of the door-to-door 2011 survey, orchestrated by the New Community Centre Committee but conducted by many parishioners, provided the evidence for the construction of a new hall and justification of the decision to move the site of the hall to the existing playing field.

1.5 Our objectives are to:

- a) provide current users with facilities of the highest quality both in terms of their suitability and safety;
- b) enable residents with disabilities and their carers to participate fully in community activities, via full disabled access, which is not available at present i.e. toilets and stage.
- c) create a sustainable future for the village hall and the playing field by:
  - re-locating the new community centre to the playing field and providing one space to accommodate sports and other community users;
  - promoting greater usage within the parish and increased self-generated income by making the facilities more attractive and in the case of the playing field, ensuring that the drainage is improved thereby improving reliability and reducing the cancellation of fixtures leading to teams having to travel to use other grass facilities; also improved meeting, catering, storage and toilet facilities;
  - providing a slightly increased hall foot-print for use by the local primary school for the delivery of the PE curriculum and its 'out of school hours' programme;
  - improving heating and lighting systems and making greater use of renewable energy sources, thereby reducing hall running costs and its carbon footprint.

1.5 The total cost of carrying out the above work is estimated at £650,000 (please refer to Section 8 entitled 'The Design').

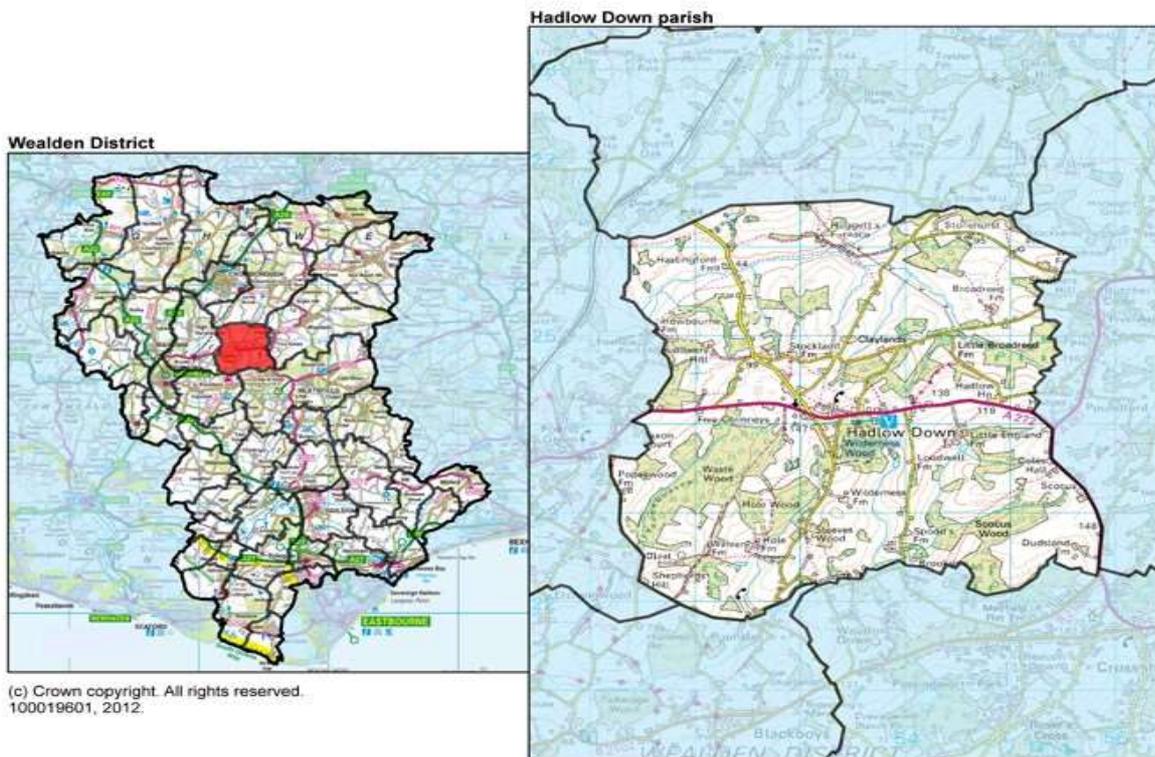
## 2. Our Objectives

- to drive forward the provision of a new Community Centre for the benefit of all the parishioners Hadlow Down;
- to promote community spirit by involving all the residents of the Parish of Hadlow Down as it exists today and with the intention of meeting the challenges ahead;
- to encourage participation of all individuals or groups from within Hadlow Down or who have links with the community of Hadlow Down in the building and use of the new Community Centre.

## 3. Background

### 3.1 The Parish

Hadlow Down is a relatively small parish of 1697 hectares in size (6.6 miles) situated towards the northern part of Wealden.



### Population

The census of 2011 showed that there were 857 inhabitants (411 male, 446 female) and distributed across the age ranges as indicated in the table below:-

Gender	Age 0-14 (%)	Age 15-29 (%)	Age 30 – 41 (%)	Age 45 – 64 (%)	Age 65+
Male	29.1	13.4	20.4	28.5	15.8
Female	19.5	13.9	19.3	31.8	15.5

All	20.7	13.7	19.8	30.2	15.6
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**Households**

In 2011, there were 314 households (17.8% all one person households, 74.2% all family households and 8% all other households – the latter can be defined as a group of people (not necessarily related) living at the same address who share cooking facilities and share a living room, sitting room or dining area.

The overall figures for Wealden are:- 27.6%, 67.2% and 5.2% - clearly Hadlow Down has a higher proportion of family households and those living at the same address who share facilities.

**3.2 The village** itself lies at the centre of this relatively sparsely populated parish. Households in the village number around 300.

Hadlow Down is typical of so many rural communities in East Sussex. Like many, it has lost a number of services over the past thirty years; the last being the village shop and post office at the beginning of the millennium. Currently it retains a church, pub, village hall, primary school and playing field/outdoor play area.

**3.3. The current village hall and its organisation**

The existing village hall was built in 1965 on the site of the original building. Referred to originally as the Red Triangle Hut (purchased from the YMCA), it was opened in 1921. It became known as the Hut and hosted many social occasions and classes - Horticultural Society meetings, the Organ Club, British Legion (male and female branches), the Happy Circle for older members of the village, the Jazz Club, the Pied Pipers drama group, and the Bowls Club. It was also used for more formal meetings like those of the Church Parochial Council and the Parish Council.

It is interesting to note that in February 1962 the condition of the Hut was causing such concern that three options were under consideration:

- i) 'to provide a new hut on a new site';
- ii) 'to provide a new hut on the present site';
- iii) 'to find the cost of putting the present Hut into such order that it will stand for 40 years as it has now'.

Whilst Option 3 was chosen, the fact that a new hall was built and opened in 1965 indicates that the final decision was to opt for ii).

So, here we are fifty years later, faced with the same choices.

In 1965 some of the above organisations/groups continued to use the hall and in 2013, the Horticultural Society, the Variety Club and Bowls Club are still users. Other users are:- Dog training class, Zumba, Tap, Latin American classes, TN22 Lunch Club, St Mark's CE Primary School; in addition to these, it hosts a number of meetings and fund-raising events e.g. Parish Council (meets on first Tuesday each month), annual Parish Assembly meeting, jumble sales, markets, AGM's of the Summer Fayre, Playing Field, Village Hall, new Community Centre, Horticultural Club and Variety Club committees. Also it is hired for birthday and wedding parties.

The area of the current hall is approximately 205 square metres and the accommodation consists of :- the main hall (including fixed stage), kitchen, toilets, committee room, entrance foyer and storage areas.<sup>1</sup>

Whilst the Village Hall Committee and other volunteer helpers work tirelessly to ensure that the fabric of the current building is maintained to a high order, it is apparent that the hall is in need of both considerable refurbishment and enlargement. This view is supported by the findings of a comprehensive condition survey of the hall carried out in 2012.<sup>2</sup> Also parking and vehicular access to the hall and access on to the A272 have become a growing problem.

The management of the hall is carried out by the Village Hall Management Committee, a registered charity (no 305236). The objects of the charity are as follows:-

(1) the provision and maintenance of a village hall for the use of the inhabitants of the Parish of Hadlow Down without distinction of political, religious or other opinions, including use for meetings, lectures and classes, and for other forms of recreation and leisure-time occupation, with the object of improving the conditions of life for said inhabitants;

(2) the said land and building shall be held upon trust for the purposes of a village hall as aforesaid.

The Committee is obliged to have not less than four and a maximum of six elected members and five representative members, one of which shall be appointed by the Parish Council. Also the Management Committee may co-opt a further two members.

During the past few years, the Committee, particularly the Chair, has been successful in attracting external funding to carry out improvements to the existing accommodation; Awards for All and the Sussex Community Foundation to name two. Also the Parish Council continues to provide some financial support when budgets allow.

The site is owned by the Parish Council and leased to the Village Hall Committee; the hall itself is the property of the latter.

### **3.4 The Playing Field and its organisation**

Formerly referred to as Curtains Hill Playing Field, the Hadlow Down playing field is located off the lower end of School Lane and was created in 1975 by local volunteers; prior to this time, it had been located at a number of sites in and outside the village e.g. Tinkers Park. The amenity is the responsibility of the Playing Field Management Committee which is a registered charity (no 270069).



Ownership of the site is shared. The Parish Council is the owner of the land on which is located the football, cricket, stoolball and small basketball practice areas together with the pavilion. The lower portion of the site is owned by the St Mark's School House Trust (custodian being the Diocese of Chichester) and is subject to a lease agreement with the Parish Council. It provides the access to the site as well as hosting an informal play and picnic area.

The football part of the field measures 100m x 55m and competitive adult football matches have been played on it in the past. With the adoption by the Football Association of increased and defined dimensions for football pitches, it is now too small. However, it is adequate for 11-a-side under 13/14 matches and for younger age groups.

The cricket pitch has a seven wicket cricket table with a boundary line positioned 45 metres away from the centre of the table on three sides and only 41metres to the eastern end (towards the church). Whilst the dimensions are adequate for the division of the East Sussex League in which the Stanmer and Hadlow Down Cricket currently play, they would not be for a higher level of competitive cricket.

The grass areas are very poorly drained largely due to the fact that a thin layer of topsoil sits above two metres of clay.<sup>3</sup> This precise understanding of the soil composition was achieved through the conducting of a geotech survey in June 2013 – the costs of which were shared jointly by the Parish Council, the Playing Field Management Committee and the New Community Centre Committee. Action has been taken to try to remedy this situation and this is explained in greater detail in Section 7.

The pavilion is a two storey building with a footprint of 81.62 square metres; it is comprised of a changing room, 2 toilets, a chair storage area (formerly a shower area), small kitchen and three storage areas at ground level – two undercrofts and one under the veranda. One of the undercroft areas stores equipment for the Summer Fair Committee and the second ground maintenance equipment. The third area is used for the storage of goals – posts, crossbars etc. All accommodation areas are greatly deficient in size and do not comply with current guidance and regulations.

Currently the primary sports user of the playing field is Stanmer and Hadlow Down Cricket Club and even this can be disrupted if there is a wet late spring which can prevent grounds maintenance machinery getting on to the field to mow the grass – as happened in 2012. The poor drainage of the football area means that it can only be used with any reliability during the late summer and early autumn months. In the recent past both Broad Oak & Horam and Jarvis Brook Junior FC's have used

the pitches but decided to find a more suitable venue given the frequency with which they had to cancel matches.

Also the inadequacy of the internal accommodation, particularly changing room and toilets, added to the lack of suitability.

The venue is used also by non-sporting organisations and for non-sporting events. For example, in June the annual Summer Fair is held and on November 1<sup>st</sup> 2013, the Village Firework and Bonfire Evening was re instated. Primarily these events are held in order to bring members of the Hadlow Down community together but they are not exclusive to parishioners. Also they provide important opportunities to raise funds used to help keep local organisations functioning.

½ A more detailed breakdown of the floor area of the current Village Hall for each accommodation element and the full Condition Survey report can be found in the appendices.

<sup>3</sup> The report of the Geotech survey is contained in the appendices.

### **3.5 The New Community Centre Committee**

During the past ten years, an increased demand for the use of the Village Hall coincided with a growing awareness of its accommodation limitations as well as a concern for the fabric of the building. After several meetings between the Parish Council and the Village Hall Committee, it was decided that the current building needed to be replaced. In 2008 the Parish Council initiated a project to look into provision of a new 'community centre' for the village incorporating an attached sports pavilion; the current pavilion was showing the ravages of time also.

Several site options were considered by the Council and in 2010 a 'working group' was formed to consider the way forward. Its primary remit was to investigate the viability of possible new sites on which the hall could be built but also included the current one, what type of building was wanted, size and usage and most importantly whether there was support for the project from the people of the village. Subsequently, in 2010, this working group was formed into the Hadlow Down Community Centre Committee. Its constitution was agreed quickly but after a year it was decided that the group needed to be more sharply focused if it was make any real progress. Sub-groups (working parties) were set up to concentrate on specific topics – business planning, local fund-raising, fund raising targeting national and regional organisations including charities, build, design and planning and marketing and promotion. Each sub-group appointed its own chair and drew up its own terms of reference. This arrangement allowed willing volunteers to be co-opted onto a sub-group whose theme matched either their interest or expertise. The working arrangement was for the chairs to conduct such meetings and report back to the main committee meeting.

During each February an AGM is held at which progress is shared and future priorities and actions outlined.

On 2 January 2014 the Committee submitted an application to the Charities Commission to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) - Application Number: 5041468. This is explained more fully in the Management section of this document.

## **4. The Key Issues**

### **4.1 Options Appraisal**

Four options were considered:

1. Do nothing: Although this is the lowest cost option with the current accommodation and limited

facilities this valued community asset is locked in a downward spiral ultimately leading to its demise. If a viable amenity is to be retained doing nothing is not an option.

2. Build a new hall on the existing site or adjacent to it; either way land would have to be purchased. If the new hall was built on the current site, additional land would be required for car parking and if constructed on nearby land, also this would have to be purchased. Whilst the landowner indicated a willingness to sell land, it was at an unaffordable cost level. Also in section 6, after consultation with East Sussex Highways and Transport Department, you will see further compelling reasons why the Committee considered the current site to be less desirable than relocation.

3. Refurbish the existing main building; a Conditions Survey report was produce by members of the Build & Design Sub-Group. Replace roof covering with composite, profiled colour-coat cladding; remove suspended ceiling (which will no longer be needed) and make good/decorate exposed roof structure to suit, replace guttering and downpipes with enlarged system, upgrade heating system, replace main hall floor and incorporate under floor insulation as part of this work including the stage area. Such work does not include required extension works to provide increased storage areas, a larger committee/meeting room, toilets for wheelchair user access. A conservative estimate of £150-250k was suggested but this did not include the costs of new build i.e. extensions nor the cost of purchasing additional land.

4. Build a new hall on the lower part of the playing field. Whilst this site is on the edge of the village and away from the centre, this option does provide us with the opportunity to demolish the existing sports pavilion and incorporate changing accommodation, toilets and shower areas, a kitchen and larger storage areas.

Faced with these options, it was decided to carry out a further consultation with parishioners.

#### 4.2 SWOT analysis

##### Option 1 – Refurbishment and modernisation of existing Village Hall

<b>STRENGTHS</b>	<b>WEAKNESSES</b>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Centre of village – accessible to more on foot;</li> <li>• location (panoramic view);</li> <li>• cost – likely to be cheaper than other 3 options;</li> <li>• often easier to raise funds for a refurbishment rather than for a new build;</li> <li>• continued local engagement;</li> <li>• fresh impetus for community involvement and development;</li> <li>• likely to be cheaper than other 2 options</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parking – cost of purchasing more land;</li> <li>• Un adopted road – costs involved in adopting said road;</li> <li>• Access on to A272 (ESCC Highways against);</li> <li>• does not include a ‘sport’ element;</li> <li>• needs to be extended for even current usage;</li> <li>• in the 7km Ashdown Forest Zone so restriction of increasing size of main hall;</li> <li>• relative small Parish so precept limited;</li> <li>• separate management body/charity to run it (from Playing Field) i.e. two bodies and volunteers hard to recruit;</li> <li>• would need to be closed for some of the works to be carried out i.e. roof and floor and loss of income</li> </ul>
<p><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p>	<p><b>THREATS</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• potential for increased church usage – wedding receptions;</li> <li>• PE curriculum usage by school;</li> <li>• catering for other interests – cinema etc, IT;</li> <li>• environmentally sound building;</li> <li>• employment opportunities;</li> <li>• greater engagement with young people;</li> <li>• attract new users;</li> <li>• pre-school;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lack of local engagement;</li> <li>• lack of funding;</li> <li>• planning issues and constraints;</li> <li>• in competition with other similar locally based projects such as Buxted, Five Ashes &amp; Mayfield;</li> <li>• local apathy and negativity, time; has to be self-funding;</li> <li>• proximity to proposed new housing development – noise and extra pressure on car parking;</li> </ul>

**Option 2 – New build on existing site**

<p><b>STRENGTHS</b></p>	<p><b>WEAKNESSES</b></p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Centre of village – accessible to more on foot;</li> <li>• location (view);</li> <li>• continued local engagement;</li> <li>• fresh impetus for community involvement and development;</li> <li>• lower carbon footprint – cheaper to run;</li> <li>• compliance with DDA requirements;</li> <li>• better storage;</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost of demolition of existing hall;</li> <li>• Cost of purchasing land on which to build hall;</li> <li>• Un adopted road – costs involved in adopting said road;</li> <li>• cost – with architect fees, planning issues, etc;</li> <li>• Access on to A272 (ESCC Highways against);</li> <li>• does not include a ‘sport’ element;</li> <li>• in the 7km Ashdown Forest Zone so planning restriction on size of main hall;</li> <li>• relative small Parish so precept limited;</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
<p><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p>	<p><b>THREATS</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• potential for increased church usage – wedding receptions;</li> <li>• PE curriculum usage by school;</li> <li>• catering for other interests – cinema etc, IT;</li> <li>• environmentally sound building;</li> <li>• employment opportunities;</li> <li>• greater engagement with young people;</li> <li>• attract new users;</li> <li>• pre-school;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lack of local engagement;</li> <li>• lack of funding;</li> <li>• planning issues and constraints;</li> <li>• in competition with other similar locally based projects such as Buxted, Five Ashes &amp; Mayfield;</li> <li>• local apathy and negativity, time; has to be self-funding;</li> <li>• proximity to proposed new housing development – noise and extra pressure on car parking;</li> <li>• site of sewer line crossing field where hall is to be built and cost of rectifying this</li> </ul>

**Option 3 – New build on playing field site**

<b>STRENGTHS</b>	<b>WEAKNESSES</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New sports facilities and activities;</li> <li>• fresh impetus for community involvement and development;</li> <li>• replace existing sports pavilion;</li> <li>• provision of sustainable building in terms of design, carbon footprint and revenue;</li> <li>• opportunity to create a beautiful building;</li> <li>• expansion of social and health improvement facilities;</li> <li>• much more varied usage;</li> <li>• better parking;</li> <li>• meets ESCC concerns with regard to traffic access;</li> <li>• majority support from parishioners for the new site</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Away from the centre of the village;</li> <li>• dependent on funding that may or may not be available i.e. disposal of existing village hall;</li> <li>• lack of known benefactors;</li> <li>• relatively small parish so precept limited</li> <li>• lack of high profile champion i.e. celebrity;</li> </ul>
<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>THREATS</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• potential for increased church usage – wedding receptions;</li> <li>• PE curriculum usage by school;</li> <li>• catering for other interests – cinema etc, IT;</li> <li>• environmentally sound building;</li> <li>• employment opportunities;</li> <li>• greater engagement with young people;</li> <li>• attract new users;</li> <li>• pre-school;</li> <li>• creation of one management body to oversee both the community centre and playing field</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lack of local engagement;</li> <li>• lack of funding;</li> <li>• planning issues and constraints;</li> <li>• in competition with other similar locally based projects such as Buxted, Five Ashes &amp; Mayfield;</li> <li>• local apathy and negativity, time;</li> <li>• has to be self-funding</li> </ul>

**5. Community Needs Analysis**

In 2002, as part of a Village Appraisal exercise, parishioners were consulted and in 2011, a door-to-door survey was conducted to hear the views of parishioners with regard to the future of the hall. A questionnaire for completion was left with each resident and collected a week later; the survey attracted a 70% response rate.

The questionnaire consisted of ten questions and an explanatory introduction which put into context both the current and future issues. Importantly the following options presented to local people were set out:

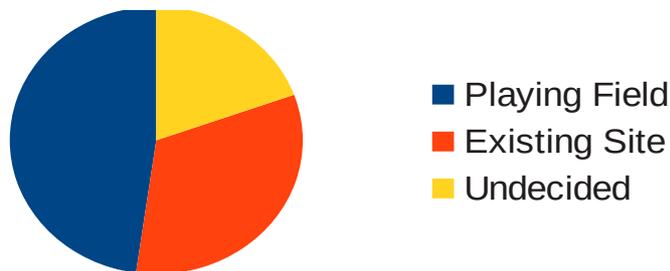
- Do nothing – this is not a no cost option as both the playing field pavilion and Village Hall will need very expensive repairs in the near future;
- to build a Community Centre by refurbishing and extending the existing Hall and obtaining additional land for car parking. At the same time to find funding for a new pavilion. This is a valid option as the nearby land owner has indicated her willingness to sell additional land to the project;
- sell the existing Village Hall and site – either for housing or light industrial use and build a new Community Centre on the Playing Field site which replaces both the Village Hall and Pavilion.

Parishioners were asked several other questions but most certainly the following were of greatest significance as far as the future of a village hall/community centre was concerned:-

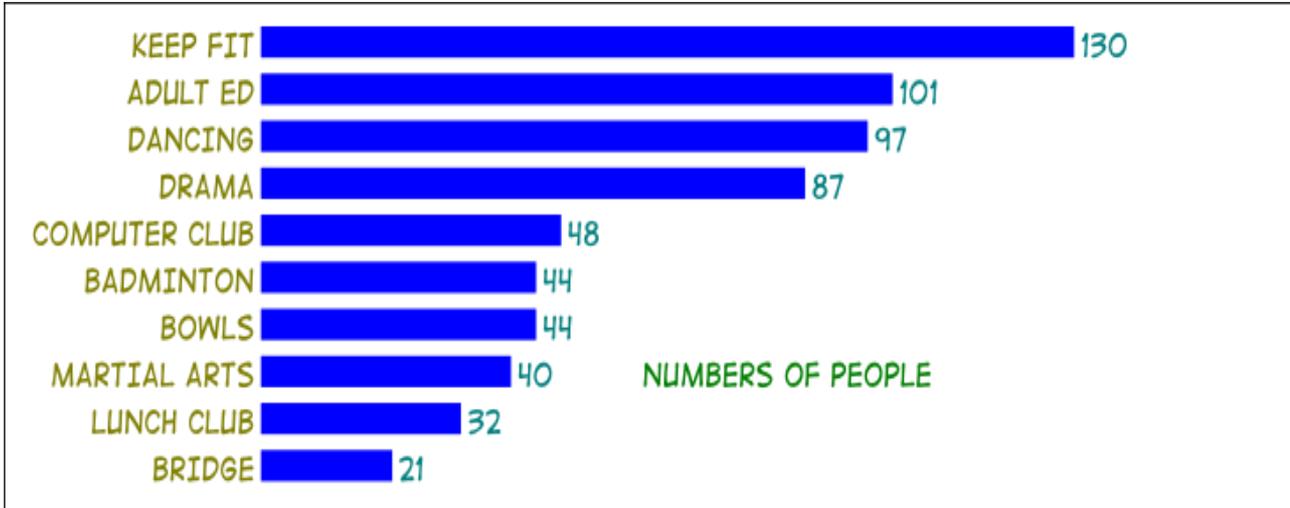
- 1) Which of the two sites would you prefer?
- 2) What facilities would you like to have in a new centre? (tick boxes were provided setting out the various activities that could take place);
- 3) Do you use the current hall and/or playing field and would you use a new community centre?

Nearly 70% of the parish residents responded and of these, over 60% opted for the relocation of the village hall to the playing field site. Clearly the attraction of this option was that the existing sports pavilion (built in 1975 and again to no particular specification) would be demolished and changing accommodation for sports-people, including showers, toilets, kitchen facilities and equipment storage would be an integral feature of the a community centre.

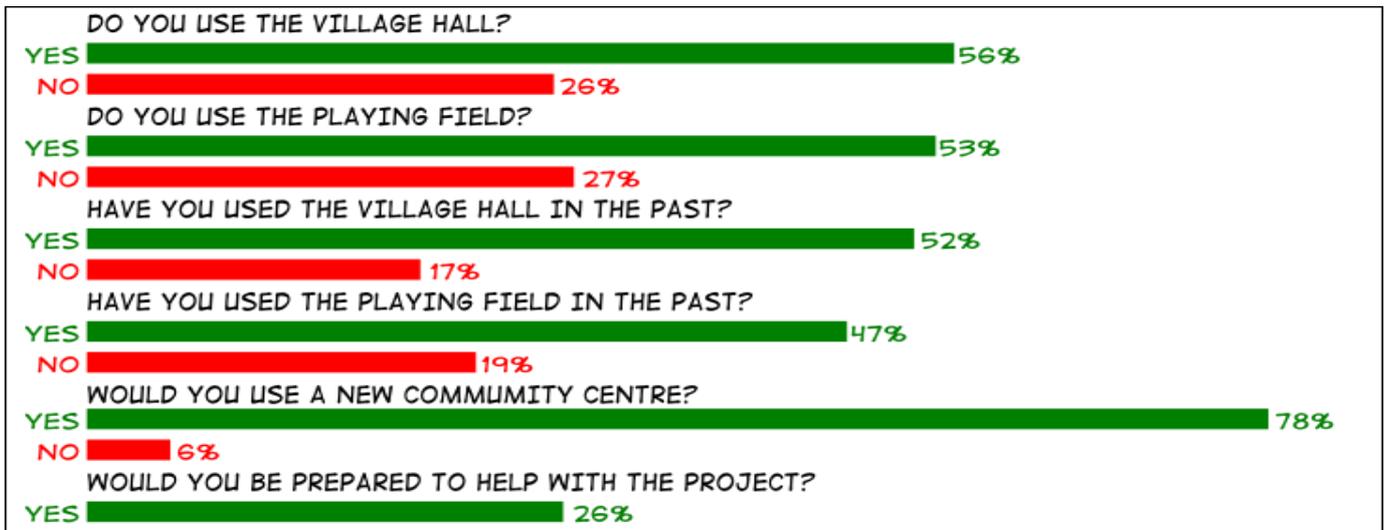
### Site preference



### Choice of activities



### Current and future use



## 6. Strategic Need and Local Need

Our ambition and objectives are supported by a number of key strategies and local evidence supported by the work of several partnerships and agencies.

### 6.1 Strategic

#### i) The Wealden Sustainable Community Strategy (2009 – 2012)

This acknowledges that 'rural villages face issues of economic and social sustainability, including access to services for those without their own transport'. The document continues by putting forward a vision for

Wealden which is:-

- a healthy, rich and diverse environment based on sustainable principles for everyone in Wealden;
- reduce health inequalities, provide appropriate information, advice and access to health and social care services in order to maximise the potential for good health and well-being;
- access to lifelong learning, education and skills training to allow Wealden residents to fulfil their potential;
- a broad range of opportunities to improve quality of life, health and well-being including sport, leisure, recreation and the arts.

Under the sub-heading of Cultural Activities, Sport and Leisure the following priority is identified:

- *'Explore how attractive, well-equipped, multi-purpose facilities such as village halls, can be put to a wider variety of uses'*.

### **The Active Leisure and Well-Being Strategy (2011 – 2014)**

Wealden District Council acknowledges that the district contains countryside areas which are not used to their full potential for recreation. Two of the actions identified are to:-

- promote and enhance green spaces, natural waterways, grass pitches and general countryside as areas for physical activity and active recreation.
- Work in partnership with public, private and voluntary agencies to promote physical activities outdoors.

Clearly this is of particular relevance to the playing field and sports pavilion.

### **iii) PPG17 Assessment – April 2010**

This report identified a number of district-wide priorities and made a series of recommendations. In the section entitled 'Community Halls' the following summary appears:-

- The District has a good range of community halls and a high proportion of the population live within a short travel time of at least one hall;
- some halls in the District are small or old and will require replacement or major upgrading in the reasonably near future; others require more minor improvement, particularly in relation to disabled access;
- There appears to be a shortfall of provision in the Crowborough, Hailsham, North west, Polegate and Uckfield areas.

The report concludes this section by stating that 'the minimum sensible size for a hall is 330m<sup>2</sup>' and that a larger hall space will be required if the hall includes 'outdoor changing to serve the needs of a recreation ground'. This suggests a possible need to 'extend a number of existing halls as only 23 of the 83 halls in our listing have a floor area of 330m<sup>2</sup> or more'.

### **iv) Hadlow Down Parish Community Plan – June 2011**

Ostensibly this was developed as a tool to assist the Parish Council and other stakeholders (such as Wealden District Council and East Sussex County Council) to identify the community priorities for the future of the Parish up to 2026 in line with Wealden District Council's Local Development Framework.

Within the theme heading of 'Culture, Sport, Leisure and Play', it identifies this as one of its three key priorities: *'To design and develop a new Village Hall which incorporates the ability for multiple uses, e.g. meeting rooms, indoor sports facilities, kitchen, changing rooms, male / female toilets, Parish Council office, storage area and suitable car park area'*.

## **7. Maintaining the profile and keeping people informed**

This has been and is done in a numbers of ways:-

- Displays and information giving at local events such as the Summer Fair, coffee mornings held at

- the Village Hall, the local primary school fund-raising event, AGM's;
- Website, regular articles in the Parish Magazine and quarterly newsletter (an example of which appears in the appendix);
- fund-raising events – not only did a recent Scottish Dance evening raise £500 to support the project but it provided a further opportunity to explain what we are trying to achieve;
- public meeting held on 28th October 2011.

## 8. The Design

In July 2010 the PC commissioned Boswell Associates (Architects) Ltd to produce a design for a new community centre to be located on the playing field site.

Having received a very clear indication from parish residents with regard to the preferred site, the HDCC Committee decided to undertake some very practical research. Over a period of six months in 2012, recently constructed village halls close to Hadlow Down and further afield were visited. These were:- High Hurstwood, Punnetts Town, Barcombe, Pett and Scaynes Hill. Information was collated to cover the following areas/issues and the list offered below is by no means inclusive:-

- population of village/parish;
- area of hall footprint (m<sup>2</sup>);
- cost of build;
- grant aid and fund raising e.g. what did they do to raise funds locally;
- length of actual build of hall;
- usage of hall – as much detail as possible in terms of activities;
- storage - adequacy;
- toilets;
- disabled access;
- insurance arrangements;
- kitchen – size and source of equipment;
- heating –type, annual running costs and efficiency;
- car parking – number of spaces;
- management of the village hall i.e. bookings, security, cleaning etc;
- evaluation of the project with a focus on what has not worked well and what would they do differently with hindsight;
- were the services of a consultant used to develop the Business Plan and take the project to the stage of submitting a Planning Application?
- how were these costs met?

The research revealed that the halls visited could be sub-divided into three categories:-

**i) Gold standard** (dimensions 21m long x 12m wide x 6m high) – top class standards and facilities able to provide for a wide range of uses with a view to attracting additional users from a much wider catchment area. Based on the diversity of activities and opportunity to cater for weddings, conferences etc, such a building could be self-financing. In addition to the main hall it would provide:-

- separate function room;
- two committee/meeting rooms and separate office;
- outside balcony for sports use and large patio area off main hall;
- spacious entrance lobby/meeting/waiting area;
- stage area capable of simultaneous use separate from main hall;
- toilets to very high standard and able to cater for peak usage at large events/functions;

- generous internal and external storage areas;
- visually attractive building;
- top quality finish, use of high quality materials expected to require minimal long-term maintenance;
- fully fitted and equipped commercial kitchen with large serving counter;
- separate bar area;
- intelligent remote controlled mood lighting system for hall and function room;
- automatic building control system for air-conditioning, heating and ventilation;
- tarmacked parking area with 50 spaces plus 3 reserved for disabled users;
- overflow parking area – possibly gravel surface;
- many 'eco' sustainability and CO<sub>2</sub> reducing features.

It was felt that Barcombe fell into this category and the estimated construction cost would be between £750k to £1million.

**ii) Silver standard** (dimensions 18m long x10m wide x 6m high) – still would accommodate a wider range of activities that the current hall can and still suitable as a wedding and conference venue; again it was considered capable of self-finance. In addition to the main hall it would provide:-

- two committee rooms, one large and one small;
- outside balcony and patio area;
- entrance lobby/meeting/waiting area of a useful size;
- toilets expected to be up to modern standards;
- separate disabled user toilet and baby changing facilities;
- increase secure storage for many activities;
- separate male/female changing rooms with lockers, toilets and showers;
- stage with integrated lighting and sound – no stage extensions required;
- integrated multi-media projector and screen – wireless broadband;
- visually attractive building;
- higher than average finish with attractive and good quality materials expected to require minimal long-term maintenance;
- well-fitted and equipped commercial kitchen;
- generous sized bar/serving counter to kitchen;
- carefully designed and cost effective lighting, heating and ventilation systems;
- tarmacked parking area for 40 spaces plus 2 reserved for disabled users;
- overflow parking area (possibly gravel surface);
- some cost effective 'eco' features.

It was felt that High Hurstwood fell into this category and the estimated construction cost would be between £600 - £650k.

**iii) Bronze standard** (dimensions 16m long x 8m x 4m high) – this has to provide for what the current hall does with more limited potential to draw in users from outside the parish. This would be a 'no frills' option with costs pared down to the absolute minimum. In addition to the main hall it would provide:-

- committee room measuring 6m x 3m;
- toilets to acceptable standard including access for disabled users;
- sufficient storage for current activities;
- changing room area with temporary partition for male/female segregation;
- stage with collapsible extensions;
- basic kitchen but to minimum commercial standards;
- tarmacked parking area for 30 cars plus 2 reserved for disabled users;
- minimal 'eco' measures.

Punnets Town Village Hall was considered to be a good example of this and the estimated construction cost would be within the areas of £500k.

The above detail was shared with parishioners at Annual General Meeting held on presented at a public meeting held on 25th February 2013, at several local events held in the village and also appeared on the HDCC website. The Silver standard was chosen as the preferred option.

### **9.1 The Planning Context**

During 2012 Wealden District Council produced its Core Strategy and forms part of a wider set of local planning policy documents known as the Local Development Framework (LDF).

The vision for Wealden, which will drive the plan forward and set the direction for future development, is:

*'By 2030 Wealden will have successfully accommodated growth to meet future needs whilst protecting and enhancing its essential rural character and high quality environment and promoting the countryside as a resource for recreation and tourism. Its market towns will have been regenerated providing opportunities for residents to access suitable housing, local jobs, services, facilities and recreational opportunities and a number of its villages and rural settlements will have enhanced their sustainability through successful growth including provision of affordable housing.'*

However, in the north of Wealden, is situated Ashdown Forest – an area designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and also a Special Protection Area (SPA). As such these will have significant implications for future planning applications within a 7km radius of the forest. The crux of the issue stems from the fact that any development which adds to vehicle movements potentially will increase traffic volumes within the zone of influence (7km radius). The HDCC Committee has been advised any development which cannot show that it has a nil or reduced impact in this regard would conflict with the duty placed on Wealden District Council (WDC) in respect of Habitats Regulations.

Furthermore, the position of WDC is that any development within the 7km radius which would increase recreational and traffic pressures upon these European habitats must mitigate its own impact.

With regard to the Hadlow Down Community Centre project, it became apparent that two main issues would have a direct bearing:-

- i) WDC believes firmly that an increase in size of the footprint of the main hall would lead to an increase in usage and therefore, an increase in traffic volume;
- ii) Disposal of the existing village hall site for the construction of 2 to 3 low cost, affordable housing units would be opposed by the planning authority for the same reason.

### **9.2 The Process**

In light of the above changes to the Local Plan (Core Strategy) the HDCC Committee together with the Chair of the Parish Council and another parish councillor and district Cllr Ken Ogden met with WDC planning officers on 17 December 2012.

Whilst the planning officers recognised that clearly there was a need for improvement to the current village hall – greater storage space, provision of disabled toilet facilities and changing facilities which could incorporate a second meeting space. However, they confirmed that they would oppose any enlargement of the main hall space.

On 18th February 2013, the Chairs of the Parish Council and HDCC met with Cllr Roy Galley (WDC) at the playing field site. At the time Cllr Galley was the Portfolio holder for Planning and Development. The opportunity was taken to explain to him the detail of the project, particularly our intention to relocate the new hall onto the lower part of the playing field, to demolish the existing sports pavilion and incorporate new sports facilities into the new hall/community centre. Also the impact of the 7km zone on the development of the project was discussed. The meeting concluded with Cllr Galley stating that 'Hadlow Down will have its new hall'.

A very constructive and regular dialogue has been maintained with the Planning and Development Officer for the North of Wealden, Doug Moss. In March 2013, in relation to the issue of permitted development options, he advised that we should '*consider moderate expansion of both the sports pavilion linked to the new hall at the recreation ground. Provided the main hall was essentially comparable to the size of the existing main hall, ancillary facilities and 'smaller rooms' could be enlarged and brought up to contemporary standards - e.g. kitchen facilities, backroom offices, Parish Committee and small meeting rooms, changing facilities, storage space and sanitary facilities and the like. These would have to remain reasonably proportionate to the intended local use, and support Parish needs as opposed to 'threatening' wider usage (The Hab Regs require WDC, as 'competent authority' to be certain of the possible effects upon the European sites). The main case for the HDCC to show would be that the building was not more capable of serving as an entertainment venue with propensity to draw a greater number of attendees from across a wide area (outside of the Parish and most notably across the Ashdown Forest (Special Area of Conservation). In this regard, I see the main communal hall as the key variable which could be linked to greater traffic movements from a wider area outside of the Parish*'.

Acting upon this advice the Build & Design Sub-Group put together a detailed plan for notional extensions to both the existing sports pavilion and village hall in compliance with the restrictions of Part 12 of the Town and Country Planning General Permitted Development Order 1995; essentially these require the proposed enlarged footprint not to exceed 200m<sup>2</sup> and 4 metres in height. The applications were submitted in early February 2014 and it is expected that 3-4 weeks will elapse before a judgement is provided by Wealden District Council.

If successful in establishing PDR rights, the HDCC will move towards the submission of a full planning application during the summer of 2014.

The HDCC Committee is fortunate to have the Chair of the Parish Council (PC) and a fellow parish councillor attending meetings in an advisory capacity. As the PC is the landowner of both sites and the lessee for the lower part of the playing field on which it is proposed to build the new community centre, it is kept informed of developments. The submission of both PDR applications and the eventual full planning application will have to be undertaken by the PC.

### **9.3 Implications for the design**

It is clear from the advice received from the local planning authority that a certain degree of flexibility will be applied to proposed dimensions of ancillary accommodation i.e. storage areas, toilets, showers, kitchen etc. However, this is not the case with regard to the main hall based on a fairly simplistic assumption that a larger hall would lead to greater numbers using the facility. Such a view does not reflect the inadequacy of our current hall nor take into account the appropriate size to accommodate certain activities such as short mat bowls and performances staged by the local Variety Club.

Our proposed design for the new Community Centre includes a main hall footprint of 16.4 metres in length and 10.75 metres in width and, in addition, an enlarged permanent stage area of 5 metres in length and 8.08 metres in width is included. In comparison with the existing dimensions in the current Village Hall, the main hall is 18.196 metres in length and 8.05 metres in width including a fixed stage. The critical issue will

be if the planning authority can be convinced that a proposed increase of over 3 metres in length and slightly over 2 metres in width will simply enhance provision for users rather than drawing 'a greater number of attendees from across a wide area (outside of the Parish and most notably across the Ashdown Forest'.

The Parish survey conducted in 2012 indicated that badminton would be a popular activity; however, the recommended clearance height of 7.5 metres for club badminton and 6.1 metres for recreational badminton almost certainly would lead to difficulty with the planning authority.

Finally, with regard to the sports element of the proposed accommodation, arises a further possible complication. As shown on the previous page, the Wealden planners feel that '*these would have to remain reasonably proportionate to the intended local use and support Parish needs as opposed to "threatening" wider usage*'. If the project is to attract funding from either the Football Foundation or Sport England to enable changing rooms, shower and toilet area and storage areas to be built, the lay-out has to be in accordance with their particular technical specifications. There is every possibility that these might exceed what Wealden planners feel to be 'reasonably proportionate'.

## 10. Sustainability

### 10.1 Present Income and Expenditure

Currently the Village Hall and Playing Field Committee operate as separate entities; a detailed set of accounts for both for 2010 -11, 2011 -12 and 2012 -13 are included in the appendix. Below is a very simple breakdown and income expenditure:-

#### 10.1.1 The Village Hall

##### 2011 – 12

Income	£ 7,948.21;	Expenditure	£6870.83;	surplus	£1077.38
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##### †2012 – 13

Income (including grants)	£14,960.64	Expenditure	£21,415.42	deficit	£6,454.78
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##### 2013 – 14 (at 31.01.14)

Income (including grants)	£18,588.50	Expenditure	£14318.23	surplus	£4270.27
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† The deficit during was due to a significant amount of investment in the improvement of hall facilities, particularly the kitchen.

‡ If grants funding and facilities expenditure is excluded from the figures, the overall available funds have been increased to £4270.27.

The overall trend is a continuing increase in bookings income due to greater usage rather than an increase in charges.

#### 10.1.2 Current usage

The information below sets out the regular weekly usage pattern of the hall:-

**Mon:** Variety Club rehearsals for Murder Mystery or Pantomime [7.30 - 10.00 pm]

**Tues:** Ballroom Dancing 10.00am [Private lessons but not every week]  
Parish Council Meetings – first Tuesday of the month [7.00 - 9.30 pm]

Short Mat Bowls Club [7.00 – 10.00 pm]

- Wed:** TN 22 Club or TN22 Plus - lunch clubs for the over 60's and those with dementia or memory loss [10.30 - 3.30pm]  
Boxing [6.30 – 9.30 pm]
- Thurs:** Gentle Exercise Class [11.00am to 12.00pm]  
Dog Training [6.30 - 9.30pm]
- Fri:** Latin American Dancing [9.30 - 10.30am, followed by private lessons]
- Sat:** Private Dance Lessons two or three times a month

**Other events booked in the hall (2013-14):**

HDCC Scottish Dancing evening - Sat. 11<sup>th</sup> January 2014

Horticultural Society: AGM 14<sup>th</sup> January, Suppers -12<sup>th</sup> March and 15<sup>th</sup> October, Show – 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2013/14

Plant Sale – Sat. 10<sup>th</sup> May 2013

Variety Club: Murder Mystery -17<sup>th</sup> May 2013, Pantomime – 28<sup>th</sup>,29<sup>th</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup> November 2013, AGM 17<sup>th</sup> March 2014, club meetings, showing of Pantomime DVD

Combined Village Organisations AGMs – 28<sup>th</sup> February 2014

Parish Assembly: - Tues. 15<sup>th</sup> April 2013

Coffee Mornings – several over the year, first on Sat. 1<sup>st</sup> March 2014

Seasonal Markets: Spring – Sat. 12<sup>th</sup> April, Christmas – Sat. 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2013

HDCC Swish Evening event – Fri. 21<sup>st</sup> March 2014

Tap Dancing Jumble Sale – Sat. 26<sup>th</sup> April 2013

Theatre performance: Rude Mechanicals Children's play on Fri. 25<sup>th</sup> April 2013

Polling Station: Thurs. 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2013

Regular children and adults parties throughout the year

Use by St Mark's CE School for productions.

**10.1.3 Hall hire fees**

An extensive comparison with rates of hire that other nearby village halls charge has been undertaken (a copy of the findings can be found in the appendices). As it is impossible to compare 'like with like' given variables such as location and catchment, age and size of hall but it is felt that the current rates offer significant value of money. At the moment, with regard to heating and lighting, the users pay for usage via a meter and this does no more than recover costs. If the energy costs were to be absorbed into the hire

rates, they would have to increase by 25% to meet current cost levels.

The schedule for hire fees has been reviewed recently by the Village Hall trustees. Hourly rates have been introduced across the board for hirings of up to two hours after which it is a session fee which is the equivalent to marginally under three hours of the hourly fee. Session times are 09.00 to 13.30 hrs, 13.30 hrs to 18.00 hrs and 18.00 to 23.00 hrs.

It is clear from the above timetable of usage and accounts that further efforts will have to be made to attract more users to fill gaps and maximise income

For 2013 the following rates have been applied:

Mon-Fri: Main Hall

Local residents: am/pm £14.50 (regular users £11.50), evenings £25.00, all day £50;  
Non-residents: am/pm £20, evenings £35 (regulars - £15, £15 and £25)

Weekends:

Local residents: am £16, pm £25, evenings £50, all day £70 (not available for regular bookings);  
Non- residents: am £30, pm £35, £70 (not available for regular bookings)

Committee Room – weekdays and weekends: Local residents – am/pm £10, evenings £15 (regulars £8 and £10);  
Non-residents: am/pm £15, evenings £20 (regulars £12. 50 and £18)

**10.1.4 The Playing Field**

†2011	Income	£ 437.81	Expenditure	£ 748.23	Surplus/deficit	£ 310.42
‡2012	Income	£ 920.88	Expenditure	£3534.88	Surplus/deficit	£2614
■2013	Income	£2856.13	Expenditure	£1789.85	Surplus/deficit	-£1066.28

† The main item of expenditure was grass cutting.

‡ The main item of expenditure was grass cutting (maintenance) - £1728 and a double payment of insurance (late payment for 2011 as well as for 2012); this amounted to £802.44.

■ The income from actual sports use has remained the same i.e £700 from Hadlow Down and Moulsecombe Cricket Club. The trebling of income is due to several fund raising events and donations.

Currently the account has a surplus of £2142.04.

**10.2 Predicted Future Income**

The key issue is that the facility has to be self-financing in revenue terms; however, it is anticipated that in addition to lettings/bookings income, fund-raising and events associated with this will continue to happen. With a relatively low Parish Council Precept, it has been made clear that the Parish Council does not have the financial capacity to make an annual revenue contribution.

Examining the accounts for both the current Village Hall, it should be noted that the former has created a surplus of over £4000 for the past year. This is all the more impressive given the expenditure incurred over that period carrying out significant improvements to the fabric of the building and the provision of a newly

equipped kitchen.

### 10.2.1 The Village Hall

**Table 1: No of notional hours available for community usage**

Maximum Possible Use	Hours	Hrs per year (based on 51 weeks)
Mon – Fri (09.00 – 23.00 hrs)	14 per day	3570
Sat (09.00 – 24.00 hrs)	15 per day	756
Sun (09.00 – 16.00 hrs)	7 per day	357
Total possible hours		4683

**Table 2: Forecast block booking usage**

Likely use - regular block bookings	Use (hrs)	Weeks (total 51)	Total hours	Assumed type of usage
Wk/days (evening)	17	45	765	Club /society
Wk/days (daytime)	15.5	45	697.5	Club/society
<b>Total</b>	<b>32.5</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>1462.5</b>	Private hire

**Table 3: Forecast casual usage bookings**

Likely use – casual bookings	No of 2/3 hr sessions	No of 6 hr plus sessions	Total hours	Assumed type of usage
Wk/ends – Sats	26	10	144	Club/society/parties
Wk/ends – Sun	4	2	30	Club/society
			174	

#### Percentage of maximum possible use: 29%

It is difficult to predict an actual income figure because of the great variation in the current hiring fee structure. However, based on the accounts for the current financial year and current income of £6521.08 and predicted increase in usage of the new Community Centre in year 1 of 30%, it is assumed that hirings income will rise to £10k.

### 10.2.2 Playing Field

Clearly the situation with regard to the Playing Field is very different. The current income from the booking and use of the sports facilities is insufficient to cover the annual costs of grass cutting and insurance. Whilst the current Management Committee is doing much to raise funds by organising events as can be evidenced by the 2013 accounts, it is imperative that increased sports usage, particularly during the

months of September to April is achieved. To this end the Trustees have submitted an application for capital funding to Sport England's 'Protecting Playing Fields' programme to provide effective drainage for the football playing area of the field. If successful in being awarded a grant (£65k has been applied for), the Playing Field Trustees will provide 3 mini pitches running across the field (for U7 & U8's 5-a-side - each 37m x 27m) and running the length of the field, two marked out pitches for U11/U12 (dimensions 73m x 46m) and U13/U14 (dimensions 82m x 50m). The larger of the two pitches would be super-imposed over the smaller pitch (different coloured line markings i.e. white and blue). Maximum income would be realised if the three mini-pitches are used on each Sat and Sunday morning from Sept to April (approximately 37 weeks); use of one of the larger pitches would prevent these pitches being used at the same time and therefore reduce income.

In putting together the application the Trustees have created a partnership with two local junior football clubs – AFC Uckfield Colts and Crowborough Athletic Youth FC; however the latter has indicated only usage by its younger youth teams so a third partner will be sought to increase use of the mini pitches. When hiring out pitches, it is customary to offer users i.e. football clubs a block booking either for half or the whole of the season.

These charges vary greatly and vary according to the size of the pitch, whether or not goalposts are erected, access to changing facilities and the status of the facility provider i.e. local authority, town and parish council, sports club or school. Often it is parish councils that apply the more affordable hire charges. Both the above clubs have confirmed their future usage.

Dependant on rectifying the drainage problem of the playing field, regular usage by two local junior football Clubs on Saturday and Sunday mornings (Sept – April) is expected with an anticipated income of £2500 – £3000. It is impossible to predict the amount of one-off, casual usage or indeed pre-season training bookings. Additional income of £800 from the cricket club is expected and it is reasonable to assume that when the pitch is not being used on either a Saturday or Sunday, it can be hire out to other cricket clubs. Currently negotiations are taking place with a local junior cricket club and if successfully concluded, anticipated income from this will be £500 approximately.

Fund-raising and non-sporting events will continue to take place; these activities should produce a further £2000 – anticipated sports income in year 1 of the operation of the new Community Centre should amount to £6300.

**Hadlow Down Community Centre income during year 1 - £16,300**

**11. The new Hadlow Down Community Centre**

**11.1 Capital costs**

At this stage it is difficult to arrive at any firm costing for the capital element of the project for two principal reasons:-

- i) as yet we have not decided on a clear design specification due to the planning process and associated issues;
- ii) we are still in the process of raising sufficient funds to commission the services of an architect to produce a final design and to decide on the method of construction and the materials to be used; such design work cannot be undertaken until we have received a clear steer from the Planning Authority.

Until both these matters are addressed, the calculation of costs remains an estimate informed by historic information and potential future plans.

Based on our original draft plan produced by Boswell Associates (Architects) Ltd, we have calculated that ideally the footprint for:-

1) The community hall space and ancillary accommodation would be the main hall (20.635m x 10.75m, including fixed stage – area 221.83m<sup>2</sup>), storage rooms (14.1m x 4.0m – area 56.4m<sup>2</sup>), committee room (8.1m x 6.21m – area 50.34m<sup>2</sup>), entrance lobby (4.4m x 7.11m –31.1m<sup>2</sup>), W.C.s (i – 2.0m x 3.08m, ii – 4.36m x 3.08m, iii – 2.0m x 1.6m , iv – 2.0m x 1.34m, v – 5.0m x 3.0m – area 47.9m<sup>2</sup>), changing rooms (3.5m x 11.55m – area 40.4m<sup>2</sup>), kitchen (3.6m x 11.55m – area 22.6m<sup>2</sup>) – **total area: 425.76m<sup>2</sup>**.

2) The sports area would be the changing room (area 32m<sup>2</sup>), showers areas (2.2m x 1.75) plus toilets plus hand basins x 2 (area 15.4m<sup>2</sup>), official’s changing room area (area 5m<sup>2</sup>), kitchen (2.7m x 2.7m –area 7.29m<sup>2</sup>) and storage (area 40m<sup>2</sup>) – **total area: 99.69m<sup>2</sup>**.

The combined footprint for the current village hall and sports pavilion is 373.5m<sup>2</sup>; however, in February 2014 the Committee applied for a Lawful Development Certificate for both. This would allow us to increase the existing footprints of both buildings by 30% providing that we do not exceed a height restriction of 4 metres without the requirement for planning permission. But, more importantly, we can transfer and combine both increased footprints as a minimum footprint for the new build. If successful with the Lawful Development Certificate Applications, the combined footprint would rise to 486.9m<sup>2</sup> (30% of 373.5m<sup>2</sup>). The proposed footprint for the new community centre is at 525.45m<sup>2</sup>. Clearly from a planning perspective, the issuing of Lawful Development Certificates is critical to the Committee achieving a new facility which could be considered ‘fit for purpose’ for future years. Also the outcome will depend on how the Planning Authority reacts to the proposal of an increased footprint of 15% (from 486.9m<sup>2</sup> to 525.45m<sup>2</sup>).

We will be investigating the extent to which renewable energy technology can feature in the capital plan in order to reduce whole life facility costs and minimise the risk posed by continuing increases in fossil fuel prices.

**11.2. Revenue Expenditure**

		£
Maintenance	Community Centre	3000
	Playing Field	5000

Cleaning and sundries	2000
Rates	500
Utilities	2400
Insurance	1000
PRS licence	134
Window Cleaning	175
Fire extinguisher service	170
Advertising	100
Postage & stationery	50
Subscriptions	100
Dustbin hire (PHS annual charge)	310
Burglar & CCTV contract	300
<b>Total:-</b>	<b>15339</b>

**Notes to expenditure forecast:**

1. The predicted hall lettings are considered to be a fairly conservative estimate. There is an expectation that such new facilities will attract pilates, yoga and dance groups.
2. The utility costs are based on discussions with other new halls such as Scaynes Hill and High Hurstwood.
3. i) The maintenance fund for the hall is based on the assumption that during the early years of the new centre, costs will be relatively low and by the time they begin to rise, so also will have usage and bookings income.  
  
ii) The maintenance costs for the playing field are based on discussions with Horam and Burwash Parish Councils.
4. Insurance costs have been taken from experience at Scaynes Hill.
5. The burglar alarm and CCTV contracts were discussed with AB Fire and Security.

**12. Governance and management**

The facility will be managed by the Hadlow Down Community Centre Management Committee. Between

the preparation of this business plan and prior to the commencement of construction, the existing committees for the Village Hall and Playing Field will be merged with the current Hadlow Down Community Centre (HDCC).

It is anticipated that the HDCC will become registered with the Charity Commission as a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO) and as such the governing document will become its constitution. In most circumstances the trustees will be protected against contractual liabilities.









