
WICKHAMBREAUX VILLAGE HALL



Five-Year Plan

Prepared for: Public Use

Prepared by: Wickhambreaux Village Hall Management Committee

March 2024

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SUMMARY

The purpose of this document is to create a rolling Five-Year Plan for the Wickhambreaux Village Hall, to aid the Trustees and Management Committee of Wickhambreaux Village Hall in meeting their moral and financial obligations towards the community that the Hall serves.

Their goal is to provide a well-maintained and presented, accessible and safe Village Hall, to be used for social, recreational, educational and leisure activities, with facilities which will be to the benefit of, and meet the needs and desires of, residents of the Parish and the Hall's other users.

This plan aims to build upon the Community Consultation that was undertaken in 2022 to determine support for the Hall. It considers current use, and ways in which this should/could evolve, better to meet community needs.

The plan will provide a framework for future planning, so that maintenance/upgrade work can be identified, prioritised and budgeted for, and so that grants/funding/sponsorship can be sought in a considered and timely manner.

The Trustees and Management Committee are keen to engage individuals and groups within the community to become involved with the plan. It will be made public (on the Parish Council website) and will be regularly assessed and reviewed, and updated annually at the Village Hall Committee's Annual General Meeting.

BACKGROUND

History & Evolution

Ordnance Surveys show that there has been some sort of club/reading room on the site in The Street since the late 19th Century. It is believed that the current Village Hall was built early in the 20th Century as a club for working men, with additional works completed around 1910-11. After WWII it became a general Village Social Club so that women could be admitted. In 1958 the site was bought by the Parish Council and it was subsequently designated the Village Hall.

The Hall is still owned by the Parish Council – the Trustees – to be used for the benefit of the Community in accordance with the Deed of Trust. Day to day operations are managed on a voluntary basis by a Committee of around eight local residents, including a Parish Council representative and the Parish Clerk, who acts as secretary.

Management Committee

As at March 2024

Emma Denning	
Patrick Duffy	Treasurer
Tebiena Martin	Booking Secretary
Karen Newton-Anker	Vice Chair
Caroline Rees	Parish Council Representative
Lucy Rushbrooke	Chair
Gail Hubbard	Secretary/Parish Clerk (maternity cover for Chenice Sparkes)
Keith Walsh	

PURPOSE

Why a Village Hall is important

They are unique to rural communities and villages. The 'concept' was created post WWI to facilitate rural regeneration and foster a sense of community, particularly in more remote areas. The initiative was part of a broader force for social change, answering a need for recreation and mental stimulation.

Village Halls provide important facilities for their community (sporting/recreational/entertainment), and often act as polling station/medical clinic/post office/general store etc, where needed. In addition to providing the tangible benefits of a physical space for community events and gatherings, Village Halls also foster intangible benefits, such as friendship/mutual support/social network.

Who the Hall services

The Wickhambreaux Village Hall services the Parish of Wickhambreaux (which includes Wickhambreaux, Stodmarsh and Grove) and approximately 540 residents (UK Census, 2021).

Since the mid-1960s, Wickhambreaux Primary School has been a key tenant of the Hall, and this was formalised by a contract in 2022. The Hall is used by pupils during school hours (0800–1630) during term time. Outside these hours the Hall is available for use by the whole community and others who wish to hire it for private use.

Current level of use

In addition to its regular term-time use by the School, the Village Hall has historically been well supported by residents for such varied activities as jazz concerts, quiz and trivia nights, village lunches, clubs and societies, children's parties, 21sts and weddings. In line with current social trends and changing rural demographics, use of the Hall has been declining in recent years. This fall-off was exacerbated during the global pandemic, when it was closed for public use, and it has subsequently been slow to pick up. [See: Current Usage table, p 12]

In 2022 the Management Committee implemented a Community Consultation to determine community support for the Hall. Every resident of the Parish was sent a brief questionnaire and there was an approximate 14% response rate. Of those who responded, the view of the Hall was universally positive and enthusiastic. Many people submitted suggestions for clubs/societies and the outcome of the consultation did spark an uptick in usage, with several new regular bookings. However overall use of the Hall is still below capacity.

DESCRIPTION

Hall

Wickhambreaux Village Hall is located on a small plot in the centre (Conservation Area) of Wickhambreaux, a rural village 8 km east of Canterbury. It is opposite the Village Primary School and there are privately owned houses on either side. There is no designated parking.

The main Hall measures roughly 15 m x 7 m with a sprung hardwood floor. There is a stage at the far end, measuring approx 6 x 2.5 m. There is a fair amount of storage below the stage, used for tables, school equipment and some Village Hall equipment.

In 2022/23 a new, digital media system was installed, comprising projector, screen, amplifier and surround-sound speakers. The Hall has fast WiFi but no telephone line.

The Hall can accommodate up to 120 people standing or 70 people seated at tables. Crockery, glassware and cutlery are all available for hire. (Inventory of Contents on file)

The good-sized kitchen is located next to the stage and it opens into a rear kitchen storeroom, from which there is a fire exit into the rear garden.

The WC block is accessed off the main hall, as is a 'school storeroom' used to store gym and games equipment. The two storerooms and WC block were later additions to the main hall and were built to a level which is poor by current standards. In 2023 it became necessary to re-roof the block and to repair the WCs and 'school storeroom'. The facilities are currently scheduled for a further major upgrade over summer 2024. (See page 8 for details.)

Fees for hiring the hall are published on the Hall's website, along with terms and conditions of hire. [see <https://wickhambreaux-pc.gov.uk/the-parish/village-hall/>]

The Hall is licensed for entertainment and holds a general commons license, but hirers are required to apply for their own temporary event notices for sale of alcohol.

Gardens

Wickhambreaux Village Hall has a small front garden which is currently being established as a wildflower garden. To the rear is a small garden which has not, historically, been greatly used and which had become very overgrown. It backs onto a neighbouring garden.

There is a hedge growing up against the front wall of the Hall, which requires regular maintenance and impedes access and light. There are currently discussions about removing it and creating a pathway alongside the hall instead.

In early 2023 the Frank Montgomery Playing Field Committee requested that a shed be housed in the Village Hall grounds to store equipment and it was eventually decided to position it in the rear garden against the boundary fence. To facilitate its installation the major part of the rear garden was cleared, creating a 'blank canvas' for future use.

There is an attractive table-bench and a clear opportunity for improvement. The local Garden & Nature Club have agreed to take on the garden as a project and the Committee have allocated £250 (thanks to a gift from a local resident) towards this and work has already commenced.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Incomings/Outgoings

It is important to note that the Village Hall is not intended to be run as a profitable business, but should not make a loss! [See Appendix for Profit & Loss summary, p 13]

The running costs of the Hall are met from annual income and it is fortunate to have a regular tenant in the Wickhambreaux Primary School. Historically the school has generated the bulk of Hall's revenue stream with the remainder coming from renting the Hall out to local groups and societies as well private hirers. In recent years – and with the impact of the pandemic – the contribution from other sources has dwindled.

In 2021/22 the Hall received business restart grants of approx £19,000 as part of the UK Government's post-pandemic initiative to revitalise Village Halls. This money has largely been used in 2023 to fund the urgent, major repair works required in the WC block.

Reserves

The Hall adopted a Reserves Policy in 2010 (on file) which follows guidelines set out by the Charity Commission. However in recent years this has fallen by the wayside. It is intended that the Committee's Five-Year Plan will reinstate the Reserves Policy as a way of managing future expenditure. Part of this process will involve establishing steps required to establish/maintain reserves at the agreed levels.

In brief, the Hall's Reserves Policy recommends holding six months running costs (approx £2,500 in 2010) to be held in Unrestricted Reserves. Within these Unrestricted Reserves there should be Designated Funds for planned spending for the current year. There are also Restricted Reserves, which are raised or held for specific future puposes, and planned for immediate/short/medium or long term expenditure.

RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS

Work achieved/Investments since 2017

2017

New oven
WiFi installed
External painting

2018

Hand dryers in WCs
LED emergency lighting
Media upgrade - Stage 1: Projector

2019

New boiler
New flooring
Kitchen worktops
Media upgrade - Stage 2: Screen
Interior decorating (WCs, hall skirting, kitchen)

2020

New stage curtains purchased

2021

Covid!

2022

Media upgrade - Stage 3:
Speakers, Amplifier
Wildflower meadow
Table-Bench set for Garden

2023

Roof (WC block) replaced
New Fire Door
School storeroom repaired

FUTURE OBJECTIVES

Community facilities

The aim is to provide a well-maintained and presented, accessible and safe Village Hall, to be used for social, recreational, educational and leisure activities, with facilities which will be to the benefit of, and meet the needs and desires of, residents of the Parish and the Hall's other users. It is important to recognise that the Hall should be 'Fit for Purpose', and that we need to recognise the limitations of the space/venue and not over-invest financially.

SWOT analysis

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
General goodwill and fondness for the hall	Increasing costs - energy/maintenance due to age
Enthusiasm for its continued place as important in the village	No car parking
Small and functional and relatively easy to look after	Disorganised and lack of storage
Centrally located	No small meeting room
Regular tenant (school)	Less opportunity for other regular hirers during the day in term times
Adaptable for variety of community events	Less opportunity for carrying out major works because of school occupancy
WiFi	Slightly poor layout
Good tech equipment (recently upgraded)	Not suitable for many sports
Engaged management committee	Cramped location - little surrounding land
Doesn't (usually) operate at a loss	No disabled access/toilets - Currently in progress!
Reserves (although these have been run down)	The community is geographically spread out and Stodmarsh/Grove tend not to recognise it is for their use too.
By Autumn 2024, fully accessible / disabled friendly	Poor energy efficiency
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
Improve underused capacity	Rolling repairs and maintenance required
Look at decoration/facilities with fresh eye	Apathy / Lack of engagement by the community
Better managed expenditure programme	Overcapitalising on the hall generally
Opportunities for grants / Fundraising options	Limitations of offering vs other venues
Continue to improve communication with the community	
Better energy efficiency	

FIVE-YEAR PLAN

Proposed Projects at Wickhambreaux Village Hall, NEED

Between mid-2023 and early-2024 the Hall Management Committee met several times to consider work that might be needed at the Hall over the next five years.

At this point, there was already urgent work being carried out in the Hall: to the roof, WC block and 'school storeroom'. By prior consultation, this work was to be jointly funded by the Hall's Reserves and the Parish Council. For various reasons, there was a shortfall, which was absorbed by the Parish Council. The Hall has a commitment to repay the Parish Council over time, and this is included as an item of future spending in the tables below.

Following additional input from the Parish Council, the scope of the works has been adapted to make the hall more widely accessible to all members of the Community, by including a disabled stall in the WC block and making the Hall entrance and Fire Exit fully accessible for people with mobility issues. This was deemed to be a Second Stage of the Project (ESSENTIAL) and required further funding. This funding needed to be sourced externally, and was obtained in January 2024.

Proposed future projects at the Hall were identified as being ESSENTIAL (category 1), DESIRABLE (category 2) or WHEN POSSIBLE (category 3) and are listed in the tables below.

NB The Hall Management Committee is keen to engage individuals and groups within the community to become involved with the plan. Any thoughts, suggestions will always be considered.

NB Items in **blue** represent money already raised

WISHLIST PROPOSED EXPENDITURE – 1 (ESSENTIAL)

		2023	2024	Current	2025	2026	2027	2028
	ESSENTIAL	£K (ex VAT)		£K (ex VAT)	£K (ex VAT)	£K (ex VAT)	£K (ex VAT)	£K (ex VAT)
1	Replace WC block roof/school store upgrade	£36,874.00						
2	Upgrade WC block to include disabled stall			£24,363.75				
3	Disabled Fire Exit plus Access			£2,773.00				
4								
5								

WISHLIST PROPOSED EXPENDITURE – 2 (DESIRABLE)

		2023	2024	Current	2025	2026	2027	2028
	DESIRABLE	£K (ex VAT)		£K (ex VAT)	£K (ex VAT)	£K (ex VAT)	£K (ex VAT)	£K (ex VAT)
1	Refurbish hardwood floor			£800.00				
2	Blackout Blinds	£500.00						
3	Kitchen utensils			£75.00				
4	Refurbish rear store room							
5	Refurbish exterior fascia/soffit/ barge boards							
6	Install energy efficient windows							
7	Redesign kitchen window							
8	Energy efficient radiators							
9	Improve front garden (path/ creepers/hedge etc)							
10	Landscape and improve rear garden			Ongoing - minimal expenditure (£200 gift earmarked for this.)				
11	Repaint interiors							
12	Improve storage - access to below stage/other							
13								
14								

WISHLIST PROPOSED EXPENDITURE – 3 (WHEN POSSIBLE)

		2023	2024	Current	2025	2026	2027	2028
	WHEN POSSIBLE	£K (ex VAT)		£K	£K	£K	£K	£K
1	Repay Parish Council!	£10,000.00		£1,300.00	£1,300.00	£1,300.00	£1,300.00	£1,300.00
2	Upgrade rear store to meeting room							
3	Roof - if any issues identified?							
4	Other energy efficiency measures							
5	New stackable chairs							
6								

Proposed Projects at Wickhambreaux Village Hall, TIMING

The stated objective of the Five-Year Plan is to create a framework for future planning, so that maintenance/upgrade work can be identified, prioritised and budgeted for, and so that grants/funding/sponsorship can be sought in a considered and timely manner.

Based on the level of NEED (as outlined in the Proposed Projects at Wickhambreaux Village Hall NEED tables, above), the Committee has put together a proposed schedule of likely expenditure by TIMING

This was determined by following the Charity Commission's guidelines for Reserves, and identifying whether funds would be required IMMEDIATELY (within 3 months), SHORT TERM (3–12 months) or MEDIUM TERM (2–5 years)

Both IMMEDIATE and SHORT TERM funding has already been sourced, thanks to small grants from 4VPO and Canterbury City Council and a large grant from the Valencia Communities Fund.

Going forward, the Committee will regularly review the MEDIUM TERM projects (which are not listed by priority, below). The order of future works will be determined by evolving NEED and by what grants/funding/sponsorship is likely to be achievable.

IMMEDIATE (within 3 months)-1

Item		Justification	Level of Need	Estimated Cost to Village Hall	Actual Cost	Funding / Grant / Donation
Complete WC upgrade/Fire Exit & Access		To complete WC upgrade/ meet Legal obligation for disabled access	1	£32,563*		£30,186

*VAT will be RETURNED

SHORT TERM (3–12 months)

Item		Justification	Level of Need	Estimated Cost to Village Hall	Actual Cost	Funding / Grant
Refurbish hardwood floor		Timely/local resident has offered to help	3	£0.00		£800.00
Kitchen utensils		Social Saturdays need	3	£0.00		£75.00

MEDIUM TERM (2–5 years)

Item		Justification	Level of Need	Estimated Cost (at March 2024)	Actual Cost	Funding / Grant
Parish Council loan		Loan for repair works, 2023	2	£10,000.00	£10,000	
Refurbish exterior fascia/soffit/barge boards		Rolling maintenance / improvements	2	£3,918 (ex VAT)		
Upgrade windows:		Energy costs / environment	2			
Keep existing & Install secondary glazing				£7,666 (ex VAT)		
New UPVC				£10,053 (ex VAT)		
New Wooden				£13,142 (ex VAT)		
Redesign kitchen window		Energy costs / environment	2			
Energy efficient radiators		Energy costs / environment	2			
Complete installation of stage curtains		Fabric already purchased; Curtains still to be made	2	£1,500 tbc		
Front garden:		Rolling maintenance / improvements	2			
Clear hedge/ creepers				£380.00		
Pavers/path						
Upgrade rear storeroom		Rolling maintenance / improvements	2	£5,412.14 (ex VAT)		
Landscape and improve rear garden		Rolling maintenance / improvements	2			
Redecorate interiors		Rolling maintenance	2			
Other energy efficiency measures		Energy costs / environment	3			
New stackable chairs		Current ones are poor	3			
Roof maintenance		As identified	3			
Convert rear store to meeting room		If required by PC	3			

APPENDICES

Current usage: timetable

DAY USE	DAY	TIME	FREQUENCY	NOTES
School	Mon	0800–1630	Daily	During School Term. Not used consistently in holidays
	Tues	0800–1630	Daily	As above
	Wed	0800–1630	Daily	As above
	Thurs	0800–1630	Daily	As above
	Fri	0800–1630	Daily	As above
Social Saturdays	Sat	1030–1200	Bi-monthly	
St Andrews lunch	Sun	1200–1530	Annual	

EVENING USE	DAY	TIME	FREQUENCY	NOTES
Garden/Nature club	Mon	1900–2100	Monthly	During winter
Art group	Mon	1830–2100		When Tuesday unavailable
Parish Council	Tues	1930–2130	Monthly	Break in August
VH Committee	Tues	1930–2130	4–6 pa	
FMPF Committee	Tues	1930–2130	4–6 pa	
Art group	Tues	1830–2100	Weekly	In 10-week blocks
Movie night	Wed	1930–2200	Ad hoc	New club
Circuit Classes	Thurs	1830–2100	Weekly	Thursday nights
Quiz nights	Fri/Sat	1930–2200	Ad hoc	
	Sun			

Profit & Loss: summary

INCOME

INCOME	2017		2018		2019		2020		2021		2022		2023	
	£K	%	£K	%	£K	%	£K	%	£K	%	£K	%	£K	%
Primary School	£2,673.45	52	£2,673.45	50	£2,673.45	33	£2,673.45	63	£2,673.45	18	£2,673.45	24	£2,963.19	72
Other rental income	£360.00	7	£695.00	13	£619.00	8	£800.00	19	£240.00	2	£175.00	2	£1,162.72	28
Grants	£1,100.00	21	£1,425.00	26	£2,139.00	27	£600.00	14	£11,500.00	78	£8,250.00	74	£0.00	0
Fundraising	£1,005.00	20	£249.00	5	£2,080.20	26	£144.00	3	£0.00	0	£0.00	0	£0.00	0
Donations	£0.00	0	£0.00	0	£0.00	0	£0.00	0	£0.00	0	£0.00	0	£0.00	0
Other	£0.00	0	£335.00	6	£557.56	7	£0.00	0	£250.00	2	£100.00	1	£0.00	0
	£5,138.45		£5,377.45		£8,069.21		£4,217.45		£14,663.45		£11,198.45		£4,125.91	

EXPENDITURE

INCOME	2017		2018		2019		2020		2021		2022		2023	
	£K	%	£K	%	£K	%	£K	%	£K	%	£K	%	£K	%
Utilities	£1,148.73	30	£905.87	13	£1,888.54	32	£1,354.67	29	£1,141.05	22	£1,764.77	43	£1,306.55	17
Insurance	£591.23	15	£618.87	9	£639.17	11	£656.34	14	£665.39	13	£670.22	16	£694.02	9
Wages	£600.00	15	£610.00	8	£585.00	10	£165.00	4	£108.04	2		0	£313.50	4
Maintenance	£718.09	18	£2,729.79	38	£817.29	14	£2,018.80	43	£827.08	16	£1,384.51	34	£2,180.52	28
Equipment	£162.14	4	£2,326.01	32	£1,574.77	27	£406.22	9	£1,364.98	26	£300.61	7	£2,843.78	36
Subscriptions	£80.00	2	£0.00	0	£0.00	0	£0.00	0	£0.00	0	£0.00	0	£0.00	0
Donations	£0.00	0	£0.00	0	£0.00	0	£0.00	0	£891.15	17	£0.00	0	£0.00	0
Community Events	£0.00	0	£0.00	0	£0.00	0	£0.00	0	£0.00	0	£0.00	0	£455.46	6
Other	£584.17	15	£0.00	0	£399.98	7	£50.00	1	£280.50	5	£0.00	0	£0.00	0
TOTAL	£3,884.36		£7,190.54		£5,904.75		£4,651.03		£5,278.19		£4,120.11		£7,793.83	

PROFIT/LOSS

	2017		2018		2019		2020		2021		2022		2023	
	£K		£K		£K		£K		£K		£K		£K	
Income	£5,138.45		£5,377.45		£8,069.21		£4,217.45		£14,663.45		£11,098.45		£4,125.91	
Expenditure	£3,884.36		£7,190.54		£5,904.75		£4,651.03		£5,278.19		£4,120.11		£7,793.83	
PROFIT/LOSS	£1,254.09		£(1,813.09)		£2,164.46		£(433.58)		£9,385.26		£6,978.34		£(3,667.92)	