



Eynsford

VILLAGE HALL

Registered Charity
302737

New Village Hall & Football Pitch Business Plan

January 2022

New Village Hall & Football Pitch



Arial View of Harrow Meadow

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New Village Hall & Football Pitch

1. Summary

Eynsford Village Hall, which was built in 1905, has increasing structural problems that threaten its closure on safety grounds.

The hall Trustees and the Parish Council have obtained planning permission to build a new, versatile, energy-efficient hall on Harrow Meadow including parking and a re-orientated football pitch.

The hall Trustees along, with the Parish Council, have also obtained planning permission to demolish the existing hall and replace it with three houses to enhance the value of the site in readiness for going to the market.

Eynsford is a vibrant village and requires a flexible and comfortable hall that meets the needs of the community.

Furthermore, the existing football pitch requires improvement to attract further use from within the community and beyond.

The Trustees have therefore launched a 'Rescue and Renewal' project. It has five objectives:

- **To rotate the existing sloping football pitch**
The new pitch will now be re-orientated in a north-south direction requiring a significant amount of excavation. The pitch will be laid level in accordance with the FA's recommendations.
- **To build a new hall on Harrow Meadow**
The new hall will be modern, long lasting, flexible in use, have a low carbon footprint and be economical

to run. Building on Harrow Meadow allows for more than 30 new car parking spaces.

- **To raise the funds needed to complete the new development**
A committee has been established to coordinate all fund-raising efforts.
- **To extend the uses of the village hall**
The hall will support facilities not only for existing uses but also for new services highlighted by the local population in the village surveys.
- **To deliver a more efficient hall**
The new building will be modern, easier to adapt to different needs, and cost less to run. The designers have been successful in achieving a low carbon footprint, by specifying air source heat pumps, photovoltaic panels, low energy lighting, low u-value glazing fabric, high air-tightness and low water flow restrictors. The main rooms are designed for passive summer cooling and ventilation providing good air quality and summer overheating mitigation. Electrical Vehicle (EV) charging will be provided in the new car park in support of the parish council's ongoing green aspirations for the village as a whole.

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South West Elevation

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2. Introduction

Eynsford is a vibrant Kentish village community located between Sevenoaks and Dartford. It has a population of over 1800.

Eynsford Village Hall is a registered charity (No 302737), run by locally elected and appointed trustees. Its formal objective, as recorded with the Charity Commission, is:

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

The village hall is over 100 years old and has increasing structural problems which threaten its closure on safety grounds. The Trustees have established

(a) that repairs to the existing building would have substantial cost, would not offer a long-lasting solution to the problems, nor would they provide significant enhancement or modernization.

(b) that since obtaining planning permission in 2010 for a new hall on the existing site, planning policies for development on Green Belt have been adapted to further embrace community development.

(c) that the construction of a new hall on its existing site was not popular and did not overcome issues such as parking.

Faced with this challenge, the Trustees launched the 'Rescue and Renewal' project to build a new hall on a different site.

The only site suitable, is Harrow Meadow, owned by the Parish Council. The Parish Council however, are keen to ensure that the village retains a hall, and are prepared to gift part of the land to be used for the new hall.

Careful consideration has been given to the design, appearance and scale of the proposed village hall, particularly to its impact upon the rural setting and its location.

New hall plans on Harrow Meadow, along with a reconfigured football pitch and associated car parking, have been approved by Sevenoaks District Council. Contractors' quotations for the earthworks necessary to rotate the football pitch, and a quantity surveyor's estimate for the hall have been obtained. The cost of the overall project is approximately £1,947,000. The consented plans provide for a modern, flexible and energy efficient building with attractive views over the new levelled football pitch and beyond.

The current hall has some 800 lets a year in its three rooms. Usage is wide ranging; from dancing classes for the young to social gatherings for the village's senior citizens. Activities range from the athletic, like badminton, to the cerebral, like the History Society talks.

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A new hall facility will meet all the requirements of the community and in particular target groups, namely:

- Wheelchair users;
- People with limited walking abilities;
- The sightless;
- The partially sighted;
- The hearing impaired; and
- The elderly.

Harrow Meadow is currently used by two football clubs, of which Eynsford FC is one of the oldest clubs in Kent founded in 1894. The teams will benefit in playing on a level pitch and it is also hoped to encourage youth and female teams to play in Eynsford.

The 2011, 2019 & 2021 surveys of local opinion indicated strong support for the continued need for a village hall. It pointed the Trustees towards future new uses that embraced the requirements of the young and of senior citizens.

The Trustees have established a project committee to manage the rebuilding process and a fundraising committee to seek the funds needed to carry through the project. The committee is supported by a practice of architects who have wide experience of building new village halls in Kent. A local appeal for funds has been launched and approaches to other sources and grant giving organisations have commenced.



New hall next to the existing changing rooms viewed from the football pitch

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3. Alternatives considered

Before applying for planning permission the only suitable site identified was on Harrow Meadow which is owned by the Parish Council. The Trustees considered two main alternatives.

- **Repairing the existing Hall.**

Given the fundamental structural problems of the century-old building this would have been costly (in excess of £650,000). The Trustees considered this to be an undesirable option because it would have still required considerable fundraising to deliver a hall which would offer no better facilities or efficiencies than the existing building. Moreover, advice from the architects suggested that repair may not assure the long-term structural future of the hall.

- **Building on a new site.**

Advice from planning consultants considered that building a new hall on Harrow Meadow could gain planning permission even though it was within the Green Belt and in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Hence the decision to build a new Hall on Harrow Meadow, which would have the added benefit of reconfiguring the football pitch and make it level.

New Hall Plans can be seen in Appendix C.

Eynsford Village Society

“No other venue exists for the many groups that use the Hall. The new Hall will be able to meet their needs and improve upon them.”

Yoga

“We must have the foresight to provide a facility with flexibility and potential for the future needs of our village society such that it is a centre for the whole community for many generations to come.”

Eynsford Gardening Club

“Since its inception in 1905 the club has been using the Village Hall and it would not be possible otherwise for us to run our events. The club looks forward to using the new hall’s facilities and will provide support for fundraising.”

Eynsford Football Club

“It would be great to play our games on a level pitch with proper grass”

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4. Objectives of the Project

The Rescue and Renewal project has five main objectives:

- **To reconfigure the football pitch**
This will be achieved by rotating the existing pitch through 90° and extending it into part of the adjoining farmland, which will be compensated by a land swap between the farmer and Parish Council. There will be a significant amount of excavation required due to the profile of the existing contours, although, the committee have stipulated that the pitch should be no higher than 1.2 metres above the finished floor of the new hall and that the excess soil is to be spread over a strip of land owned by parish council.
- **To build the new village hall**
This new hall will be similar in area to the existing hall and should be modern, long lasting, flexible in use, have a low carbon footprint and be economical to run. The new hall will not only have parking for over 30 vehicles but will have an outlook onto a large attractive green space that will not only be used for football, but for a wide range of village events.
- **To raise the funds needed to complete the rebuilding project.**
A committee has been established with skills to drive fundraising forward. The fundraising strategy is described more fully below.
- **To extend the uses of the village hall.**
It should be able to support facilities, not only for existing uses, but also for new services desired by the local population. In particular the Trustees are keen to address the needs of marginalised local residents, notably senior citizens and the disabled. The Trustees also wish to encourage the development of IT facilities and training. A wider range of sporting facilities would be valued, suitable for senior citizens and the young. Hirers will have the benefit of the main hall and its two adjacent rooms, along with a centralised kitchen.
- **To deliver a more efficient hall.**
A modern building would be easier to adapt to different needs and cost less to run. In particular energy costs should be sharply lower. The present hall spends some £8,000 a year on heat and lighting out of a total running cost of around £25,000. The new design reduces the carbon footprint, with the incorporation of ground or air source heat pumps, high value insulation and air tightness, photovoltaic (PV) panels, electrical vehicle charging points and natural ventilation provisions.

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5. Evidence of Demand

The principal evidence of demand for the project is the current heavy use to which the hall is put. **These facilities would be lost if the existing hall had to be closed for safety reasons.** There are some eight hundred individual lettings each year in the hall's three rooms.

Current users of the hall include:

- Local societies (eg Gardeners, History, Photographic)
- Women's Institute
- Tuesday Club (senior citizens)
- The Riverside Players – a local amateur theatre group, with a youth section
- Three badminton groups
- Dancing classes (various ages)
- Keep fit classes
- Irish dancing and Morris dancing
- Jumble sales and table sales
- Private parties (weddings, birthdays, wakes, etc)
- Polling station

Local consultations

In 2007 the trustees undertook a consultation, mainly in the form of a questionnaire sent to all local residents and user groups. This sought views about the facilities that residents ideally would like in their village hall.

Of the respondents who answered the question about whether the village needs a purpose-built village hall, 96% answered in the affirmative (312 to 12). Most interest was expressed in activities for arts, sports, education and retired people.

In March 2011, the Trustees of Eynsford Village Hall asked residents of Eynsford and users to complete a survey concerning:

- a) Their current use of the village hall; and
- b) Their opinions about a new village hall.

More information about current and potential activities can be found in the **Survey of Local Residents 2011** report, see Appendix A.

Further consultations with the local residents were made in 2017 and 2021.

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5. Evidence of Demand (continued)

The results from the 2011 village survey are reported in Appendix A and are summarised below.

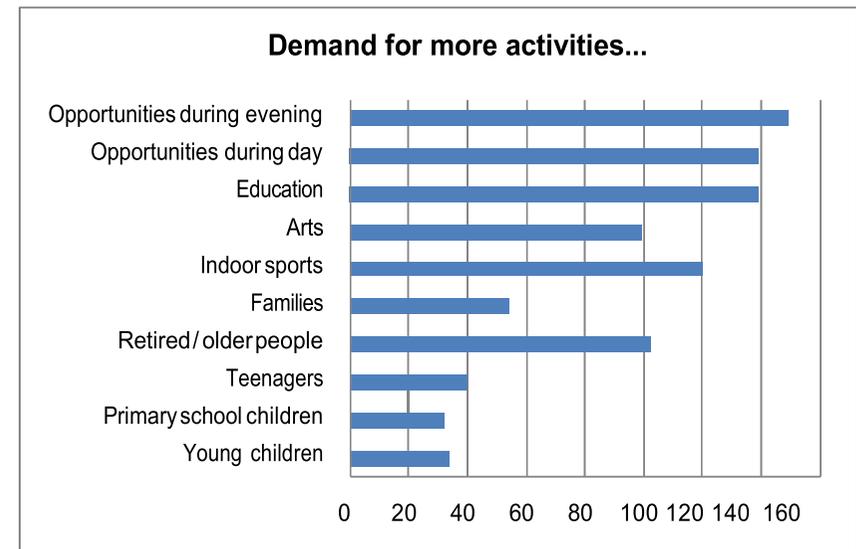
There was overwhelming recognition of the importance of the Hall to village life. Almost 97% of respondents agreed that the Village Hall and the activities that take place there help to make Eynsford a good place in which to live and strengthen the sense of community. In addition, 94% of respondents believe that more activities at a new Hall will make Eynsford an even better place in which to live.

There was a healthy 41% response rate to the survey; the trustees received 357 responses representing 752 people.

Of the 752 people, nearly one third are members of groups that regularly use the hall. Moreover, members of almost three-quarters of the households that responded to the survey have been to an event at the hall in the last 12 months.

Significantly, the survey responses suggest potential for greater use of the Hall. Approximately one half of all adults in the survey are at home most days, and approximately one-third of household members are aged 60 or over. Almost 150 respondents reported they would use the Hall more if there were additional activities during the evening, and 139 respondents said they would use the Hall more if there were more activities during the day.

There was interest in more indoor sports (120 responses) and for activities for retired / older people (102 responses). Respondents were particularly interested in having an on-site café (165 responses).



The results of the 2017 community survey are reported in Appendix B and are summarised below.

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Ratings for current facilities and their importance were requested. Parking, main hall, kitchen and toilets were all considered very important. In a separate survey of regular users, the results showed responses very much in line with the community survey.

A final survey was carried out in 2021 where residents were asked the following:

- 1) Is it important that Eynsford has a modern community facility – 80% in favour
- 2) Is it important to improve and retain a sports pitch at Harrow Meadow – 74% in favour
- 3) Is it important to have a larger car park – 65% in favour
- 4) I support the project to build a new hall at Harrow Meadow – 74% support

The final design incorporated the comments made by the user survey.



Artist's impression of the new village hall at Harrow Meadow.

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6. Organisation and Implementation

Eynsford Village Hall is run by local residents who are volunteer charity Trustees (list available on request). There are currently 20 Trustees, elected and appointed in accordance with the Scheme approved by the Charity Commission. The only paid support is a part-time cleaner and letting Secretary. Bookings are made through various routes, including an on-line diary on the Hall's web site - www.eynsfordvh.com. The Trustees meet formally nine times a year.

As well as running the existing hall, the Trustees remain responsible for the New Hall project along with the parish council. However, they have delegated day-to-day management of the main elements of the project as follows:

- **The design and construction phases of the ground works** associated with reconfiguring the football pitch will be overseen by Parish Councillor, Alan Cooke, who is a structural engineer.
- **The design and construction phases of the new hall** will be overseen by one of the Trustees, Malcolm Richardson, who was a Chartered Surveyor, together with James Staniland, a mechanical and electrical engineer. The monitoring of the contractor will be in the hands of the Project Committee.
- **Fundraising** will be the responsibility of a committee of volunteers, some of whom are hall Trustees or Parish Councillors coordinated by Holly Ivaldi, (Parish Clerk) and Bridget Storrar and Heather Sim.

- **Financial control** will be the responsibility of the project treasurer, Rob Viner who is the existing hall treasurer, assisted by Bridget Storrar, an accountant with a firm of consulting engineers. Separate bank accounts have been set up for the project. The project treasurer will manage receipts and payments through that account, prepare relevant financial accounts and report, as appropriate, to grant-giving organisations.
- **Local consultation** will be the responsibility of Holly Ivaldi and Bridget Storrar who have extensive experience of managing events and working within the community. Local communication will be supported by providing project updates in the village monthly magazine, on the Village Hall website and via Village Hall and Parish Council newsletters.

The Trustees will oversee the project in line with their legal obligation to be prudent in financial matters.

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7. Timetable and Milestones

The project team have identified a series of milestones for the project – points at which the progress of the project will be monitored. They are mostly steps which need to be accomplished before the project can move on.

The target dates will be subject to revision according to progress.

“Eynsford Women’s Institute wishes to express its support for the rebuilding of Eynsford Hall and looks forward to using the new and improved facilities it will provide. We know and appreciate the value to the whole community of a well appointed village hall.”

| Milestone | Target date |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Obtain planning permission for the hall on Harrow Meadow | Achieved July 2020 |
| Obtain planning permission for three houses on the existing hall site. | Achieved October 2021 |
| Carry out a geotechnical site investigation on Harrow Meadow | Achieved September 2021 |
| Obtain tenders for the football pitch works | February 2022 |
| Launch Fundraising | January 2022 |
| Review football pitch tenders | May 2022 |
| Obtain consultants fees to Stage 1 | January 2022 |
| Sell the existing site | August 2022 |
| Commence football pitch work | March 2023 |
| Review Fund Raising Process | June 2022 |
| Tender Hall Stage 1 designs | June 2022 |
| Appoint Football pitch Contractor | September 2022 |
| Review fund raising | August 2022 |
| Commence Construction of the new hall | TBC |

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8. Financial Management

To protect the trustees from a charge of imprudence, and given the lack of a financial buffer, two conditions must be satisfied:

- No contract for work must be signed until it is clear that funds will be in place to honour it.
- At any point in time more cash must have been received than expended.

All receipts and payments relating to the project are passed through a separate No2 bank account which has been opened, along with a number of savings accounts, to segregate project finances from the ongoing business of running the village hall. Separate accounts are prepared for this account.

The **estimated expenditure** on the project is:

| Item | Cost |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Football pitch contract | £137,000 |
| Building Contract (tenders) | £1,730,000 |
| Future Fees | £60,000 |
| Fixtures & fittings * | £15,000 |
| Fundraising expenses ** | £5,000 |
| | |
| Total | £1,947,000 |

* Kitchen fittings, etc.

** Mostly undertaken by volunteers.

The planned **sources of funds** for covering these expenses are:

| Source | Amount |
|-------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| Current Village Hall Funds | 350,000 |
| Parish Council | 120,000 |
| Sale of Existing Site | 500,000 |
| Local Community Fundraising inc. Village Hall Lottery | 122,000 |
| Local Authorities | 35,000 |
| Charitable Foundations | 260,000 |
| Public Works Loan | 300,000 |
| CIL Funding | 260,000 |
| Total | 1,947,000 |

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8. Financial Management (continued)

We are advised that Eynsford Village Hall is not eligible for a grant from the Reaching Communities programme of the Big Lottery Fund. The position will be monitored and an application made should the programme's eligibility criteria change in favour of the Rescue and Renewal project.

We have noted that other village halls that have undertaken major modernisations have obtained large increases in letting revenues. In addition we hope for significant running cost savings, notably on heating and lighting. This, at a late stage in the project, might make it prudent for the Trustees to raise some loans, for example to complete fitting out. This possibility will be examined at the time.

9. Ongoing Maintenance

Maintenance of the new hall will be funded from the revenues obtained from hirers of the hall.

In the present hall, annual letting income is around £18,000 a year and expenditure some £25,000, the balance being covered by fundraising by the Trustees. Within total expenditure, energy costs are £8,000 a year.

The new hall will be much more energy-efficient and we estimate ongoing annual expenditure at £12,000 a year at today's prices. The experience of other villages in Kent that have built new halls is of a subsequent large increase in letting income. Hence we, conservatively, estimate future letting income at £20,000 a year, which would more than cover ongoing expenses.

Riverside Players

"There is a long tradition (since the 1950s) of amateur theatrical use of the Village Hall. We also have a strong youth group that has run many successful productions. We will support the Trustees in whatever way is practicable in their efforts to raise funds for the new hall."

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10. Fundraising Strategy

The Rescue and Renewal fundraising strategy has to take into account the financial circumstances of the wider Eynsford Village Hall charity.

The function of the charity is to run the village hall which it must continue to do until the present hall is demolished and after the new hall comes into use. From the 2019 accounts (copies of recent years' accounts available on request, but figures were very different during the pandemic) the annual cost of running the hall is around £25,000. Of that under £18,000 is met from charges to hirers. The rest comes from the regular fundraising events organised by the trustees, leaving little surplus for the accumulation of funds.

At the outset of the project, in early 2022, the trustees held liquid assets of £24,000, with a minimum of £10,000 regarded as a prudent floor. **Since then £25,000 has been spent obtaining planning permission**, mainly in fees to the architects and Sevenoaks District Council and on specialist reports required by the planning process. Most of this money came from funds previously accumulated by the trustees.

The Rescue and Renewal project was launched in August 2021. A music extravaganza and barbecue on Common Meadows was held at the launch and 300 people attended through the afternoon.

A significant contribution to the Rescue and Renewal project will come from the existing hall which the Trustees own. It

is expected that the sale of the existing hall site will raise up to £500,000. We have then identified the following main potential sources of funds:

- Donations from local residents
- Donations from former residents
- Donations from existing user groups (including in kind)
- Donations from local businesses
- A village hall lottery (launched in September 2011)
- Brick and paving slab sponsorship
- Sponsorship of elements of the new hall, for example rooms, foyer, lighting, tiling, kitchen, terrace
- Eynsford Parish Council *
- A Public Works Loan
- Sevenoaks District Council
- Kent County Council
- Grants from grant-making organisations
- Tax relief on gift aid donations
- Fundraising events organised by local volunteers

* *The Parish Council has already provided £5,000, to cover the cost of preparing a detailed site investigation and aims to contribute a further £120,000 over the next two years.*

The above fundraising activities are additional to the regular small-scale events that help fund the running of the existing hall. Such traditional activities will continue and their funds will be kept separate from those in the Rescue and Renewal account.

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11. Publicity

It is essential that the status of fundraising and rebuilding is publicised to the local community. Articles are being submitted for inclusion in the monthly parish Trident Magazine which is distributed in Eynsford, Farningham and Lullingstone and is mailed further afield along with Parish Council newsletter.

Information about the project and fundraising are being posted on the village hall website and social media sites including the local community groups.

Posters for fundraising and information events are put up around the local area and flyers are distributed to residents.

A highly visible barometer of funding achieved will be maintained in the centre of Eynsford.