

CONSULTATION SUMMARY RESPONSE

The Community Building Project team held two consultations during July in a bid to capture as many comments as possible and suggestions on the initial feasibility drawings.

On display was a plan showing an indicative idea of what facilities could be contained within the proposed 1250sqm facility. There was also an illustrated sketch drawing of the facility to give an idea of what the building could look like based on the proposed plans.

Attendees were advised that, until the surveys were all completed, the exact location of the new facility could not be shown, and until it was confirmed what facilities there would be within the building that would be attainable and feasible, and the exact footprint identified, it was not practical to show any dimensions.

All the comments are summarised on a separate document and this response is a summary of most of the frequently asked questions.

LOCATION

The location of the building will be determined by the constraints. For example, it has already been identified since the first consultation that due to the root protection area (RPA) of the Oak Trees awarded protection, the new facility cannot be built on the area currently occupied by the Scout Hut, or indeed turned 90 degrees as per one of the suggestions.

The location will also be determined upon being able to achieve the required car parking allocation, that will not only serve the new facility, but existing facilities as well.

There were several comments as to why the new facility could not be built on the former cricket pitch area, why was the Benians Pavilion not being demolished or expanded, and why is the Village Hall not being enlarged or demolished.

In response:

1. When the cricket playing field area was purchased, there was a covenant agreed that restricts this area from ever being built on and must remain open space, it is nothing to do with planning policy.
2. The Benians Pavilion is a sports pavilion and the new building will not be providing the same facilities, eg. Sports team changing rooms and a bar facility and is an important village asset.
3. The Benians Pavilion does not have the structure in place to expand significantly.
4. There is not enough space to demolish and build on the site of the Benians Pavilion to provide the size of facility which would provide the additional infrastructure required and replace the facilities within the Pavilion. Enlarging the Pavilion back towards the children's play area would restrict the options of facilities, and with having to move the children's play area, and identify a new area for car parking, would mean the loss of too much open green space to be a viable consideration.
5. Due to the lack of car parking provision, it is not possible to expand the village hall. It will continue to run as its own entity, with Council support as previously.

CAR PARKING

Due to EHDC planning policy, a survey is taking place to identify how the required amount of parking can be achieved to be compliant with policy and include the existing facilities requirements, and with the minimal loss of existing green space. There would be no charge for car parking.

SUSTAINABILITY

The new building will be as environmentally friendly and sustainable as is possible. Various options are already being considered, including solar panels, air source heat pump, water rainfall capture, sedum roof, electric car charging points, wildlife mitigating materials eg. Swift bricks. There will be enhanced landscaping and additional tree planting to mitigate any environmental impact the new building may have.

TOILET FACILITIES

It is anticipated that there will be two blocks of gender neutral cubical and disabled toilets, one for the public area and one for the hired user area, with a security door between the two. The public area toilets will be open when the building is.

The team are working with the scouts looking at ways to achieve secure usage of the toilet facilities when the various cub and scout groups are using the building.

INTERNAL FACILITIES

- **CAFÉ**

It is intended that the facilities offered would not directly compete with other local establishments, but to offer drinks, light snacks, and catering for users. It is also intended that the operation of the café would be put out to tender, which would in turn offer local employment. There would be no conflict with the current facility offered at the Benians Pavilion.

- **BUSINESS HUB**

Even before the current situation created by the recent pandemic, the requirement for 'pop-up' business space had been identified, now even more so. The area will allow those who work from home who, at times, may need some quiet space, or use of office facilities, and with the option to hire business meeting facilities. This facility has proved to be very popular in other areas, and there has already been a high amount of interest.

The Café and business hub are being provided to bring daily revenue into the building, which will allow charities and sports clubs to use the facilities at discounted rates.

- **SPORTS FACILITIES**

There has already been interest and intent to use the internal sports facilities by existing sports users. Including indoor archery, indoor bowls, indoor cricket, as well as Badminton clubs and previously a local basketball club. Other local sports and recreational clubs will be approached to gain their expression of interest as part of the marketing strategy.

- **SCOUTS**

The Scouts usage of the building has always been at the forefront of all discussions. Although the need to demolish the scout hut to facilitate the new building is now no longer a requirement, they are keen to expand their current offering and have indicated that they do wish to use the new facility and are working with the project team to work out the most effective way to do this. The use of segregated toilet facilities is being considered already as one of the most important factors. The Scouts, and all charity and local sports clubs will have preferential hire rates, although these are yet to be determined.

- **STORAGE**

All regular users will be provided with storage based on their requirements.

TRAFFIC

There will, of course, be additional traffic at times, this is inevitable, however the team are already working with an advisor to ensure that the vehicular access is, firstly suitable, and secondly, can accommodate the projected additional vehicle movements, and any mitigation required to ensure safety for everyone. There will be incentives in place to encourage walking and cycling and discourage vehicle usage, with cycle parking.

Pedestrian safety is paramount, and a pedestrian walkway will be provided along the whole stretch of the football pitch and training area, with improvements to the banking, for greater safety, the whole way up Uplands Lane.

NOISE/ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

The effect that the building will have on neighbouring residents is of paramount importance, and all the concerns will be taken into consideration. Some of the concerns raised, and potential mitigation, for further discussion are listed below.

- Internal Noise cut off. There will be systems in place to cut any noise if the doors open to prevent late night noise. Although there will be some private functions, there are measures that can be put in place to ensure that these are kept at a minimum per annum.
- External noise pollution. It is hoped that as all the activities are internal there should not be additional external sport noise. There will be additional preventative measures in place to prevent window/door opening to keep any noise pollution to an absolute minimum. There will be an agreed closing time for minimum late-night disruption. Hours could be agreed in discussion with residents.
- External functions, loitering after the facility closes. Measures will be looked at and discussed to ensure that there is little or no disruption late night disruption. For example, no permanent seating outside the building, with, perhaps, the outdoor terrace area only open during café hours.
- Four Marks has a dark skies policy, so external lighting will be kept to a minimum, but some low level or security lighting may be a requirement for health and safety purposes.
- Anti-social behaviour/vandalism. This will be hard to mitigate but there will be CCTV and possible security lighting, to be determined and agreed with neighbouring residents.
- Concern over increased usage of neighbouring estates for pedestrian access. This is to be expected as walking to the facility will be encouraged, particularly by those who live on the estates. However as the rubbish is generally left at the Recreation Ground itself, there is no reason to expect additional littering in other areas. There is adequate bin provision at the Recreation Ground, and there will be more provided for the new building.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to attend and complete comment forms, there will be a further consultation once all the comments have been considered and the architects are able to put the dimensions and proposed location together.

End.