



# HOOK PARISH COUNCIL

## PROPOSAL TO REFURBISH HOOK COMMUNITY CENTRE – CONSULTATION JUNE 2013

Hook Community Centre is a valuable asset to the Parish and is home to The Base Youth Club, The Young at Heart Club, Hook Village Nursery, Hook Community Squash Club and provides an office for the Parish Council. A number of local groups hire the main hall for dance, fitness, martial arts, badminton as well as some use for social functions.

Attendees of the Annual Village Meeting (AVM), held on 24<sup>th</sup> April, had the opportunity to discuss the proposals for the refurbishment of the Community Centre in Ravenscroft. Although it had been hoped to present the full costs of the project to the meeting, the tender process was still in the detailed negotiation stage. As a result the Council was not in a position to disclose or discuss the final financial arrangements for the project. In view of the relatively small number of residents attending the AVM (170) and the significance of project, the Council feels it appropriate to consult more widely. This consultation document provides specific financial information and sets out the rationale for the refurbishment and the financial aspects of the project.

### Background and rationale for the refurbishment

A wide consultation with residents, in 1984, highlighted the need for a building to provide a sport facility. The main part of the Community Centre had 2 halls, designed for indoor recreation and meetings. In 1990 two Squash courts and a 'club room' were added. The building was extended further to provide football changing facilities and The Base Youth Centre in 1997.



Since then Hook has grown substantially. A survey carried out in 2009 highlighted the need for more flexible, modern facilities which will also meet the requirements of the expanding community. The general condition of the building is shabby, outdated and has many limitations for effective use. To list only some:

- **Changing areas** – Only 2 of the 8 changing rooms and 16 showers (spread over three areas of the building) are used, but Legionella testing, cleaning etc. is still required and costly.
- **Small 'club room'** – Poor access, soundproofing and lighting make the space difficult to let and is largely redundant.
- **Sound** – Noise transfers throughout the building and between existing spaces e.g. music or sport in the main hall makes it too noisy to use adjacent rooms for other activities.
- **Leaks** - Leaks are occurring in several areas of the building, coming through the small hall ceiling when it rains and water damage is evident in foyer. In the squash courts, leaking windows require regular sealing and overall the roof is in an unsatisfactory condition.

- **Main hall** – Poor acoustics and inflexible lighting make the hall unattractive to users other than for badminton or other sports.
- **Kitchens** – Do not comply with modern standards.
- **Equality Act** – Not compliant, leading to risk of legal action for discrimination against the disabled.
- **Heating** – Is expensive to run due to its age and frequent failures mean areas of the building are cold in winter.
- **Windows** – The frames are in poor condition, do not close properly and contribute to loss of heat.

## The options

Over the last two years Hook Parish Council has taken professional advice and undertaken a range of surveys and assessments of the building. Working with the Hook Village Halls Charitable Association (HVHCA) a proposal has been developed for the building. The following options have been considered.

- Completely demolish and rebuild.** The estimated cost of a completely new building at current prices would be £3 million. This is unaffordable and unjustifiable.
- Continue with the present arrangements.** That is undertaking short term repairs as and when required. The state of the building is such that maintenance costs are rising rapidly and opportunities to let the rooms and facilities are diminishing. This is not satisfactory as the building will become unusable within a very short time frame.
- Undertake partial but major repair works to the roof, replace the heating system replace doors and windows, update kitchens and changing rooms and ensure compliance with DDA requirements.** While this would make the building more usable in the short term, it does not address the letting deficiencies or the inefficient use of space. It is also another short term solution in that further ongoing expense will be incurred at regular intervals. Estimated cost £400-£600K.
- Fully refurbish the existing building,** which will provide an up to date building, flexible facilities and new services for the community. Cost £1.6m. Numerous previous consultations on this option have confirmed positive support from residents and users. The Parish Council also believes this is the only sustainable option.

## What will be new?

The fully refurbished building will address all of the existing deficiencies and will be environmentally efficient, with reduced maintenance costs and be fully Equality Act compliant.

Facilities will include a self-service library kiosk and the Community Café, both of which will add to the vibrancy of the building and provide a convenient meeting place for all ages. The toilets adjacent to the Café will be accessible to the public using the many facilities in Hartletts Park.



A special focus has been to maintain the provision of suitable facilities for the very important services provided by the Village Nursery and The Base. These charities serve hundreds of families in the community.

The main hall will have a lower ceiling and improved acoustics and soundproofing to reduce noise transfer between hire spaces. This will make the facilities ideal for social functions, whilst still allowing for sports use. The building will offer use of up to date technology and audio visual equipment

The redundant areas will be redesigned for use by The Nursery and Parish Council office, with changing rooms and showers consolidated into a single, central area of the building. A new first floor Clubroom, linking the squash courts and the main building, will provide an additional large meeting space and a much needed viewing gallery to allow development of squash and increase use of the courts.

The spaces for hire will complement those offered at the Elizabeth Hall and extend the current opportunities for events and leisure activities for residents.

## The next steps

**An exhibition and meeting  
will be held on  
Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> June  
at Hook Community Centre at 8pm**

There will be an opportunity to tour the building, view the full refurbishment plans and ask questions.

Anticipating the continuing support of residents, the Council intends to submit an application to the Secretary of State for approval to borrow from the Public Works Loan Board. This process is likely to take up to 8 weeks. In July the Council will discuss selection of the Tender contactor with the intention to place the contract when borrowing approval is granted.

We would encourage residents to show their support for the project. Please complete and return the form below by 26<sup>th</sup> June. Comments can also be made by e-mail to [clerk@hook.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@hook.gov.uk) or on Facebook or via twitter @HookPC, by post to the address overleaf or by hand at meeting.

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### COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSAL TO REFURBISH HOOK COMMUNITY CENTRE - JUNE 2013

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**Name** (Optional) ..... **Postcode** .....

## Project Cost and Funding

As set out above, various options were considered and the conclusion of the Council is that anything less than a full refurbishment will not provide the facilities and services needed.

The tenders have now been reviewed and the final cost of the construction will be £1.6m – including relocation of users during the works, project management and contingencies.

Hook is set to grow by 500+ new homes in the coming years, but the final housing numbers and timescales are by no means certain. There is expected to be a significant contribution made to the project by the developers, but it is premature to predict how much money will be made available until planning permission has been granted. It is common practice for the funds not to be released until some way through or even completion of the development, which take up to 5 years. The Parish Council does not believe it is feasible to keep the Community Centre operating long enough for the new developments to come on stream.

As agreed by residents, the Council has been collecting £60,000 pa in the Precept (36p per week for a Band D home) since completion of the Elizabeth Hall. This money has been set aside and together with other Council reserves, will provide 50% of the capital required. However, the balance would need to be met by a loan, which can be obtained at an attractive fixed rate. In the unlikely event that no new homes were built in Hook, the worst case scenario would be that the Council would continue to repay the loan for up to 25 years. We do not anticipate this being the case and expect to repay the balance as soon as developer funding is available. The loan would be repaid by continuing to collect the £60,000, which will cover the annual repayments, so there will be no additional annual burden on the community to fund the project.

On this basis, it is proposed that the project should go ahead, funded as set out below.

Capital investment (Parish Council Reserves)	800000
Loan from Public Works Loan Board	800000
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	<b>£1,600,000</b>



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Hook Parish Council  
Hook Community Centre  
Ravenscroft  
Hook  
Basingstoke  
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