

<p><b>Village Hall Working Committee meeting - VHWC – 20<sup>th</sup> September 2018 – 7pm</b></p> <p><b>Committee Attendees:</b></p> <p>Christine Ingham – CI</p> <p>Mike Hole - MH</p> <p>Richard Hurrell – RH</p> <p>Paul Brown - PB</p> <p>Julie Pryke – JP</p> <p>Alan Christie – AC</p> <p>Sylvia Pettitt – SP</p> <p>Residents – Households 42 / residents 57</p> <p><b>Apologies received by 5 committee members</b></p> <p><b>Apologies Received by 9 residents</b></p>		
<p>CI - opened at 7.15 to thank everyone for a great turnout. CI asked that everyone had taken a voting slip and to check that everyone had signed the attendance list. CI introduced the committee and working party members, explaining that the working party was created to look at possibilities and that they had managed to come to a conclusion. The last meeting of this type was in 2006 and nothing had really been done since that meeting except that the committee had tried to maintain the running of the village hall. It was agreed that an open meeting should take place and importantly funding bodies need to know that we as the committee have consulted the residents. Fund raising from these bodies is a difficult task, and we need to all decide if we really want a village hall. After much consideration and work we realise this is not as easy as one might think it is and something radical needs to happen.</p> <p>CI introduced AC to the floor – This is all our hall, and the blunt truth is that</p>	<p><b>To Action</b></p>	<p><b>Time Frame</b></p>

when we run events it is the same 20 odd people and we need to face reality. We raise £200 and when we need to raise £50,000, £100,000 or £380,000 we need to ask ourselves the question is there enough support and will and it will need to be the people that decide.

If we want the hall we need to pick an option. Nothing is black and white. There will be some funding available. Raising money means asking for it whether it be national business, community funding, crowd funding, local business and the villagers.

We will look at the options now and no matter how small your questions are or no matter how blunt, if you have an issue let's say and openly discuss the issue and then we will have a vote.

The committee will then work on that option, but to do that we need direction, which is the broad function of tonight.

What does it mean to the villagers which is approximately 120 households – so we need to look at the costs, ownership etc. If we are asking village house holds for money whilst there is a general figure on the boards of course some households may be able to offer more / some less. We need to inform you about the scale of the tasks and who pays.

One option for example would mean we would have to ask for money to knock the village hall down, we could possible off load the hall to the local authorities, but we want people to understand the issues.

MH was introduced and started in saying that it is our collective responsibility;

- The villagers own it
- That is what we are trying to get over
- We are at a fork in the road and which way we go? Well we ALL have to make the decision

AC an option is to see a portion of the land to create the fund that would give us approximately ⅓ of the fund required for the village hall.

Resident asked – well who owns the village hall?

CI noted that this was a gift of the village hall and that we can sell it and she believes there is no covenant, albeit there are some questions over Parish Council involvement in the site. It maybe that we look in to that.

JP said that there was a covenant and whilst she is no property lawyer the covenant is for the villagers and that who and why it has been given and who is the beneficiary in any agreement means that it could be OK. At the end of the day, if we don't do anything there will be no hall. It was gifted by the Will's Estate via Mr Praed in the 1950s.

AC said Option 1 £4000 per year to keep it going and that does NOT include

any maintenance of the building or any major issues/repairs, it just keeps the lights on.

A survey was done ,which gave a life left of 15 years and it is coming up over the next couple of years and now the hall would likely be condemned. Asbestos, structural issues are a real risk to keeping it going and for due diligence we would have it re surveyed and there would be a high risk of it being condemned in the committee's opinion.

MH pointed out that ultimately it is a large shed with no foundations, and so like a shed in the garden, it will begin to decay.

We would need to consider our legal and insurance position if condemned as we would be liable for a dangerous building and there are consequences of that, of course. We would also need to spend £4000 -£5000 on a survey from funds only for it to be shut down. So if the building is shut, we lock the building up, but it is still here, it still needs to be insured and costs would be the same.

AC pointed out again as per one of the options that it would be £50,000 just to knock down the building and it was a horrendous though to be asking for money to knock the building down. MH said that we could possibly go to the council for help, but at this stage we do not know what they would say.

Resident asked – how much does it cost to run and pointed out that if it was closed there would be no income

CI noted that we break about even annually and that it takes approximately £4000 - £5000 to run per year. JP noted that we have approximately £12,000 already in the new hall working party funds. £6000 from donations , £3000 from events and a huge contribution from the open gardens and a contribution from the Village Hall committee to the working party. AC pointed our again that otherwise we raise approximately £200 per event and that it is difficult to raise money.

So we have Option 2 - to raise funds solely to knock the building down, Option 3 – to build a similar hall in scale is £380,000 on the same footprint.

Resident asked – yes what is the scale?

MH- responded to say single story open plan – a typical village hall. Use for the bowls club and to hold 100 people.

MH had estimated the cost, and is a professional architect and has looked at this project and decided that we cannot improve the current building as it will not come up to the required specifications.

We have looked at other village halls and generally the spend is £450,000 to £500,000 and we have talked to other villages. MH pointed out that his services are free and that constitutes already an approximate £50,000 saving in professional fees.

AC pointed out that a big single payment from the lottery has shrunk so

much, money on that scale is not there and it is tricky

Resident asked – does the £380,000 include the knocking down and asbestos removal?

Resident asked – what would the village hall be used for? What research has been done to see what the villagers want to use it for?

AC responded to the last question by saying that we have done some work but have not surveyed the residents for a long time.

AC confirmed that the £380,000 did include asbestos removal and demolition of the old hall.

Latest surveys looked at the potential use of wedding events and corporate events but the business plan is one thing but the reality of it is not matching up and many halls are underused. The reality nowadays is different and I don't think a village hall wedding is a regular occurrence and conference facilities now sell technology and catering as part of their package and so the reality is that corporate bookings/ weddings tend not to happen.

Resident commented - that the general use of the building really is the bowls club and in the winter the hall is cold and uncomfortable. The cricket is a big help and of course Parish Council meetings and other small events as already noted.

Resident commented – that from the most recent survey in 2014 of 93 houses surveyed 34% said 'yes' they would use the village hall for a wedding. Furthermore 64% said yes to a collaboration with another village hall such as Hargrave, Dalham or Lidgate

AC said that the feeling is that the residents would like a village hall, but we have to face the reality that people don't turn up to events, so it is difficult

Resident commented – Having spent all the money then, we may not be able to run it?

AC said the reward is if people use it

Resident commented – the question should be – do we need a village hall? If people will not commit or organise things at the hall

AC said that this was a valid point and it concerns us as a working party that we put the time and effort in to it, it is a concern that it will not be used. It needs a lot of good will and we have seen that so far, this is a great village.

Resident commented – So those successful village halls, both financially and that attract people, comparisons need to be made.

AC said that generally the expectations of new village halls generally haven't happened.

JP pointed out that Westhorpe village hall, which is a smaller village is very successful and some committee members had been to visit it.

Resident further commented – so did you gain an insight in to why it is successful?

JP replied that it is a hi-spec hall with good technology and the hall was revolutionised. JP referred to the phrase “if they build it, they will come”

MH added that he believes that architecture can change people’s lives and we have an opportunity, which leads to option 4 which is to build a new hall and sell one building plot creating sufficient funds to raise a large percentage of the funds to build a new village hall and that is the ‘game changer’. We have raised 12% of the funds already

It changes the loadings of the individuals and families, external grants supporting us. Calculating it out and of course some residents may give more and some less, but ultimately we will be climbing a smaller ladder. For example if we raise £50,000 a lot of grants will match the funds raised

Resident commented – so we think we are getting £280,000 for the plot?

Resident commented – who is the demographic look at the ages of the attendees this evening

MH responded that yes that is the expected rate for the plot and that the hall ultimately is for the future generation

Resident commented – that has any affordable housing option been considered for the plot? What about keeping the young in the village?

MH said that we have gone for this plot size to enable a reasonable size house to be placed on it, rather than social housing and we have gone for the option that would bring in most money and what a developer would want for the site. That is to say we would not rule it out. The options shown are all concepts.

AC commented that we would do more work on this as we are selling the ‘villager’s’ land

Resident commented – Have you asked for more land for the cricket pitch, maybe as a new approach? As the cricket club we could apply for funds that may available from England and Wales Cricket Board. Bullet proof glass would need to be installed if the hall was moved in to the position shown on Option 4 !

Resident commented that in terms of demographics out of 97 houses in the 2014 survey 34% were over 60 , 33% were 30 – 60 and 32% were less than

Resident asked - to verify the site lay out – MH explained to the other side of the car park

MH said the reason why is that it keeps the access already in place using the acre park and keeps the land that will be sold for the plot viable for selling, it being away from the new village hall

Resident asked - and what about the children’s playground?

AC said that this will probably go, as it is facing the end of its life and needs replacing soon

Resident asked – If the hall is rebuilt will it be smaller/ can it be?

MH said that having the toilets and providing for the bowls club it will need to be a certain size. We don’t gain enough ‘reduction in costs’ by reducing the size of the hall, relatively

Resident asked – have you spoken to the pub, as this could work in conjunction with the hall or indeed as a hall?

AC said that some outline discussions had taken place and this is another tricky scenario. Yes there are some people that have said that could it not go to the pub, however there is an overall feeling that there is a potential conflict of interest and some people won’t go to the pub for example

Resident commented – it does work in some communities

AC said that it would take the bowls away for example. Maybe the cricket would use it. The two working together may be the way forward but at this stage I am not sure

Resident commented – We have two churches. They need to be used for more things and I have read an article in a newspaper (which I have a copy of) about how this has worked in other communities

AC remarked that the broad concept is a good one

Resident commented – St Barnabas can move chairs and is already next to the village hall playing fields and has parking

Resident commented – had any though been given to a commercial sale and then they could contribute to the village hall

MH said ‘ who wants a commercial premises in Ousden?’

Resident commented that if the sale of the plot is negative then could we sell more land ?

MH said that it could be considered but we might need the land

AC said the we recognised there were different funding levels from different sources and that the value of one donation doesn't outweigh the value of another, and we do hope some substantial donations go in

Resident commented – we could play the lottery – create a syndicate

Resident commented – There are various charitable trusts – have you tried the Wills Trust ? (Chris already has knowledge of this and it might be useful to us later on)

AC commented that if we start to go up the scale in funding we will get the momentum going

Resident asked – do we have a chance of gaining planning permission?

MH said that we think the chances at the moment are good. We have a good case.

Resident commented – Just listening I feel we do not have a choice, otherwise we are left with an eyesore, we are left having to do something and we can only sell this piece of land. The reality is that it has to be option 4.

Residents <group> “hear, hear”

AC so we need to explore the options and present them to the villagers and this is why we want a vote. We feel it is the way forward

MH and then we have discussions about the size and what the village hall will be used for

Resident commented – there are only 2 options 2 and 4 – knock it down or sell the land

AC said that from his own personal point of view it would be knock it down or sell the land and build a new hall and feels the village will be richer for it. Also it may not be used now but in 2 generations time it might come round as things come in cycles and so this is a consideration.

We now need to take the vote if everyone is happy.

AC thanked everyone

<<Vote takes place >>

**Result**

Option 1 – 2 votes

Option 2 – 3 votes

Option 3 – 3 votes

Option 4 – 58 votes

**Option 4 wins**

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