

HADLOW DOWN COMMUNITY CENTRE

Minutes of meeting 13th October 2011

Meeting opened at 7.45pm

In attendance:- Janet Tourell, Richard Boswell, John Thompson, Bob Lake, Graham Terry, Paul James, Rachel Lewis, Vicky Richards,

Apologies for absence:-Don Smith, Nigel Harrison,

1. Chairman's report. Janet reported on the meeting with the Parish Council, the minutes of which are attached as Appendix 1. The Parish Council confirmed their support for the project. It was agreed that this Committee's minutes should be published on the website and mentioned in the Parish Magazine. GT to arrange with Eddie Westfield, JT to arrange with Wendy Neill.
2. Meeting with the planners. Richard reported on this very constructive meeting. We expect the written report from WDC incorporating ESCC Highways views by the 21st October. A copy of Bob Lake's notes of that meeting are attached as Appendix 2.
3. Janet and Vicky have collated the results of the survey and a summary of the bare numbers plus some of the comments are attached as Appendices 3 and 4. We had hoped that Brighton University would collate the results for us but for various reasons they could not yet do so. Rather late in the day it is now stating that there would be a charge for carrying out the work; in which case we could secure the services of a more locally based independent organisation/company to complete the analysis. (Bob Lake to investigate further). We still hope that they can assist to provide an element of impartiality but this may be impossible. The surveys are still coming in and we will retain them all until the project is complete.
4. Based on the survey results, the views given by ESCC Highways and probable cost implications, as well as the top line financial numbers Bob Lake proposed and Rachel Lewis seconded that the decision to go ahead with the Playing Field site be made. In view of his vested interest Paul James abstained and the motion was carried unanimously. A full background will be provided to the Parish Council who we hope will support this decision.
5. The meeting on the 28th now has more significance as we will be able to tell attendees that, subject to Parish Council support, we now have a clear mandate to proceed with the project and a clear agreement as to the site to be used. Refreshments will be provided for the meeting, the Village Hall Committee providing tea and cakes and members of this Committee some wine and additional food.
6. Reports from other Committee members. No other reports were given.
7. Precept planning. This Committee agreed that in the next twelve months it would aim to have
 - (a) a building fully designed but not to building regulation level;
 - (b) a new lease with the Diocese for the Playing Field land;
 - (c) the scheme would be fully costed and fully surveyed (tree/fauna and flora/etc).

This would mean that in twelve months time we would be ready for the final stage of Building Regulation approval and ready to start fund-raising seriously towards the new build. On this basis a fairly considerable sum would be needed and we could not expect the Parish Council to fund all of this. It was decided that we will ask specifically for the PC to fund the legal and other costs of the new lease together with an amount towards the other expenses. This Committee will need to fundraise for the remainder.

- 8 The Committee considered the future briefly in terms of how it would function in a new role of actually providing the new Community Centre. Whilst up until now allowing everyone to have their say and vote has been important to demonstrate transparency as we go forward the structure will change as sub-committees take forward different aspects of the task. In these circumstances it is unlikely that we can allow non-Committee members to take part in voting as they will not have the depth of knowledge necessary. However, we must maintain a dialogue with the community in Hadlow Down to ensure that they know what is happening at all times. This area will be discussed after the Public meeting on the 28th October.
- 9 DONM – 03.11.11 @ 7.30 pm

The meeting closed at 9.18 pm

Appendix 1

Meeting between Hadlow Down Community Centre Committee and Hadlow Down Parish Council

Minutes of meeting 6th October 2011
at 7:30pm

In attendance:- Janet Tourell, Richard Boswell, John Thompson, Bob Lake, Graham Terry, Paul James, Rachel Lewis, Sandra Richards, Vicky Richards, Nigel Harrison, David Walker and the PC Clerk Helen Simpson-Wells

7. **Apologies for absence:** apologies received from Cllr Damon Wellman

**2&3. Responsibilities: Parish Council only; Committee only; Parish Council and Committee.
Minutes of meetings.**

The Committee confirmed that they expected to receive the following from the Parish Council (PC) – support (financial and moral), proper dialogue, partnership, transparency and to fulfil the recommendations of the committee.

GT to forward original minutes to PC which confirms committee members.

GT

The committee members will be revised in October 2011.

Concern was expressed by the committee that some people in the village feel that the decision has already been made over which site will be used, they confirmed that this is not the case.

7.37pm Michael Lunn joined the meeting.

It was felt that there needs to more communication between the 2 groups. The PC will be copied in on all of the committee's minutes.

The committee were congratulated on the number of survey responses they had received.

It was confirmed that the PC made a resolution over a year ago supporting a new Community Centre, DW confirmed that nothing had changed.

The committee will need help from the PC with approaches to WDC.

GT confirmed that the committee's remit is to "establish the need for and villagers' requirements for a new hall and where it should be established and get it built"

DW advised that the PC would support the committee if they were following the view of the village.

4. Next Steps:

Concern was expressed that costs should be looked at, especially as the PC have their initial precept meeting for 2012-13 on 18th October.

It was agreed that the PC should be informed of the outcome of the survey and of the meeting with WDC planning department and ESCC Highways department, prior to the public meeting, although it was felt that it would be difficult to fit in another meeting prior to 28th October. The public will be informed, at their meeting, that the committee will be consulting with the PC.

The PC asked that the committee keep them informed and that they carry out the results of the survey. It was felt that the PC needs to be an impartial critical friend for the committee.

Paul James left the meeting at 8pm.

Janet Tourell to forward HSW a copy of the transferring deeds information from AirS. JTo

A discussion was held on the financing of the project and the possible future of the present village hall.

Once the results are known from the survey the committee will go to planning and then fundraise.

The committee will produce a project plan and the PC have an agreed partnership with the committee.

It was agreed that committee minutes will in future appear in the Parish Magazine and that the PC would see the planning department's report.

Survey results to be collated before the public meeting on 28th October.

Meeting closed 8:31pm

Appendix 2

Notes of meeting with Wealden District Council Planning Development Management and East Sussex County Council Highways Tuesday 27th September (Village Hall)

In attendance:

Doug Moss (Head of Planning and Building Control, WDC), Kal Pegler (Senior Highway Engineer, ESCC), Janet Tourell, Richard Boswell, Rachel Lewis, Bob Lake.

Apologies:

Graham Terry

Context:

Janet provided a verbal and brief explanation of the background to the project. After very little progress being made during the previous four years, it was decided in 2010 to invite a number of parishioners and several representatives of user organisations to form a group to realise the shared ambition to provide a much improved village hall. Currently, the group is conducting a survey of all residents within the parish to gauge accurately the level of support for a new building, what activities they would like to be engaged in and if they have a preference with regard to the location of a new hall – current site or playing field. Completed forms are to be gathered by 30th September and responses to be collated by the University of Brighton (Falmer campus) and shared with parishioners at an open evening due to take place on Friday 28th October. It is extremely important that at the meeting, we are able to share the views of both WDC Planning and Building Control and ESCC Highways.

Kal Pegler (ESCC)

Current site - concerned primarily with two issues: i) Parking ii) Location – access and egress

i) Parking – it was explained that regardless of the preferred site, more than adequate parking would be provided. However, it was pointed out that should future development of the land immediately above the hall take place, this could lead to residents using the village hall car parking spaces as an overflow. If an increasing number of cars were to be parked on Hut Lane itself, this could restrict access and importantly impede that of emergency vehicles. It was pointed out that, as part of the proposed housing development of the site referred to earlier, land was offered for additional car parking spaces but these were considered to be too few in number.

ii) Location – ESCC Highways already concerned about the issue of access off and egress onto the A272. With the provision of spaces at the New Inn and the understanding that vehicles should access the pub car park off the main road and leave via the rear the converted property (formerly garage outbuildings), this could lead to a bottleneck at the top of Hut Lane. This could result in stationary cars on the A272 waiting to turn in and those

turning left would be of particular concern given the bend in the road. Already the width of the top end of the lane is restricted by cars parking along the side of the converted property.

Kal pointed out that the lane from the Village Hall (from Hidden Cottage to Beech Tree Cottage) could alleviate this problem and, almost certainly, improvement to this lane and subsequent maintenance, would be made a condition of any planning consent. Having been advised that this was an 'unadopted lane', she stated that ESCC would have no authority to insist on this; therefore, the problem remains.

Playing field site: Prior to the meeting, she had visited the playing field and considered this to be a better option. It was pointed out that the volume of traffic using School Lane increases appreciably at peak times i.e. 7.00 – 9.00 am and 4.30 – 6.00 pm. She suggested the possibility of conducting some traffic flow measurement and analysis.

Doug Moss (Wealden DC)

i) Current site – suggested that a more acceptable measure would be to construct the new building in the field below, knock down the existing hall and convert to car parking spaces. Richard pointed out that the existence of the main sewer running across this section of the field could be problematic i.e. that Southern Water might object to anything being built above the sewer and might insist on it being diverted. If this were the case, it might entail significant costs.

DM said he would like to see the village hall rebuilt to the north of the extended site to give a clear, linear cut-off to the built environment with the car parking forming a courtyard where the existing hall sits. This avoids the indistinct visual spread into the grazing land to the north that would result if the hall stays in its current location and either rebuilt, extended/alterd or just repaired with the car park to the north. Even with hedging/fencing, he felt the built line would be indistinct. By re-siting the hall to the north, there is a clear, visible line to the end of the built environment. Extending the car park to the north was his least preferred option from a planning point of view.

DM felt that the height of the proposed hall might be more of an issue if located on the current site rather than the playing field although if the hall is located to the north this would then be further down the hill so would be mitigated to a certain extent. He was unsure about the proposed slope in the car park which in Richard's opinion may be necessary – he wasn't all that keen on this.

Should the decision be to relocate the hall to the playing field site, the issue of re-development of the existing site and the capital receipts being used as 'seedcorn' funding was raised. Doug was of the view that strictly speaking, this would be considered a 'brownfield site' and its re-development would be restricted to commercial use. However, as part of the Localism Bill, he did advise that the Parish Council would have within its powers to use neighbourhood planning to permit the development that it wants to see - in full or in outline – without the need for planning applications. This will be called the 'neighbourhood development order.' He pointed out that Neighbourhood development plans or orders will not take effect unless there is a majority of support in a referendum of the neighbourhood.

Rachel Lewis brought up the potential for conflict about noise should the Houseman site be built on for houses and a new hall with increased patronage on the current site.

ii) Playing Field – Suggested leaving pavilion as is, turning hall through 90 degrees so that the front elevation faces school lane. A further recommendation was to re-site the whole building to the north, closer to the boundary; re-site access track on the site to the north of the oak tree that would remain (the larger one could be removed, and be replaced/mitigated by new planting on the current pavilion footprint).

DM stated that he would prefer to see the roofline to the catslide softened a bit and also remarked that the front elevation as shown was very nice and once turned to face the lane, would be very acceptable to the planners subject to addressing the comments about the catslide roof.

He said at the moment the land is amenity land. The new hall, although a building, would provide amenity use still – albeit indoors – so, in effect, would not create a significant issue as far as change of use is concerned. By moving the track within the site to the north, parking spaces could be provided between the re-sited track and the southern boundary (school house).

In conclusion, in his view, either site would be likely to gain planning permission 'with a few tweaks here and there'. Site visit to the playing field followed.

It was agreed that WDC and ESCC would produce a joint report ready for the planned public meeting. Doug offered as part of the consultation fee/service that he would be willing to attend a further meeting to explain his views.

Appendix 3

Rough summary of 'ticked boxes' on Survey about the Community Centre

226 forms returned (more since received and others to be collected)

- Q 1 Do you use either the Village Hall Or playing Field
Village Hall 149 said Yes 70 said No
Playing Field 143 said Yes 71 said No
- Q2 Have you used either in the Past?
138 said Yes 46 said No
124 said Yes 52 said No
- Q3 Boxes ticked for activities:
- | | | |
|--------------|---------------------|---------------|
| Keep Fit 131 | Dancing 97 | Bowls 44 |
| Badminton 44 | Adult Education 101 | Drama 87 |
| Bridge 21 | Martial Arts 40 | Lunch Club 32 |
| Pavilion 40 | Computer Club 48 | |
- Q 4 Would you use a new Community Centre? 206 said Yes, 17 said No
52 said 'Quite a lot', 128 said 'Sometimes' and 26 said 'Rarely'
- Q6 Which site do you prefer?
46 were 'Undecided', 73 said 'Existing Site' and 106 said 'Playing Field'
(This differs to Janet's summary of 108, 74 and 44 – but I didn't mark the Person who's only comment on their form 'will go with what the village decides' as an 'undecided')
- Q7 69 people said they would be prepared to help in various ways on the Project

180 said they were responding for their household, 42 as individuals

Only relatively few gave their age indication:

6 were under 21, 87 were 21 – 65 and 32 were 65+

Appendix 4

SOME OF THE COMMENTS FROM THE SURVEY FORMS

About the survey in general:

Very few people were completely uninterested although one person wrote 'Does it matter?' (Richard and I got the impression that people were pleased to be asked)

Safety was an issue with both sites

A community Centre should be a focal point for the Village

No comparison of cost between the playing field site and the current site

The second question was odd! (This was generally not understood)

Question 3 should refer to 'uses' not 'facilities'

One or two thought it a waste if time because decision already been made!!!

Current site:

Many thought current site was the 'centre of the community'
One or two people were under the impression that the Hall just needs 'sprucing up'.
There would be speeding along Hall/Hut Lane if the Hall is sold. (There already is!)
Current site is central and it would be unlikely that more housing would be built around there if a hall was built.
(A large number of people from around the old hall were of this opinion)
There were objections to the increased usage of Hall Lane if the current hall is rebuilt – it was pointed out that traffic there is already dangerous.
Parking on the current site is a bone of contention
Poor conditions in current hall a factor in Toddler Group ceasing.
Present hall looks uninviting
Cost of improving current site worrying.
The adjacent 'brownfield site' (Houseman's?) should be developed into a new hall.
One resident suggested selling the old site and 'bringing a bit of industry into the village'
The speed on the A272 was a factor for one person who thought the traffic was still going over 30 mph and would therefore compromise safety

Playing field site:

Concern over loss of rural land, peace and quiet of playing field.
Plans were too intrusive and too much
A pavilion definitely needed
Noise on PF was a concern from the people in School Lane because activity would be increased. However some thought having noise on the playing field was preferable to noise on the current site.
PF site more cost effective
PF site much better for the children – eg, Rainbows/Brownies/ Children's Clubs etc (Many young families expressed this view
Concern over how building on PF would affect Fayre and Winterfest
Lack of street lighting on School Lane a problem

Facilities:

Facilities for young people (a lot of support)
More meeting rooms
Good kitchen facilities (mentioned a lot)
Disabled access to building
Good lavatories
Good chairs
Efficient heating
Health centre – local surgeries
Cafe/Shop in building
Pool/ Gym
Good heating
Mobile Library venue

Uses for the Hall:

Adult Education (a lot of support)
Markets
Martial arts
Dance and exercise (very big response – one dance teacher replied that there should be a sprung floor if there was going to be dance)
Yoga
Important to attract business from outside the village if it was going to function properly
Anything that was built must have 'green' credentials
Youth Club needed
Cinema club
Somewhere for parties and weddings
Music – concerts, jazz etc
Cooking classes
Art classes
Rifle Range!!!!
General comments:
Too old (not many of these)
Many thought that a hall on either site should maximise business opportunities
No where for old people to go! (I did notice that there would be some support for a lunch club)
Children were being taken out of the village because there was no where for them to go!

Help:

Quite a few left names, addresses and emails

One person stated they would only help if the hall went on their preferred site

One person said they would help 'maybe' (Preferred site was the VH!)

Finally this: **'Happy to go along with what's best for the village'** (Hallelujah!)