

FEASIBILITY STUDY
WIDECOMBE VILLAGE HALL
STEERING GROUP

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1. Abstract

The Widecombe Village Hall Steering Group (WVHSG) has carried out activities to inform this feasibility study primarily over the past year. Documents in the Appendix evidence the research and consultation that has fed into this report.

89% of local survey respondents expressed their support for a new village hall and the majority of groups regularly hiring the Church House stated that they would move into new facilities, with most expecting this to increase attendance as a result. Primary school aged children are keen to see Youth Club facilities offered in a new hall with 62% of respondents dissatisfied with the clubs currently offered outside of school in the locality. Music events, fitness groups and social functions have been highlighted locally as key requirements of new hall provision, along with appropriate meetings space.

Future Church House financial viability has been an important consideration, with many parishioners stating their concern about the potential impact of a new hall on this historic building. The future of Church House as a community building is currently secure according to the Management Committee, as a result of regular craft and village markets which would continue to use it in preference to a new-build. Low overheads give confidence that the known income from a reduced number of users will continue to maintain Church House viability in the future. The Church House Management Committee have formally stated their support for a new village hall in Widecombe. Local businesses and nearby village hall committees have also indicated their support for the project, recognising many potential benefits and few concerns have been raised.

The initial, aspirational concept design that has been created by architects as a result of community and stakeholder feedback provides a large hall and separate smaller multi-use space which can become one large room through the use of an opening wall. Generous kitchen, storage and office spaces were designed in along with unisex loos. Heritage Centre facilities, including archive space and workroom sit opposite the main hall either side of an open-air courtyard. Externally accessible changing rooms have also been designed in to support the adjacent sports group facilities. However, a significant funding shortfall resulted in smaller building layouts being considered, using reduced footprints and excluding the Heritage Centre, with a focus on the community-based village hall facilities. The latter offers a similar level of functionality, but the smaller footprint makes it more affordable and reduces the layout to a single span building, which has a positive effect on the ease of construction.

Hayes Field has been independently identified as the most appropriate location for a new hall on the basis of comparing several characteristics of the potential sites – Access & Highways, Drainage, Character & Appearance and Village Connectivity. Local residents and regular hirers of Church House have also favoured this site in their survey responses. Hayes Field would be available for purchase by a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) set up for the purpose of managing a new village hall.

Capital Investment Plan research, by an experienced team at Devon Communities Together, has indicated that approximately £700,000 of funds could be available in the form of grants, public sector contributions, local fundraising and loans. Such funding does not include large grants from any Lottery funded community building funds, as these are no longer available. Community fundraising would need to reach around £50,000 and as loans now form a significant element of the funding mix, an increase to householders' council tax precepts should be investigated to support a loan via the Parish Council. Additional benefactor support appears necessary in order to provide a completed project.

Preliminary estimates from the architects, using the concept plans, suggested £2,000 per square metre should be used for the purpose of initial budgeting. On an aspirational building design with

645m² this totals £1,300,000 with an additional £400,000 estimated for fit-out costs and professional fees. This would not match the available funds and appears poor value-for-money. Therefore, other approaches have been pursued. Using a 'multi-contract' or Design-and-Build approach and value engineering is estimated to reduce this to £1,000,000 in total even with a similar build size. The main driver of the reduction in cost is a focus on simplification in construction form from that which the architects have proposed, into a simple steel framed single building. If a hall without Heritage Centre was built it is thought to cost £750,000. It is then considered a further saving of £110,000 can be made by committee-led construction of certain ancillary aspects and some aspects of fit-out. As a result, it is thought the cash cost of the hall and changing facilities may be £640,000. This figure still includes a 10% contingency on build cost.

When the Heritage Centre is not included in the design, approximately 90m² is removed from the building footprint and costs will reduce. One negative result of this would be the loss of an estimated £100,000 of National Lottery heritage funding in addition to other smaller funds to the project. This would also represent a lost opportunity to provide a unique and distinctive facility which could have wide reaching benefits including the attraction and retention of additional visitors to the village. However, there has been a limited positive response locally in supporting the work required to set up and run such a facility.

The expected income and expenditure of an operational hall has been considered. Hourly charges range from £5/hour for local repeat hire of the meeting room to £20/hour for non-local hirers using the whole venue. All hire charges are inclusive of light and heat, with no separate meter. Based on conservative anticipated hall hire, an annual income of C. £13,500 is projected. Running costs and annual expenditure are forecast as C. £11,000 giving a profitable business projection. An employed part-time Manager has also been considered, with additional grant funding available to support the set-up of this post in early years and it would need to be self-funding thereafter.

Should the project go ahead, next steps are outlined which would include the setting up of a CIO in order to proceed with the detailed design, planning and construction phases and facilitate ongoing management responsibility. Detailed design will be essential to confirm the final layout, footprint and finish of the building and this will lead on to a planning permission application and further consultation with Dartmoor National Park Authority (DNPA). Fundraising will need to commence immediately, and a sustained programme of community events and activities will sit alongside formal grant applications.

Hypothetical timescales for the completion of the project are indicated and this is potentially possible within 2 – 2.5 years. Fundraising is the most significant determining factor and the least predictable, so this could extend the anticipated duration.

The aspirational design completed to date will require further development in order to settle upon the final scale, form and finish of the building, but the research conducted suggests that an affordable project is achievable. On this basis, a new village hall in Widecombe of approximately 400m² would be feasible and the WVHSG recommend that this approach is pursued.

2. Introduction

In May 2016 Widecombe Parish Council invited the community to consider the feasibility of building a new village hall as a result of the insurmountable challenges posed by the existing Church House building – inadequate accessibility, restrictions imposed by Listed building status, high heating costs for hirers, limited flexibility for use and basic facilities. The restrictions of the present hall limit the range of activities that the community can access, and residents are forced to travel to alternative venues. For residents that are older or are disabled, use of the current hall is severely restricted as the main space is on the first floor with no disabled access. A steering group of local residents was set up and this has now formally constituted as the Widecombe Village Hall Steering Group (“WVHSG”). This group has investigated local opinion, carried out work in support of this feasibility study and sought and received funding for the external professionals who been employed.

Community surveys have been completed and feedback is positive, potential locations have been identified and compared and the viability of moving the project forward is now formally considered in this report.

Organised visits to three existing village halls (Broadhempston, Lustleigh and Meldon) were arranged in order to gain insight from their management committees on the design, build and running of different styles and sizes of community buildings.

The feasibility work, including the engagement of architects and local rural development charity Devon Communities Together, covers a wide scope including: evaluating the existing community facilities and highlighting potential for collaboration and complimentary uses where shortcomings exist; assessing the impact of a new hall on other local and nearby facilities within the Widecombe Parish; consideration of a potential building and site; sketch design and outline costings; capital and revenue funds consideration and estimated project timescales with continued stakeholder consultation throughout this process.

3. Organisation – Widecombe Village Hall Steering Group

3.1. The existing organisation & its constitution

In July 2017 the WVHSG was formally constituted with the aim to *“develop and present a recommendation for construction of a viable, multi-purpose Village Hall in Widecombe to meet the needs and aspirations of the members of the Community of the parish of Widecombe-in-the-Moor and its immediately surrounding population, as well as providing for features to enhance its economic viability.”*

The committee is made up of between 4 and 14 annually elected members who are required to meet a minimum of three times each year. This is in addition to an annual general meeting, at which members are invited to attend and vote. A Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and Membership Officer are appointed at the AGM.

Residents of the Parish of Widecombe are invited to become members of the Group and those aged over 14 years shall have voting rights. Membership rights can be granted by the Committee on an individual basis for those living outside of the Parish.

See Appendix 1 for the Constitution.

3.2. The history of the organisation

The WVHSG was informally created in May 2016 following the Parish Council AGM at which the community was asked to consider the feasibility of building a new village hall in the village. Group members were initially individuals from the community who felt compelled to investigate the opportunity further and have voluntarily put their time and expertise into this process. The Group was formally constituted a little over 12 months later and has moved forward with the consultation process and research required to complete this document.

3.3. Finances & management

There is an elected Treasurer on the Committee who is responsible for all financial record-keeping and, along with two other named signatories, has authority to make payments on behalf of the group in line with the approval procedures set out in the constitution. Annual accounts are presented at the AGM and are independently audited.

As a newly formed Group, there were no initial funds, so members of the Committee made small cash donations to enable start-up costs, such as printing and membership fees to be met. As the project has progressed and the likely costs of feasibility work have become known, the Committee has applied for grants to support this work. In December 2017 a substantial grant of £10,000 was received from the National Lottery Awards for All scheme to enable an Architect to carry out site reviews, prepare an initial project brief and concept design including budget costings. The grant has also enabled the committee to continue receiving support from Devon Communities Together, local rural development charity, in order to effectively continue stakeholder engagement and fully consider all of the potential impacts on existing community facilities, highlighting the potential for collaboration and complimentary uses where shortcomings exist. Small fundraising activities have been undertaken to cover additional costs and VAT and these events have been well supported locally by members and parishioners alike, raising £665 to date. Additional local grants and donations have amounted to over £500 and membership of WVHSG has also brought in fees of nearly £200.

The organisation continues to cover its costs and end-of-year accounts will be audited ready for presentation at the first AGM. It should be noted that if the project does not go ahead, unused funds from the Awards for All grant will need to be returned and this may be in the region of £5,000.

3.4. The projected future of the organisation

The WVHSG would be responsible for managing the project through to its completion. This would include overseeing and facilitating the design, planning application approval and construction of a new hall to the point where it could operate as a community building.

An application for Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) status would need to be undertaken as a priority before proceeding with the project, requiring the creation of new aims and objectives and a new constitution. This is necessary to meet the conditions of the sale of the land but also the CIO structure has several benefits over unincorporated charities and charities that are limited companies: the members and trustees are usually personally protected from the financial and contractual liabilities incurred by the charity – this is not the case for an unincorporated charity. The new charity would be able to move forward with planning applications, fundraising and ultimately the construction of a new hall.

There are a couple of options for the effective running of a completed facility to manage the maintenance, bookings and finances of the new hall. A voluntary Management Committee of the CIO should be established (as per other local community buildings) with legal and statutory duties to be met, but a part-time employed Manager may also be appropriate and funds can be applied for to support this role for up to 3 years.

A paid Manager would offer several benefits such as providing a reliable and available point of contact for those wanting to hire and view the hall; ability to increase the number of bookings each year through direct marketing and advertising; potentially overseeing a Heritage facility and public access to it and it generates local employment. A Management Committee would be responsible for recruiting and employing this member of staff (likely to be on a part-time basis), with a commitment to paying a salary. There would need to be an expectation that the Manager would be 'self-funding' after initial grant-funding support ends, by bringing in sufficient additional funds to cover their own costs.

4. The Project

4.1. The demand for its facilities

The formal consideration of the need for improved community facilities in Widecombe was borne of the concern raised by the current Church House Management Committee regarding the longevity of the Church House as a village hall being fit for purpose. There are several significant failings of this 16th Century, listed building in terms of meeting modern standards and general requirements of a community building, namely the severely limited access for the disabled and those with limited or impaired mobility; expensive and poor heating; limited on-site parking; minimal secure storage and limited catering facilities. In order to fully understand the views of Parishioners it was agreed that individual surveys to all householders along with separate surveys to groups currently hiring the Church House on a regular basis should be distributed and the results analysed.

A community survey was distributed to all households within the Widecombe Parish in May 2017 to seek views on the existing Church House facilities; support for a new facility; required hall facilities; hall uses and potential location.

29% of households responded to the community survey and 89% of these respondents expressed support for the idea of a new village hall in Widecombe. Various potential facilities were proposed within the survey. The questionnaire attempted to only focus on additional facilities, since certain fundamental items such as disabled access are legally required and would be a part of any new building. Nonetheless, respondents typically restated these items since these are typical complaints about the existing hall. Of these additional facilities, extra catering provision and facilities for larger groups were most popular. Investment in acoustics and additional meeting rooms were also highly rated. Some respondents raised concern over the impact on the current Church House and its future use, as well as the impact on Leusdon Village Hall, which is also within the Parish of Widecombe. The points are considered more fully in the section 5 - *Impacts expected on other local provision*.

A further survey to existing groups that regularly hire the Church House in Widecombe was distributed in November 2017 to seek information on existing hire details; facilities used/required; space used/required; storage used/required; potential impact of a more accessible hall on group attendees and favoured new hall location.

There was a 72% response rate to the group survey and only 2 users expressed an intention to remain at Church House if a new hall was built. 71% of existing groups who responded to the question expected their attendance would increase with the provision of a new hall.

Some members of the Widecombe History Group (WHG) highlighted the need for improved archive storage and digitising work space and requested that this be considered in the new hall design, and the WHG shared details of an ideal footprint for these distinct spaces for incorporation into the design. From this, the idea of a Heritage Centre was born.

It was recognised that the community survey method may tend to reach the younger members of the community only via a parent filling in responses on behalf of younger potential users. For this reason a specific youth survey was carried out. Questionnaires aimed at primary school pupils were distributed through Widecombe Primary School and parents were invited to help their children fill them in. There was a 20% response rate, with roughly even numbers of boys and girls responding across the full age range of 5 – 11 years old. 62% of these children did not feel that many activities or sports opportunities were available to them locally, outside of the school and 70% wanted a new

Youth Club in the village. A separate online survey was created for secondary school-aged children, but despite widely advertising this there were no respondents.

See Appendix 2 – Community survey data, Appendix 3 – Group survey data and Appendix 4 - Youth survey data for full results.

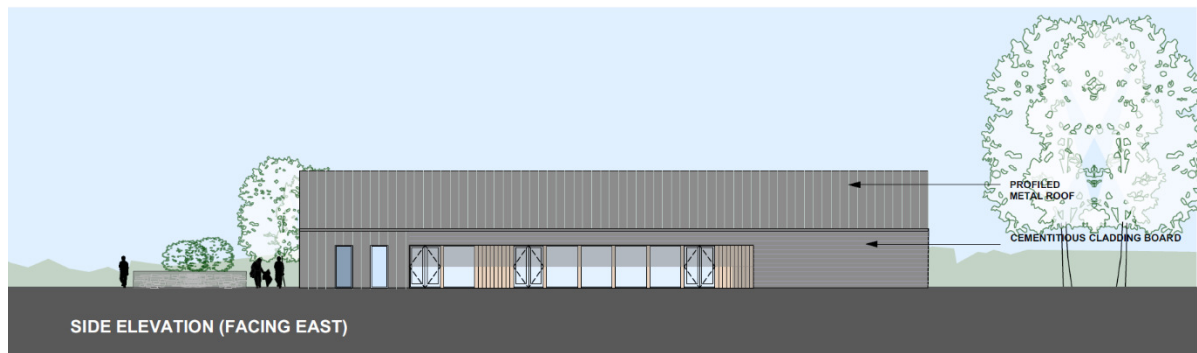
WVHSG worked through the survey data to provide a facilities list to the architects, which reflects what features need to be included and their relative importance. The architects have then referred to this in developing their proposal.

See Appendix 5 for the facilities list which was developed.

A number of specific additional suggestions were made relating to potential extra facilities, which have been taken forward where there has been apparent funding available or where it has been possible to incorporate these into the business plan, or where it seems important and possible to incorporate into the main hall.

For the purpose of initial aspirational design development, it was considered that there may be sufficient demand, and potential funding for, a Heritage Centre and digitisation space, and for replacement changing facilities for the adjacent sports facilities whose current facilities are in need of improvement. There were some suggestions which were not taken forward due to difficulty in understanding how they would work and be funded in practice, such as incorporating a Post Office.

4.2. The proposed project



The project which is emerging based on local demand is for a new build village hall in Widecombe. This hall would be a high-quality building of simple and sympathetic style as befits the location in a scenic and iconic village, with sufficient space to accommodate a wide range of uses, including different concurrent use, and can include facilities for specific local groups where demand and funding allows.

The main part of the building would consist of a main hall for flexible use with a floor space of up to 150m², suitable for seating up to 120 people. This main hall adjoins a secondary multi-use room with flexible folding wall to allow the positioning of temporary staging and connection or separation of these spaces. Each space has independent storage, toilet and kitchen facilities. Both spaces open out onto an external covered space offering panoramic views of the valley. A combination of both flexible spaces permits an audience capacity up to 200 as requested by at least one potential user group. This flexibility also allows for larger functions and events, such as weddings.

Two options have then been pursued.

In one option a second building has been incorporated with two different specific uses; a Heritage Centre to support the history group in their archive, digitisation and interpretation activities, and a changing facility for the adjacent sports facilities to replace the existing time expired facilities. Joining these two distinct elements of the building are two small flat or low-pitched buildings which provide main toilet facilities, as well as a lobby and display area, and which enclose a small courtyard.

A second option, which does not yet have high-quality architect drawings but appears more likely given available funding, is that within the single main building the changing facilities are accommodated in addition to the reception area. A Heritage Centre is excluded from this layout. Drawings will shortly be available if the project is supported by the community.

In either case the building(s) would all have level access, with modern high-quality building specification and finishes. This high specification build offers a well-insulated building with low energy consumption and has been conceived to have low maintenance costs and the most efficient energy conservation and usage values. Visually whilst the building form is simple in terms of a large single span hall and adjoining building, the linking buildings and different finishes create an interesting profile and are sympathetic to nearby agricultural and residential buildings.

The above description has developed from the community responses which were received and incorporates as many features as could practically be delivered. Many community responses asked for a bold and future-proofed design, with low running and maintenance costs. Whilst detailed drawings exist for the larger more complex design, it is only after detailed appraisal that a cost-effective proposal has developed. These do not yet have high quality drawings, but schematic layouts are included in this report, along with descriptions of the spaces.

4.3. The clients / users

Feedback received from surveys has given the WVHSG a clear indication of the number and type of regular groups expected to hire the new hall in the future and predictions have been made regarding one-off or irregular hire in addition to this.

22% of community survey respondents were from households with children aged 16 or under resident. 27% were households comprising only of adults over the age of 66. This demonstrates the range of ages and family groups resident in the village but it is interesting to see that there is vast agreement on many of the functions that the hall should deliver to meet their needs. For example, 44% of respondents prioritised social gatherings as key activities to be held in the hall.

The majority of regular groups currently hiring the Church House have indicated that they would prefer to use a new, accessible and purpose-built hall with several groups indicating that they anticipate their memberships to grow as a result of this move. The introduction of new clubs, including a Youth Club and fitness groups (yoga, Pilates, Zumba etc) are expected to increase hall usage by children & young people and those who currently have to travel to find provision elsewhere. 15% of community survey respondents want fitness provision and 62% of respondents from the primary school children surveyed felt that there are not enough fun sports activities (outside of school) on offer locally. 5 community survey respondents indicated a desire for badminton facilities in the new hall, but as the number was so low and a regular group exists at Leusdon Memorial Hall already, it has not been included in the design – not least because the impact on the height of the building would be significant and the cost and visual impact of this were not deemed justifiable for the minimal demand.

12% of community survey respondents, as you might expect, were keen for a new hall to include pre-school provision. This has been incorporated into the design but following advice from other settings and Devon Communities Together, we have developed a reasonably sized multi-use space which

incorporates designated storage space for the pre-school. The reasons for avoiding single, designated spaces for sole occupancy are that this reduces the opportunities for chargeable use during all potential hire periods, the size of the building could increase significantly if all local groups requested designated space and multi-use spaces offer 'future-proofing' should circumstances change and groups no longer require purpose-built rooms. The archive store, if included in the final design, is an exception to this rule as a single-use facility because it has particular requirements such as humidity control and natural light restriction for managed document storage.

70% of the respondents from the primary school survey wanted a new Youth Club in the village and many children and parents commented on the lack of organised activities for children locally, despite school club provision being rated very positively and well attended. A huge range of activities and sports were identified by the children as being of interest and several parents suggested that if these could be rolled into a Youth Club programme of events it would be hugely beneficial to local children. Early evening was identified as the favourite time for a new Youth Club, with respondents stating a preference for ages restricted to primary school pupils only.

Music events and opportunities were highlighted by 19% of respondents as being important activities and as such the layout of the building has been designed to incorporate removable staging along with adjoining main hall and multi-use space to offer 'back-stage' provision. Additional flexibility is also offered via a folding wall between the two rooms, allowing for the main hall space to be increased by opening the wall and a stage being located in the multi-use room. Without a stage, this large dual space also offers a large floor area for bigger events and functions, which were popular with 13% of respondents.

Widcombe History Group (WHG) have requested a specially designed archive space for Parish documents and an adjoining workspace for digitising newly acquired information. Currently, the WHG has an active digitising volunteer group who would need access to this designated space at a variety of times during the working week. Displays and interactive educational resources could also be incorporated into a more imaginative Heritage Centre, and this would be a requirement in order to attract Heritage funding. This would require considerably more input and ongoing management than the WHG have currently indicated that they would be able to provide.

By using the survey feedback, an estimated hall utilisation sheet has been created, which demonstrates that both the multi-use room and main hall are expected to be in use about 40% of the time, with distinct morning, afternoon and evening hire periods. The estimates are considered to be relatively conservative, based largely on known existing groups that would transfer from Church House. Additional hire has been included in anticipation of new groups and users coming into the hall, such as regular keep-fit classes, doctor/outreach clinics and a new Youth Club, for example.

A projected hall utilisation spreadsheet can be found in Appendix 6.

4.4. The potential funders

WVHSG commissioned Devon Communities Together (DCT) to undertake Capital Investment Plan (CIP) research and the full report is in Appendix 7. A CIP is a living document, which identifies potential sources of funding and details the requirements and timescales associated with these options. Most major funders will want evidence of a CIP to *"see how the whole funding package is achievable before making an offer for part or the whole"*.

The report indicates that a range of funding sources will need to be tapped into for this scale and complexity of building project, including local community fundraising (typically 3-6% of total project costs), public sector contributions (Parish, District and County Councils etc), National Lottery grants,

grants from Trust and Foundations, Private sector and Social Responsibility schemes and Loan Finance including the potential for a Public Works Loan Board loan.

In specific relation to the Public Works Loan Board, this is a mechanism for a parish council to borrow money at a relatively modest cost, repayable over a long time similar to a mortgage. This would need to be paid for by an increase in the parish precept to cover the repayments, which is currently relatively low compared to other parishes. The precept is collected as part of Council Tax, and for illustration a Band D property might end up paying £18 per annum (equivalent to 35p per week) more on their Council Tax to cover this borrowing. The new total precept would remain well under the average precept in Devon. The willingness of the Parish Council to take out this loan will be seen by many potential funders as highly significant evidence of public support for the project and this is therefore a vital element if the project is to proceed.

There are currently no sources of significant grants for multi-use community buildings and the sources of funding available are limited.

Key potential funders that have been identified by DCT include Sport England's 'Community Asset Fund', The Heritage Lottery Fund's 'Our Heritage programme', Garfield Weston Trust, The Tudor Trust, Trusthouse Charitable Foundation and The Public Works Loan Board via the Parish Council. The challenge is submitting successful applications that meet specific criteria, with all funds available at the same sort of time to enable the build to go ahead.

A potential total of £692,000 (including £50,000 of local community fundraising) has been identified by DCT at present and this will require multiple successful grant and loan applications as detailed above.

The initial construction budget approach was to ask the architects for a cost estimate for the fully featured building if this was to be taken forward as a turn-key project and delivered in a traditional architect-led way. The resulting costing showed a significant potential short-fall of over £300,000, even with a relatively ball-park costing approach. WVHSG received clear guidance in regard to this:

"DCT's long experience of supporting community hall projects leads us to recommend that if the project is to be progressed, a way of decreasing the overall costs is further investigated as a matter of priority".

Due to the patchwork of funding, and as discussed in later sections, various different proposals have therefore been considered, such as an architect-led project, 'design and build' construction, a pre-fabricated design and multi-contract community-led building. Reduced functionality has also been considered as a way of reducing costs, however for example, if excluding the heritage facility is considered, approximately £100,000 of identified grant funding would no longer be available to the project as this is heritage specific money. A similar situation is true if the changing facilities are omitted.

It is thought that there will be opportunities for donation of time and expertise into the project by local people which will reduce the cash cost and make use of the crafts and plant & machinery which the community have already offered. This is highly valuable and again demonstrates to funders the appetite for the project in the community.

5 Impacts expected on other local provision

5.1 Widecombe Church House viability in future

The Widecombe Church House Management Committee have been consulted throughout the feasibility process and a member of the Committee also sits on the WVHSG to ensure reliable and consistent dialogue and understanding between both parties.

It is essential that a new village hall in Widecombe does not result in the loss of Church House as a space available to the community and this is a concern that has been raised by survey respondents and the WVHSG has taken it very seriously.

The Church House is owned by the National Trust and rented by the Management Committee for use as a village hall. It is also listed in the National Trust handbook for members and visitors so that it can be accessed by the public when not in use. Discussions have been held in the past between the Management Committee and the National Trust to investigate improving disabled access to upstairs areas of the building but as a listed and historic property of this nature, alterations to the fabric have not been possible to date.

Organisers of the weekly craft markets and monthly produce markets have been clear that they would continue in the Church House rather than move into a new hall and the Management Committee have confirmed that *“currently the combined income from both these events adequately covers the rent paid to the NT.”* The Widecombe Fair Committee have also indicated that the Church House is adequate for the 6 evening meetings that they hold throughout the year as they have minimal requirements, although they acknowledge the inadequacies of the heating system and would support eco-improvement to this. Church House running costs are fairly minimal and over the last five years income has exceeded expenditure with the exception of one year when extensive electrical improvements were made to the building. Financial summary in Appendix 8.

If the hall has fewer regular hiring groups as they move to a new facility, the building will become more accessible to the abundant number of tourists visiting the village each year who are often left unable to access the building as it is in use by others.

It is likely that without regular hirers, in the winter months particularly, the building may become damp due to lack of regular heating and the Management Committee will need to take a view on this in order to maintain adequate conditions for its ongoing use.

In a statement from the Church House Management Committee (full document in Appendix 9) they have stated *“We would like to emphasise that the Church House Management committee are fully behind the project for the new hall for the village. They are aware of several unsurmountable inadequacies in the nature of this building for many activities needed for the modern day and the demands of the future.”*

5.2 Potential for impact on other local venues

Stakeholder consultation was undertaken with village hall committees and large-venue businesses in and adjacent to the Widecombe Parish in order to understand any concerns or impacts that a new village hall may have on them. Leusdon Memorial Hall sits within the Widecombe Parish and as such, it has been essential that when considering a new facility in Widecombe this will not be at the expense of existing community provision. Feedback from the committee has been clear that they can *“see no problems with having two halls, there is distance between us in miles and we have our regular users.”*

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A new hall would not seek to compete with provision for existing groups and users of nearby halls, but could complement by offering alternative activities more suited to a modern new-build.

Postbridge, Holne and Buckland Village Halls were also contacted and there was a common theme that no concerns were raised by the plans for Widecombe and some benefits could be identified in terms of the provision of different sized community buildings and spaces on offer to local residents and other potential hall hirers alike and also that *“the more social activities in an area have got to benefit everyone.”*

Consultation with local stakeholders including pubs, cafes and social groups in the area have clearly demonstrated that a new hall is supported and *“could offer opportunity to bring more groups to the village to use the hall, which in turn could have a positive effect for all businesses in the village”*. However, concerns were also raised that the hall may become the natural location to hold meetings and events and this could impact on the Café on the Green, which currently sees *“people from the immediate and wider community meeting for private, business and local government meetings”* most days. It is possible that an arrangement could be made with the village pubs and cafes to advertise their external catering and/or bar facilities to potential hall hirers in order to encourage support of local business for functions and events that may be held in the new hall.

Feedback from local stakeholders in Appendix 10.

6 Options review of suggested sites

6.1 Assessment of potential sites

At the Parish Council AGM in May 2016, three potential sites were suggested by members of the community for consideration (although none directly by the owners) – the Parish Field (behind the Wayside Café), the tennis courts site and the Widecombe Fair field. Shortly after the open evening, a fourth site was offered for consideration by the owner at Hayes Field. Latterly, members of the community have suggested considering the purchase of the Café on the Green as a suitable ‘ready-made’ building that may be fit for purpose.

The tennis courts were dismissed very early on in the process as this would result in the loss of an existing community facility. The carpark area beside the tennis court would not be of sufficient size to locate a new building, particularly as all on-site parking space would be used up in the building footprint and local objections were voiced early on regarding the visual impact on nearby dwellings. Likewise, the Café on the Green proposal would result in the loss of a well-used community facility and business in order to develop a new business with a different purpose. The village would lose a busy café which serves both local residents and tourists to the area and in addition to this, it would not have been possible to secure the necessary funds for purchase within the period available.

The Parish Field, Hayes Field and Fair Field were visited by members of the WVHSG, DNPA Planning Officers and David Wilson Architects at various times in 2017 to consider the relative merits and constraints of each site. Their reports can be found in Appendix 11 and Appendix 12.

The Parish Field, whilst advantaged by being owned by the Parish Council, had further consideration discouraged by both DNPA and the Architects on grounds of terrain, potential for adverse impact on character of the surrounding area and the requirement for new infrastructure for access and services at odds with the pattern of existing development.

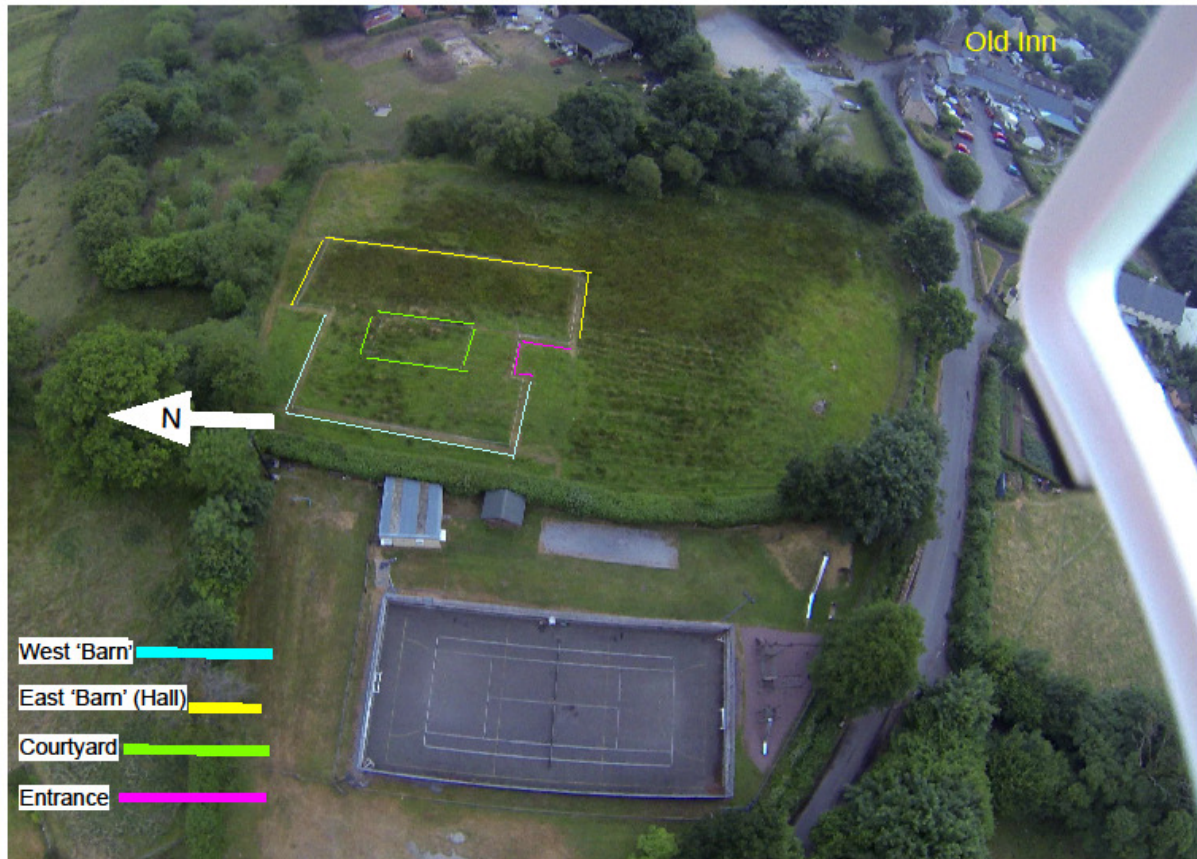
Widecombe Fair Field was viewed more favourably, but significant limitations were identified. The lack of connectivity with the village was highlighted in terms of pedestrian safety, the requirement for a larger carpark due to lack of existing parking in this area and as an extension of the built environment in the village. The visibility of the field from surrounding areas ruled out the flattest section on the southern end of the field for development on the basis of disturbing the iconic views. Potentially positive impacts for the school were highlighted with an opportunity to reduce congestion at school pick-up and drop-off times through shared parking space.

The Hayes Field was considered the most appropriate site by both DNPA and the Architects in their reports, stating *“this site is well related to the centre of the settlement with good connection on foot to existing car parks and community sports facilities”* and it is *“considered to be more likely to meet the primary purposes of the National Park”*. This site is not without its drawbacks however, due to potential biodiversity and archaeological interests and the proposed new access route onto the field direct from the road is not favoured by DNPA, although subsequent communications have indicated that this is not insurmountable.

6.2 Sufficient space for the development

One of the shortcomings of the Church House that led to this Report being undertaken was the limited parking available outside. The current proposed design allows for 18 parking spaces, including two designated for disabled users, although these allocations are likely to be altered in view of typical users and following DNPA formal pre-application advice.

The Hayes Field has ample space for a large building footprint and additional private parking area whilst allowing a large area of the field to remain undeveloped. The initial aspirational plans show a building of up to 645m² and this has been pegged out in the field to demonstrate the space required and typical location within the site.



6.3 Local feeling regarding site

All household within the Parish were offered the opportunity to express a preferred location out of three options – Parish Field, Hayes Field & Fair Field in the community survey. The same question was asked in the Groups survey sent to all existing regular group users of the Church House.

Of the respondents that expressed an opinion, 45% of community members indicated that Hayes Field was their preferred location, closely followed by 42% indicating the Fair Field (see table below). 9% of community survey respondents expressed no opinion on location and only one of these was from a respondent who felt that Widecombe would not benefit from having a new village hall. Hayes Field was also favoured as a location by group respondents, with the Fair Field and Parish field in equal second place. 37% of groups did not express an opinion.

Hayes Field		Parish Field		Fair Field	
<i>First Choice</i>	30	<i>First Choice</i>	9	<i>First Choice</i>	28
<i>Second Choice</i>	21	<i>Second Choice</i>	23	<i>Second Choice</i>	17
<i>Third Choice</i>	13	<i>Third Choice</i>	29	<i>Third Choice</i>	18

Community survey data in Appendix 2 and Group survey data in Appendix 3.

6.4 How effectively it meets requirements

DNPA and David Wilson Architects both commented on the central village location of the Hayes Field site, offering good connectivity with additional car parking facilities and the community sports facilities in the adjacent field. These aspects enable Hayes Field to offer more integrated community use due to its close proximity to the church, pubs, carparks and tennis courts for combined business purposes. For example, changing facilities have been included in the current design with external access directly from the tennis courts if a new pedestrian access point is created in the adjoining hedge line and the Widecombe and District Sports Group (WADSG) have stated that they would *“welcome the possibility of amalgamating new changing facilities and toilets into the village hall design”* and *“would support a pedestrian access to the hall”*. The full Sports Group letter can be found in Appendix 14.

Space for on-site private parking is a benefit, particularly to disabled users, and the site is relatively level for ease of construction in ensuring the carpark to entrance is smooth and level.

There is additional outdoor space available to be incorporated into a secure outdoor garden which can be used for various functions, events and regular groups during their hire of the hall or multi-use room.

The Hayes Field would be owned outright by the hall’s governing charity, ensuring autonomy in terms of decision making and safeguarding exclusive use of the space.

6.5 Other peripheral benefits / drawbacks

DNPA have confirmed that they support, in principle, the provision of a new community facility in Widecombe and that it is line with the policies of their Development Plan, which *“seeks to sustain and improve the range and quality of community services and facilities”*.

Potential issues with this site include the current divergence in views over the most desirable access point into the field and the assumption of archaeological and biodiverse features and sensitivities which would need full investigation and potential impacts mitigating in order to achieve planning consent.

7 Building & Site

7.1 The selected building or site

The Hayes Field site is located visually close to the village centre, immediately opposite the Old Inn rear car park, and Brook Lane Cottages, and it lies between the existing, floodlit Widecombe Sports Facilities (built 1988) and a commercial privately-owned car park. There is currently no direct access from road to field.

The lane was originally known as Mill Lane on account of the leat supplying water to several mills, some remains of which are still extant but not archaeologically investigated. Much of the site is firm fairly dry ground, a metre or so above the surrounding stream, but it slopes to marshier ground draining towards the North Hall moat inside the eastern boundary.

The field area is approximately 1.4 acres with the addition of the moat in 2009.

The field has been owned by Mr and Mrs Casey of West Hayes since 2009, and it has been offered for sale to the community for construction of a Village Hall and associated relevant facilities at significantly 'sale-under-value.' This requires several conditions to be met, including the creation of a properly constituted and registered Charity having status of a CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation) in order to accept a sale of the land effectively. It is also clearly stated that any use for housing, or other more valuable uses, which might increase its value, is excluded from the valuation and from the terms of permitted use.

As a condition of sale, the design and planning must include independent access directly from Mill Lane, not principally from the Sports Facilities. This would also be the preference of the Widecombe and District Sports Group as entry via the tennis courts results in the loss / change to existing tug of war area. The design should also respect the impact on local people, including the vendors, by minimising the roof height to a maximum of 7m, being located towards the north-west corner of the field and considering noise control from the building, particularly in the late evening. Local housing is scheduled to be increased by several new properties in the field beside existing Brook Lane Cottages.

Potential site layout has been investigated already and a small additional area of land in the northwest corner might be advantageous for a vehicle turning bay to maximise economy of space in the field, and to utilise the better quality ground conditions for construction.

The site has been marked out with a preliminary design layout in accordance with the initial Architect's design; however, the eventual design is likely to be confined to a smaller footprint.

7.2 Ground conditions & services

The Hayes Field site was visited on 1st June 2018 by Alan Peake, B.Sc (Hons) C.Eng and metal probes were driven into the ground at 5 locations to a point of 'refusal' to offer a preliminary assessment of soil conditions along proposed walls (walls marked with bunting tape following the setting-out of the building perimeter). It was concluded that *"in general the site has a good foundation bearing layer at shallow depth"* with soil deposits indicating fine black silt over-layer in all locations, with only one point where 'refusal' was not reached at a depth of 1m, and most points demonstrating dampness. Whilst it is assumed that prior to structural design, further trial holes will be required it was noted that *"in no instances did we find any peat or vegetable matter deposits, which is very positive"* and early indications demonstrate that foundation depths of at least 1m should be compatible with the findings of site conditions.

DNPA have identified that *“the wettest areas of this field, half way down along the eastern boundary, are of great diversity value for vegetation.”* The architects have predicted that surface water flooding is likely in the northern end of the field, so the design location of the hall within Hayes Field has been proposed in order to avoid this area, from both an ecological and construction perspective. A Flood Risk Assessment is anticipated to be required in support of a planning application should the project go ahead and this will further determine the exact location of the hall to minimise flood risk and offer improved ground conditions for construction.

Conversations with Andy Crabb, DNPA Archaeologist, have highlighted that whilst the site could contain archaeologically sensitive features related to the adjacent North Hall Manor, these are unlikely to preclude development. A watching brief may well be required for the purposes of recording excavation works for the access, building and services as a condition of any planning permissions.

The site currently has no services, but all are available in close proximity. Western Power Distribution have a small single-phase power supply running through the field to the tennis courts from the transformer on the single-phase overhead line close to West Hayes. Alternatively, 3-phase supplies exist in the highway fed from the main Widecombe transformer and it will be down to WPD to decide the most cost-effective supply arrangement. Water connection opportunities are available locally and sewerage is likely to be via a pumped system.

Pegging Out report in Appendix 13.

7.3 Planning permission requirements

Initial pre-app feedback has been sought and received from the DNPA, who have consulted internally and externally. Further advice would be sought prior to a planning application, however the following information has been made available.

The Highways authority have no objection in principle to the formation of a new access to serve the hall with limited parking or servicing spaces. Sight lines of 2.4 metres by 33 metres would be required. A potential issue regarding the ownership of the stream between the site and the carriageway was highlighted as this does not form part of the highway verge. Appropriate control would need to be established over that land, a process which is in hand. Any access would also need to be acceptable to Devon County Council who are the authority responsible for the ordinary watercourse in terms of flood control.

DNPA have indicated that breaching the roadside hedgerow is not their preference but that it is not considered to be insurmountable with reasonable mitigation. Other ecological impacts are thought by DNPA to be able to be mitigated with good design.

DNPA have also indicated they concur with the independent site selection report and local preference and prefer Hayes Field in terms of landscape impact and context within the village.

In order to secure planning permission it will be necessary to complete a flood risk assessment.

In addition to planning permission an Environmental Permit covering the form and construction of any access culvert would be required.

7.4 Location for users

One of the advantages of the Hayes Field that led to it being selected as the preferred location by the architects for a new hall was its *“good connectivity with church, shops, café, parking etc. in the village centre”*. Whilst the point of access into Hayes Field would need to be via a new entrance over the stream from the road, no pedestrian footpaths exist from this point back into the main village,

however there are no pavements in the village currently and the road past Hayes Field is minor, but relatively wide with limited traffic currently.

The adjacent tennis courts and outdoor sports facilities offer a great opportunity for the integration of community facilities at this site and the inclusion of changing rooms in the design has purposefully been built on this link to add value to the existing recreation area. Independent, external access to these facilities within a new hall will offer a vast improvement on the existing sports facilities, with the toilet block now well over 50 years old and in need of significant improvement. The WADSG have stated that they have *“considered revamping our facilities but have put this on hold while the hall proposal is under discussion”*.

8 Designs

8.1 Sketch designs and options

As described earlier, when community feedback was collated, a facilities list was drawn up by WVHSG and scored for importance and was provided to the architects for their guidance.

The following facilities list gives the main features included on the architect's proposal which developed from the community surveys:

- Main hall comfortably seating 120 – 150m²
 - Good acoustics
 - Food serving hatches and space for bar
 - Large kitchen with commercial dishwasher
 - Outside covered space to allow events to flow into the outside with bifold doors used
 - Flexible removable staging
 - Space for lighting / sound control
- Secondary meeting room of c. 40m², separately hireable with own toilets and kitchenette, with fully flexible partitioning from the main hall.
- Entrance foyer with some display space
- WiFi throughout
- Generous storage for all hall users
- Sufficient accessible toilets
- Underfloor heating
- Vehicular and pedestrian access and some on-site parking and good drop off facilities
- Changing rooms for sports facilities
- Cleaner's store
- Durable and long lasting external and internal finishes
- Excellent insulation and good passive design to capture and retain heat when needed and good natural ventilation as required
- Adequately sized plant room suitable for renewables and thermal store
- Heritage Centre including dedicated digitising space, archive, and sufficient public areas for significant display of artefacts
- Differentiated user access dependant on hired area

The initial concept design that has been created as a result of community and stakeholder feedback provides a building comprising two barn-like structures around a central open courtyard, externally faced with weatherboard and local granite on gable ends and feature walls. The design process has been the result of numerous iterations to potential layouts and Appendix 15 shows how the architect has started with an 'area schedule' giving indicative rooms sizes, which moves on to an 'adjacency diagram' showing how spaces need to be connected. From this, preliminary plans are worked up and options for layouts are given both with and without Heritage Centre facilities.

As has been described, the full architect's design (based on an aspirational wish-list from the community) appears to be too expensive to match the funding available, but it is thought that the footprint can be reduced with most of the above facilities preserved. Appendix 16 details the full aspirational design, with elevations. Various other proposals are considered possible at a lower cost which deliver much of the same functionality.

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The Heritage Centre is effectively optional dependant on funding available and the level of committed voluntary support post-construction and these aspects need to be thought of as parallel proposals to the main hall design. The process of determining what is included in the final version would be dependant on the need for each element being fairly cost neutral in the short and long term.

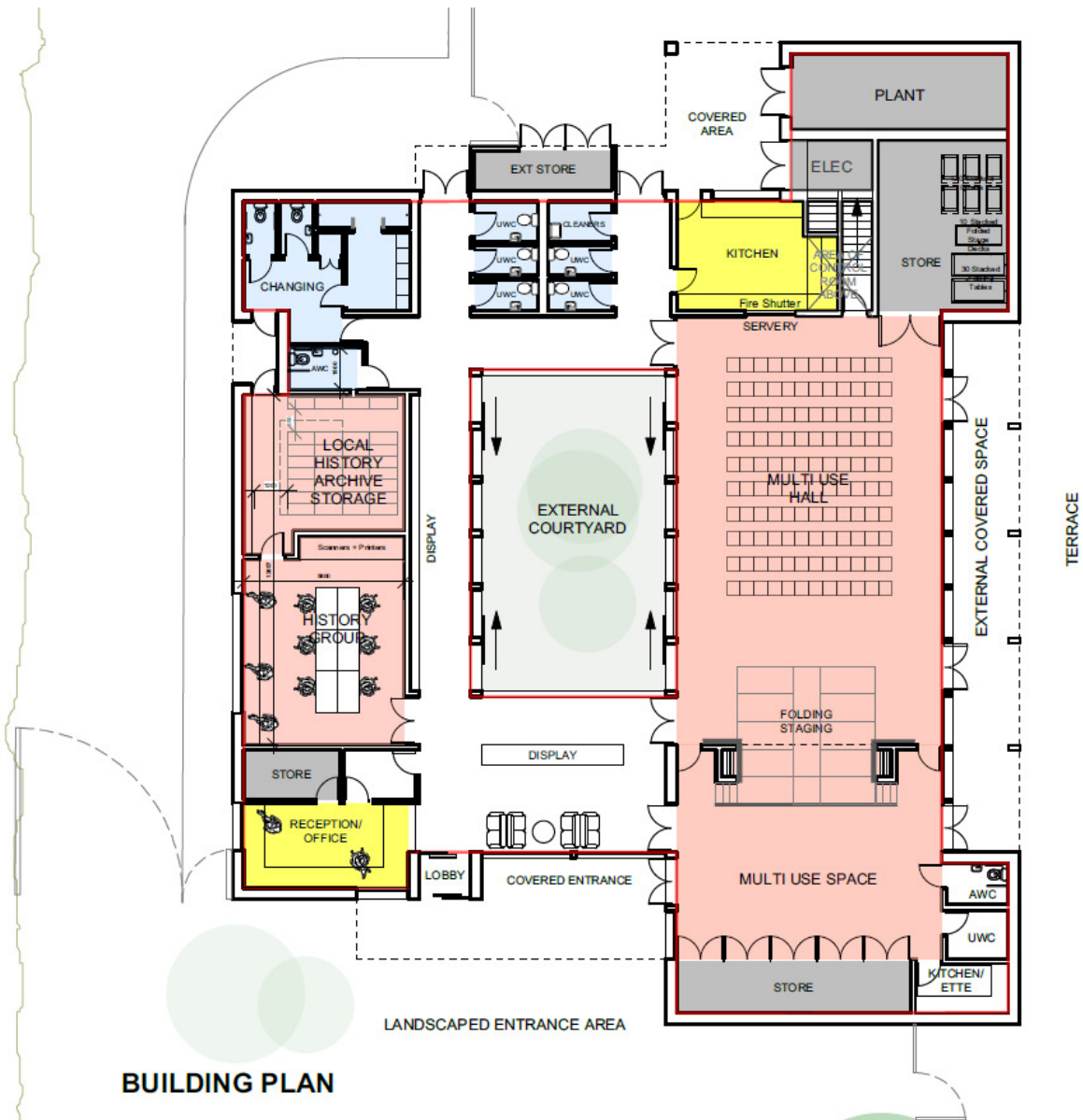


FIGURE 1 - THE FULL ARCHITECT DESIGN INCLUDING TWO BUILDINGS AND LINK STRUCTURES. HERITAGE CENTRE AND EXTENSIVE ANCILLARY SPACE MAY BE RATIONALISED IN REALITY.

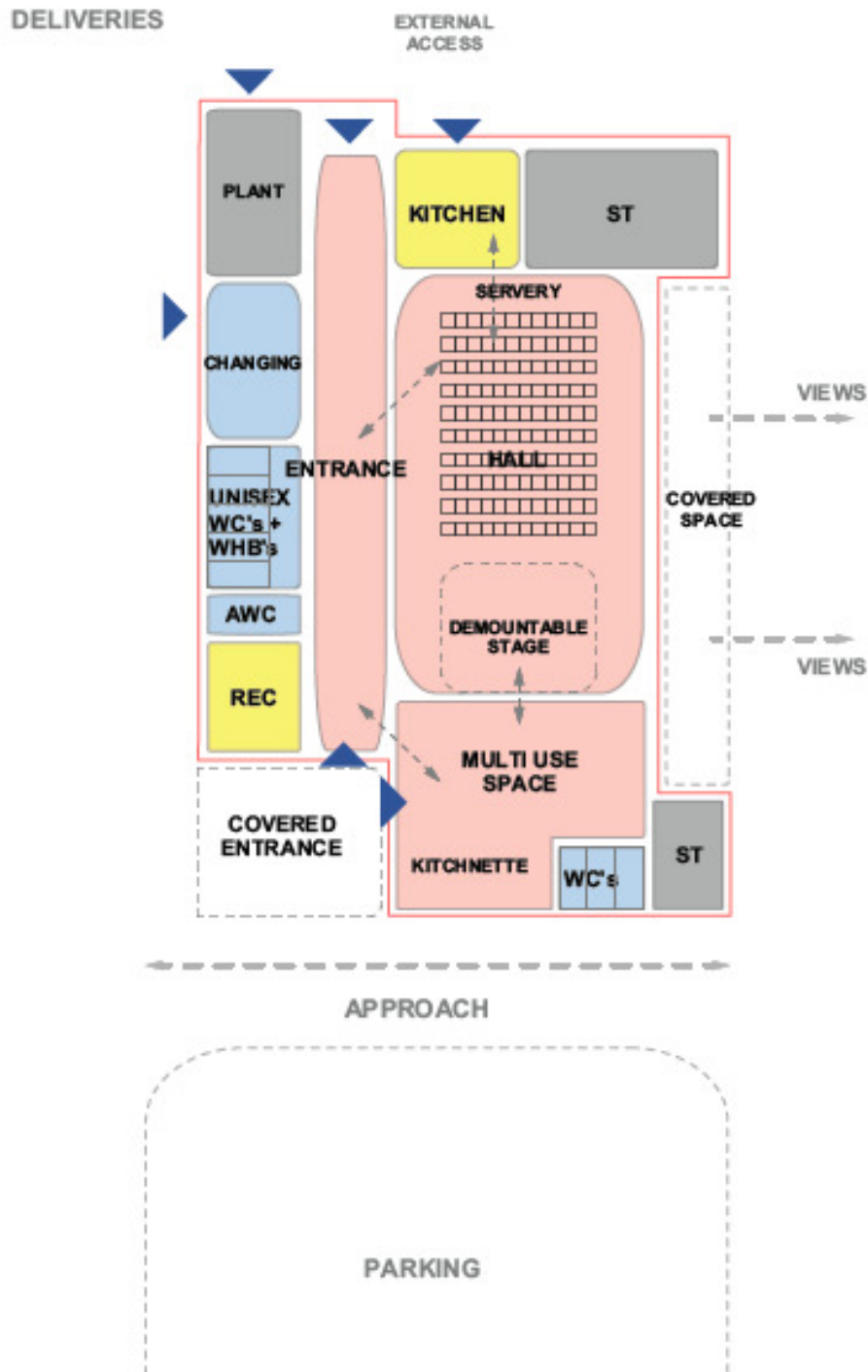


FIGURE 2 - A SCHEMATIC WORKED UP EARLIER IN DESIGN WHICH OMITTED HERITAGE CENTRE AND WHICH WILL FORM THE BASIS OF THE RATIONALISED PROPOSAL IF IT IS TO PROCEED.

The final form will be subject to further work, but the schematic design covers the features thought essential or inescapable and will therefore need to be in the final hall. The proposed arrangement has been well thought out and so will probably be followed closely. The covered spaces to the side of the main hall and at the entrance are recognised as being important and a building of around 400m² is being targeted as a reasonable aim.

For the sake of maximising community support it is important not only to seek local financial backing, but to make use of the local labour, craft and machinery which may make an extremely worthwhile

non-financial input into the scheme. There are benefits in terms of fostering a real sense of community ownership, and also because this labour can be recognised as a donation at a market rate and so counts as matched funding which is highly important. A similar approach delivered the sports provision nearby in the 1980s, and is used in many local village hall new-builds.

Tasks which it is thought may be directly carried out by WVHSG, local volunteers and small local contractors as required include works which might be thought of as enabling tasks, such as:

- The provision of a culvert access,
- General drainage works,
- Temporary or permanent hardstanding,
- Pedestrian connection into the tennis courts,
- Trenching and backfilling in support of utility provision,
- Fencing and walling,
- Ground improvements for general access over the site.

Furthermore there may be discrete elements within the main build, or at the conclusion of the main build such as:

- Stone facing of feature wall areas,
- Paving, walling, fencing and landscaping,
- Planting and mitigation works,
- Fitting out of changing rooms, kitchen, external renewables,
- Paperwork tasks.

8.2 Design features

A large main hall adjoins a separate meeting room, which can be independently hired with its own toilets, storage and kitchenette. Both rooms have doors opening onto a fenced terrace and garden area. A large kitchen, with servery hatch, sits at the far end of the building next to generous storage space and a mezzanine level sits above, from which sound and lighting equipment can be controlled for events and functions. Unisex toilet cubicles aim to provide flexibility and externally accessible changing rooms offer facilities to support the adjacent Sports Group users and anticipated new fitness groups hiring the main hall.

Heritage Centre facilities, if included, must allow for controlled public access and currently offers a dedicated archive room and space for the digitisation of new records, as requested by WHG members, as well as information screens in a publicly accessible area. Educational and interactive features would need to be added to secure the financial viability of this space.

It was considered important to include a covered main entrance for the comfort of hirers when arriving and leaving the building and this has been built into the plans at a landscaped entrance area. Additional external access points have been included in various locations, partially to comply with fire regulations, but also in response to comments made in the community survey and to improve the efficiency of the building. For example, doors at the far end of the building enable deliveries, catering staff, event organisers and plant room personnel to access the building away from the main entrance and space is provided here for vehicles to unload and turn. A covered area provides shelter at these access points. The changing rooms are also independently accessible so that these facilities can be used by members of the adjacent Sports Group tennis courts. French doors have been designed along the main hall wall, and from the multi-use space overlooking the garden with views towards the

village. This space is expected to be used during a variety of functions and events and an external covered space has been designed here to offer both shade and protection from rain.

Limited storage has been highlighted repeatedly as an issue at Church House and this has been taken on board during the design of a new hall. The architects have initially worked on the principle of providing associated storage at 20% of working space requirements. This is considered overly generous, but adequate storage space is essential. Dummy floors with loft ladders have also been suggested by contractors as an alternative to some of this space, in order to provide extra room for light storage without increasing the floor area of the building so significantly since the roof space would in any case exist.

Unisex loos have been specified in order to try and maximise the usage of facilities. Accessible toilets have also been included for both the main hall provision and in the separate multi-use space.

The kitchen is generously sized to support the catering requirements of a large function or event. It is not envisaged that this would have full commercial fit-out as the demand for this would not warrant the cost, but elements such as a commercial dishwasher would be included as the benefit to a wider user group is evident. Such inclusions were recommended by other village hall committees during early investigations and visits. A serving hatch has also been designed in from kitchen to main hall and this could support a variety of activities including food serving, bar provision and youth club tuck shop. A separate bar area may be considered more practical and could be incorporated into future designs.

The multi-use space has been designed as a stand-alone unit, which can be hired independently of the rest of the hall. It has its own toilets and small kitchenette, which means that evening meetings can take place here and a pre-school could largely operate out of this space during the day, for example. Ample storage for this room is also included and the pre-school could have dedicated space within this. A folding wall between the multi-use room and main hall offers significant flexibility for larger events and to support performances where the demountable stage is required to be set back into this space. With the wall closed, the multi-use room can be used as a 'back stage' area for other performances where the stage is set-up at the end of the main hall.

Externally the building has been proposed to have some feature walls finished in Granite as a nod to the traditional vernacular, and with other walls in a contrasting finish. Initially wood was considered, but a more durable fibre cement board which mimics the finish is thought to provide a visually similar, lower maintenance finish in the longer term. The roof has been specified by the architects as a standing seam zinc construction, although visually very similar products which are composite panels are also available at a lower cost and have been advocated by many contractors.

All the designs include generous insulation as this is a cheapest and best way of ensuring long term comfort at a low energy cost. The architect's design was intended to capture solar gain and have natural ventilation, any redesign will include these requirements.

Heating is intended to be via underfloor wet heating. The proposal includes ground mounted solar panels, and an air or ground-source heat pump. The benefit is that this provides electric heating at a much higher efficiency than conventional methods and may provide an alternative income source via the Renewables Heat Incentive scheme. The solar panels will probably not receive the Feed-in-Tariff because this may have stopped by the point of installation, but are still thought to be worthwhile as they are only a small part of the heating cost. An alternative of direct solar thermal heating may be more appropriate, either would be linked to a large hot water store in the plant room to reduce imported electricity requirement for the heat pump.

External ground beyond the covered space is available due to the size of the plot; it is expected that an area with secure boundary will be included to make use of the attractive setting outside when weather is fine. Exact details are subject to agreement with the planning authority regarding environmental mitigation.

8.3 Overall costs

8.3.1 Land purchase

A recent provisional valuation (2017) was made by Sawdye & Harris, Ashburton, who were agents for the sale of this land in 2009. S&H indicated a valuation of about £26k.

This was on the basis that:

- It will have no use of any type except as a charitably-owned community hall
- It is assumed main vehicular access to the site be direct from the road (Mill Lane), permitted by DNPA Planning, and principally used for access.
- A confirmed professional valuation (or valuations) current at the time of sale, should guide the value for a sale agreement.

The owners have proposed an outline solution to achieve purchase costs to the Project at a 'sale-under-value', subject to fiscal, legal and economic constraints. This is to be developed further by agreement.

8.3.2 Building

The costs for this project may have a large range of outcomes based on the exact form, finish and method of delivery.

The building as proposed by the architects is relatively large and complex. They have provided a costing for planning purposes, but this does not support the continuation of this project since the projected cost is so high and does not match the available funding.

There are ways to reduce this cost, which are:

- To use alternative contractual arrangements which may be lower cost and encourage value-engineering
- To change specifications to achieve desired building function at lower cost
- Reduce building footprint without reducing capacity
- Simplify building form
- Introduce more elements of community input into aspects of build

Contractual arrangements which have been considered are:

- a conventional architect-led approach,
- a design-and-build contract where the contractor has design responsibility, or
- a multi-contract approach where the Steering Group has more responsibility and takes more risk.

Specifications changes which have been considered include structural options, cladding and finish options, and construction styles such as pre-fabricated or off-site constructed elements.

Building footprint options have been investigated and working up of these into formal plans will be an immediate next step if community approval is received, currently rough rescaling has occurred and is thought reasonable by multiple external firms.

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Building form has been considered and a simplification to a single building appears to be likely.

Community involvement has been considered and advice sought as to the extent this is possible and desirable, and this has been converted into a valuation.

More detail on all these items is provided in Appendix 17 - Financial costing detail.

All of these approaches have been investigated by the committee and the expected out-turn costs are presented here.

The expected approach will be either a design-and-build arrangement, or with sufficient professional support, a multi-contract arrangement. The simplified form building will be necessary for the sake of affordability.

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	Building options					
	Conventional build			Modular build		
	Including Heritage Centre (645m ²)	Excluding Heritage Centre (550m ²)	Redesigned smaller excluding Heritage Centre(400m ²)	Including Heritage Centre (645m ²)	Excluding Heritage Centre (550m ²)	Redesigned smaller excluding Heritage Centre(400m ²)
Funding indicated	£692,000.00	£592,000.00	£592,000.00	£692,000.00	£592,000.00	£592,000.00
Delivery method						
Traditional, architect-led	£1,946,500.00	£1,640,000.00	£1,360,000.00			
Design-and-Build of a building similar to the architect's plans	£1,453,000.00	£1,257,000.00	£1,003,000.00	£1,246,500.00	£1,028,500.00	£859,000.00
Multi-contract of entire project with significantly simplified building form	£1,021,000.00	£910,000.00	£756,000.00			
Multi contract with maximum community work and simplified building form	£911,000.00	£800,000.00	£646,000.00			
Design and build core architect style build with community enabling work and landscaping	£1,343,000.00	£1,147,000.00	£893,000.00	£1,191,500.00	£933,000.00	£764,000.00

Key	Exceeds funding available to large extent (>50% over)	Exceeds funding available to lesser extent (<50% over)	Appears to broadly match funding available (<10% over)
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8.4 Potential funders

DCT have identified public agencies, National Lottery distributors, trust and foundations, Corporate donors, private sector social responsibility schemes and loan finance as potential funding opportunities, alongside local fundraising to generate an estimated £692,000.

Potential funds include:

Public Agencies, £52,000 – Devon County Council, Teignbridge District Council, Widecombe Parish Council and Dartmoor National Park Authority

National Lottery distributors, £190,000 – Big Lottery Fund, Heritage Lottery Fund and Sport England.

Trust and foundations, £250,000 – Garfield Weston Trust, The Tudor Trust, Trusthouse Charitable Foundation, plus other smaller organisations.

Corporate donors, £8,000

Private sector social responsibility schemes, £22,000 – Landfill Tax Credit Distributors and Eon Energising Communities Fund.

Loan finance, £120,000 – ACRE and Public Works Loan Board via Widecombe Parish Council.

Local Fundraising, £50,000 – regular fundraisers, one-off events, pledges, buy-a-brick, match-funding (time, materials, equipment), JustGiving / Crowdfunding etc.

Additional benefactors are likely to be necessary to increase the total funds raised to a level which enables this project to be truly successful.

8.5 Special requirements from funders

It is clear that multiple funding streams will be required in order to raise the total capital required for this project and as such, there will be a variety of funding requirements and criteria that will need to be met.

Some grants can be spent on capital costs only, so would not be suitable for the planning phase of the project whereas other funds are more suited to the fitting-out of a completed building.

Several funders will cover discrete costs in-line with their aims and objectives, such as Sport England's 'community asset fund,' which has a focus on providing and enhancing community spaces to enable more active lives and National Lottery 'awards for all' with a focus on social inclusion.

The Heritage Lottery Fund grant could only be applied for in relation to the heritage aspect of the design and there are clear outcomes that need to be demonstrated in order to secure funds – positive outcomes for heritage, people and communities. Enhanced access to and interpretation of heritage information will be key, with clear engagement from the community and opportunities for education built into the proposal.

Many funders will only give to registered charities, so it is vital that an application is made to register a new CIO at the earliest opportunity in order to improve eligibility for many grants. It will be key requirement to align aims and objectives with other charitable interests in the community.

Some funders need evidence that the whole funding package is in place before they accept applications, so the timing and order of applications is critical to the success of securing these funds.

Likewise, most funders give money with time limited spend periods so there must be certainty that the project can be delivered within the agreed timeframe in order to avoid the withdrawal of financial support.

Loan providers would offer varying interest rates and repayment periods, some of which would be agreed directly with WVHSG/CIO and others which would need to be procured through the Parish Council, such as the Public Works Loan Board. The latter would require the evident acceptance of most parishioners for an increase to their council tax precept, which would be implied by vote to proceed with the project.

8.6 Financial & contractual details

WVHSG has previously applied to HMRC for VAT registration and was rejected on the basis of no projected income during the construction period. Advice will be sought on the appropriate time to reapply, but VAT claims can be backdated by 4 years for goods and 6 months for services for anything relating to the 'business purpose'. This results in a cashflow management exercise, as additional funds will need to be secured to cover the cost of VAT initially, but there is a possibility of reclaiming some of this back on completion and successful VAT registration. As a charitable organisation constructing a new building for social and recreational community use, the building should qualify for supplies at zero-rated VAT. According to the HMRC, this is not likely to apply to the Heritage Centre element of the build because *"any part of the building which cannot be used for a variety of social or recreational activities cannot be seen as being used as a village hall."* (VAT Notice 708 – buildings & construction). If the digitisation workroom became a more multi-functional space, this might be able to be mitigated.

The new CIO would seek to gain Gift Aid status at the earliest opportunity in order to claim tax relief and get tax back on gift aid donations, currently at a rate of 25p for every £1 donated by a tax-payer. This will significantly improve the fundraising phase of the project.

8.7 Phasing of the project

The project is likely to be delivered in a single phase; although construction may have certain stages, it will be likely to open in one phase. Therefore, it is necessary to decide on the final facilities once funding has been secured for them, and if funds are not secured, it will be necessary to adjust our plans for a reduced building.

9 Revenue Funds

9.1 Revenue expenditure to run the building

Based on the expenditure of similar village halls in the area, including Broadhempston as a relatively new-build of comparable scale, the following estimated annual running costs have been predicted:

Licences – Premises & Alcohol Licence	£250
Insurance – Buildings, Public Liability, Employers’ Liability	£4,000
Cleaning	£1,040
Rates & Water	£500
Light & Heat	£3,000
Repairs / Maintenance	£1,000
Garden maintenance / grass cutting	£375
Admin costs	£200
Phone / Internet	£600
	£10,965

Loan interest may need to be added to this section if funds are required from The Charity Bank, or other similar sources, to reach the total required for the project. Costs could be reduced further with volunteer efforts to clean the hall and keep the garden area tidy, but have been included here with a conservative assumption that these would be paid roles. Management costs should be kept to a minimum by using local volunteers to cover such tasks as hall bookings, organising and running fund-raising events.

9.2 Revenue income from users and other sources

Predicted hall hire has been tabled in a Hall Utilisation spreadsheet in Appendix 6 and this demonstrates typical expected hire over a 4-week period. Research has also been carried out to benchmark hall hire rates at local and comparable facilities. It is standard to have discounted rates for local hirers and also for regular repeat hire, such as standard weekly or monthly bookings. Daytime and evening / weekend rates can be differentiated and there are three hire options depending upon the room(s) required for hire.

A table of potential rates for the new Widecombe Village Hall has been compiled, as follows:

	DAYTIME			
	LOCALS		NON-LOCALS	
	Per Hour	Repeat / Hour	Per Hour	Repeat / Hour
Meeting Room	£7	£5	£9	£8
Main Hall	£8	£6	£10	£8
Full Venue	£14	£12	£18	£16

EVENING / WEEKEND

	LOCALS		NON-LOCALS	
	Per Hour	Repeat / Hour	Per Hour	Repeat / Hour
Meeting Room	£9	£7	£10	£9
Main Hall	£10	£8	£12	£10
Full Venue	£16	£14	£20	£16

Estimated annual hall hire income, based on hall utilisation predictions	£11,951
Annual Fundraising target income	£1,500
	£13,451

It should be noted that these hall hire rates would be inclusive of light and heat, unlike Church House which can be very expensive to keep warm during colder periods.

Renewable energy installations at the hall will also reduce costs and potentially generate a small income through the Renewables Heat Incentive (RHI) scheme. Values will be dependent on the scale of these installations and the date of commissioning but are being planned to mitigate need for annual fundraising if possible.

Dedicated WHG space, if this is not publicly accessible, should also attract an ongoing management fee in order to cover the cost of service provision. For example, the cost of maintaining appropriate humidity levels in the archive store. Likewise, the Sports Group should contribute to covering costs of the use and cleaning of changing rooms when accessed by their members.

9.3 Future management

It is anticipated that a number of ongoing management tasks will be required which will have a cost element.

- Building condition survey every 5 years by qualified surveyor.
- PAT testing annually for electrical appliances.
- Mains electrical installation checks every 5 years by qualified engineer.
- Fire Safety Risk Assessments by Fire Safety Officer.
- Annual fire-fighting appliance checks.
- Regular maintenance checks.

A proportion of annual profit, as anticipated using the income and expenditure figures above, could be reserved to cover the above tasks. Additional fundraising for specific aspects may also be required occasionally, as is the norm with community owned and managed facilities.

If a Manager was considered, with specific duties including raising the profile of the venue for events, conferences, functions and general hire it would be essential that the increased revenue they generated could exceed the total cost of their employment. If, for example, a contract for 8hrs/week cost the CIO £5,000 per annum, hire income would need to be increased by a minimum of £6,000 to make this worthwhile.

10 Programme

10.1 Timescale for fund-raising, design, & construction

The timescale of the project could be relatively straightforward if all funding can be secured simply to allow just a single construction contract to be let. However, it is much more likely that the incremental arrival of funds, the patchwork nature of funding, and with associated deadlines will result in a more staged approach to the development, albeit the project probably being opened in a single stage at the end. A potential project timescale (not necessarily end-to-end sequential) may be as follows:

Phase	Task	Who	Timescale
1	Statutory consents	WVHSG, specialists as required	6 months
2	Tender documents	WVHSG, specialists as required	2 months
3	Funding seeking	WVHSG	12 months ongoing
4	Enabling work – culvert, parking	WVHSG, volunteers, sub-contractors	3 months
5	Main construction	Main contractor	6 months
6	Landscaping	WVHSG, volunteers, sub-contractors	2 months

Cost control is clearly vital which means we expect to be unable to carry out all the work as a single contract. However, splitting up the delivery of the main building into smaller packages with volunteer input risks too many contractual interfaces or potential for delays. This would leave the WVHSG holding many risks if any of the individual contracts miss out details, are incompatible or incorrect or consequential delays occur. For this reason it is thought that only certain activities should be led by volunteer labour without difficulty, which allows real community involvement without excessive risk to costs and liabilities.

10.2 Future phases of the project

There has been some consideration as to whether the project could treat the Heritage Centre option as a second phase. This is not currently envisaged since it is thought that the cost of this section is smaller than the main hall. Since there will be a very active fundraising effort for the development, and it has been indicated that the Heritage Centre stands reasonable chances of securing funding; if it is impossible to raise sufficient funds and enthusiasm now, it seems unlikely that it would become easier in the future. It is therefore thought best to deliver a complete and finished project even if this precludes later development of a Heritage Centre at this exact location.

10.3 Marketing & public relations plan

An overview of what the Marketing and Public Relations Plan would need to include is covered here, but further detailed work to complete this document will be required if this project goes ahead.

1. Determine your public relations goals. These goals can be as few or as many as you need. Just be sure to be consistent with your business' overall goals and mission. Examples of these goals include improving your brand's image or increasing attendance at events held by your business.

2. Know your target audience. Determine which groups you need to communicate with. Who needs to be involved with your business? Whose support do you need? Who will be affected by issues related to your business? Who has something to gain or lose from their relationship with you?

3. Give your audience objectives. Think in terms of the end result you desire, not the process. When communicating with your audience, word objectives in terms of specific results you desire, and what you think is possible. Each objective should cite an audience, outcome, attainment level (%) and time frame. Consider how should your organization, product, issue, or cause be perceived by your audience.

4. Strategies for every objective. In planning, consider how will you approach the challenge of working toward your goals. Strategies here include methods of communication, messages conveyed and other activities related to reaching your goal. These strategies can serve many purposes as you will probably have several strategies for an objective and some strategies may serve several objectives.

5. Tactics for every strategy. Consider how you will use your resources to carry out your strategies and work toward objectives. You will likely have several tactics per strategy.

6. Plan activities. As part of your plan, include specific activities under your tactics that are required to carry out strategies. Activities in this part of the plan include communication methods that you will use.

7. Inform yourself through evaluation. Ask yourself if you are reaching your objectives through careful measurement and observation. Consider public opinions and feedback, since these will give you a different perspective on the effectiveness of your strategies.

8. Materials matter. Determine and obtain what you need to implement tactics outlined in your plan.

9. Create a budget. Be sure that your public relations plan doesn't break the bank by creating a budget. Be sure to include out-of-pocket costs, staff time, transportation, images, materials, etc.

10. Stay on task with a timetable and task list. Creating a timetable and task list will help you to keep track of who does what and when. You can choose to plan backwards from your project's deadline or forward from the start date.

10.4 Next steps

Assuming public support for the project, a CIO will need to be registered in order to move forward the proposals. This requires the development of aims and objectives, a new constitution and agreement of the Trustees responsible for this new charity. Once formed, a business plan will need to be developed to provide clarity on the way forward and give confidence to potential funders.

A working party may be required in order to give further serious consideration to a potential Heritage Centre, although current indications suggest that the appetite for setting up and running such a facility is limited and budgetary constraints may preclude this development in any case.

The next stage is to develop more detailed plans and costings for the village hall and submit a pre-planning application to Dartmoor National Park Authority. When undertaking this work, it is important to ensure that the designs produced are realistic and achievable and the capital cost does not become prohibitive. It is therefore suggested that the facilities required in the new building are categorised in terms of the following:

- o **Inescapable** – What is absolutely essential to meet local need.
- o **Essential** – These are important but not crucial.
- o **Desirable** – These would be very nice if there is the funding and space available, but the hall could meet the majority of community need without these.

Widcombe Village Hall Feasibility Study

To support a formal planning application, there will be various necessary surveys to commission such as Flood Risk Assessment, environmental and archaeological reports. DNPA's pre-application feedback will determine this.

As detailed above, a marketing and communications plan will need to be formalised and put into practice. This will be vital in ensuring community engagement, maintaining support and securing funds.

A fundraising team will be required immediately, and local efforts can begin straight away. A continuous programme of events, activities and promotion will be required in order to meet the target of at least £50,000 from local fundraising. This team would also be responsible for supporting the new CIO in grant applications and the monitoring and management of the Capital investment Plan as the project evolves. Gift Aid status should also be applied for at the earliest opportunity.

11 Recommendations

Public support and demand for facilities are evident and a modern, accessible village hall in Widecombe would be advantageous to parishioners and residents of the surrounding areas.

It is recommended that the Architects proposal that the Hayes Field is the appropriate location for a new village hall in Widecombe is accepted.

The scale and cost of the architect derived concept design needs to be reduced in order to reconcile with the anticipated available funding. There has been clear and consistent advice that this can be achieved without forfeiting the functionality and capacity of the building. The method of delivery will not be architect led due to prohibitive cost, and a multi-contract or design-and-build approach will be needed. It will also be necessary to make use of volunteer or paid local craft labour to achieve the finishes and costings which are planned.

Heritage Centre facilities have the potential to benefit the village in terms of providing a modern resource to record, preserve and display information and artefacts about the long and historically rich heritage of Widecombe and its residents. It would also offer a visitor destination to the abundant tourist trade in the village and this creates a unique selling point for the hall. The difficulty is that to fund the building via the Heritage Lottery Fund would put requirements on the supporters on an ongoing basis to deliver certain activities which a funding application would require, and this is a significant change from the current activities of the Widecombe History Group (WHG). WHG have demand and need for appropriate archiving and digitising work space, but not specifically for the ongoing educational or interactive elements of a Heritage Centre, although there is a keenness from some individual members to support such a facility. If a Heritage Centre is to be an integrated part of the village hall project it would require organised management, with volunteer support. It is evident that stand-alone archiving and digitisation space will not be sufficient to access heritage specific funding and without this the rooms as currently designed cannot be supported financially in a business plan.

Sports changing rooms are considered to be a worthwhile inclusion in the design as sports and fitness provision was rated highly by members of the community. The engagement of the Sports Group and expected ease of joining two community facilities together is positive and the likelihood of attracting funding specific to sports provision is good.

It is anticipated that the capital cost of the new village hall will be met by grants, loans, fundraising and donation of volunteer time. Additional benefactor support is likely to be required to meet total project costs. The running cost of the hall will be met by usage fees and every effort will be made to keep these fees to a minimum by building in to the structure low maintenance and high energy efficiency values, with discounted local resident hire rates. A Public Works Board Loan via the Parish Council appears essential in allowing enough capital to be raised for this project, and as such the example given in the DCT report is recommended. This would result in typical households (Band D) having their council tax precept increased by approximately £18 per annum (equivalent to 35p per week) to service loan repayments.

The costings in this report are based on figures originating from a handful of different contractors and professionals. Further development will need to occur to settle upon the final form and finish which should go into the planning application, but if the community supports the conclusions of this study, permission will be sought and the architect's form and finishes will guide the building development, even as value engineering occurs. On this basis, a new village hall in Widecombe of approximately 400m² would be feasible and the WVHSG recommend that this approach is pursued.

12 Appendix

12.1 Constitution

12.2 Community survey data

12.3 Group survey data

12.4 Youth survey data

12.5 Facilities List

12.6 Hall utilisation

12.7 Capital Investment Plan

12.8 Finance info from WCH

12.9 WCH feasibility input

12.10 Stakeholder feedback

12.11 DNPA pre-app feedback

12.12 Site selection report and appendix

12.13 Pegging out report

12.14 Sports Group feedback

12.15 Architect preliminary plans (Feb 2018, Rev A)

12.16 Architect design

12.17 Financial costing detail