

Ridgewood Village Hall



Ridgewood Village Hall

Working For The Community

Business Plan

Ridgewood Village Hall
New Road
Ridgewood,
Uckfield,
TN22 5SE

Registered Charity number 289627
May 2019

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INTRODUCTION

This business and development plan, associated approved planning application, and Drawings are the culmination of recent discussions and consultations with local people.

Since the official opening of the hall in 1985, its use and facilities to a degree have been taken for granted. It should be highlighted that the hall as it is now was originally built by both volunteers and professionals often using materials and funds donated by local people, with some monies being raised by the holding of events.

Ridgewood Village Hall (RVH) is owned by Uckfield Town Council (UTC) on a full management and repairing lease managed through a committee of trustees; the Ridgewood Village hall Management Committee, which is a registered charity.

We hope that the information provided in the documents will demonstrate the care and consideration that has gone into formulating the extensions and ultimately their viability. Implementation of the scheme will obviously involve many challenges, not least in terms of raising the funds to bring the scheme to fruition, although this will be done in phases.

The Trustees believe that the proposals for the new hall and associated facilities have been carefully and sensitively developed; and will be capable of meeting not only the current but also the future needs of our developing and diversifying local community.

Summary

Over the years, it has become obvious that this well used hall is a very popular facility but that its size, layout and accommodation does not maximize its potential and constrains hirers activities.

Initial proposals only included extending the length of the hall, however further discussion and evaluation of local populations needs, hirers requirements and committee necessity meant that to maximise the halls potential use, provide safe storage to meet health and safety regulations and to improve disabled access and their use of the hall, provide essential security for the hall users and improve the environmental impact of the hall, extension to both the length and East Side of the hall would be necessary as well as a full internal refurbishment.

Since the building is in reasonable condition it is therefore felt that a thorough upgrade is preferable to a full rebuild, in order to provide full disabled access, additional letting space, storage and more modern kitchen , separate kitchenette, meeting room and improved toilet facilities.

The committee therefore engaged a local firm of Architects, (2D Architecture) who were instrumental in the design of the extension and internal redevelopment and have advised on all aspects of the RVH project plans.

The Proposal

The final proposals are for the main hall to be increased in length by approximately 3 metres to the south with additional accommodation being provided on the east side of the existing building incorporating storage, meeting room ,kitchen and kitchenette with serving hatch to recreational ground and external terrace .This would enable the number of internal rooms to be increased and improving the shape of the main hall. In addition the north facing main entrance is to be covered to provide a more welcoming façade and better security with an access path around the building suitable for wheelchairs and pushchairs on an all weather path.

The works are to be carried out in phases and it is hoped to keep disruption of the hall to a minimum with provision of a temporary building placed in the car park to comply with Health and safety regulations and provide a building for regular hall users to continue to hire throughout the RVH project.

Funding

Successful fundraising events have already taken place including Summer and Christmas Fairs, Firework nights, Easter Egg Hunts, Bingo ,live band nights and Quiz nights and entertainment

evenings. These have raised approximately £10,800 and it is hoped continued fund raising will make a substantial contribution to the works.

In addition, the committee will seek grants from local business and organisations, larger funders such as the National Lottery, Kier, The Town Council , smaller grant funders such as Tesco, Chalk Cliff Trust and similar and donations from local companies. RVH have already secured Kitchens and Sanitary Ware from Taylor Wimpey, help from Thornes and Ridgewood football club. Applications for Grants and funding is ongoing.

Running Costs of the New Hall

It is expected that any increases in running costs will be offset by additional hall lettings (see appendix 2)

These assumptions are based on the fact that the hall would be a much more appealing space with two /three separate additional rooms to hire and an income stream provided by the tea room/ server for the recreation ground.

Providing the works proceed, it is hoped that the present running costs would not increase significantly and that further savings can be made by the provision of solar panels and increased insulation some of which will be added at a later date.

The Importance of Village/Community Halls

Our hall and the newly refurbished recreation ground have become a vital meeting point for our community and this aids cohesion to community life. The hall is used by a large number of social, educational and recreational groups including Bowls and Table Tennis clubs, Tai-Chi, Dance and Art Groups.

With its obvious links to the village and Millennium Green it will, with the new servery, promote and enhance the potential for people to take healthy walks, meet at the terraced area for socialisation and promote inter-generational and family activities (see case for support attached)

During weekday term times its utilization is between 90% - 95% and approximately 70% at week-ends.

The present size of the facility does not maximise its potential and since 2016 the committee has been unable to accommodate potential users for activities such as Palates, Active Stars, training days for Action for Children and dance and exercise classes. In addition to these we have been forced to turn down approximately 50 casual bookings.

The Challenges

The hall was constructed in the mid 80's using stock bricks and recycled materials and is now showing its age. It was originally designed to cater for the population of Ridgewood which at that time encompassed the "Ridgewood triangle" of Lewes Road, Eastbourne Road and New Road. The Pipersfield Estate had just been commenced. It is therefore obvious that there has been a massive increase in the population of the area with the addition of houses on Pipersfield, Mallard Drive, New Barn Lane/Shepherds Way, Fernley Park and soon the further addition of Ridgewood Place. The population in 1980 was approximately 2,800 and the present population of the Ridgewood ward is approximately 3,680 which is expected to rise to an excess of 6000 in the next 10 years.

Currently there is no planned community facility on the new 1000 home estate which falls immediately within RVH footfall and RVH is the only community facility in the North of Uckfield and the only community facility within walking distance of Ridgewood.

It is expected with the development of the new Ridgewood Place development, that Ridgewood will account for approximately 24% of the population of Uckfield; a huge increase in population and need since the original hall was constructed.

Costs

Preliminary estimates for the refurbishment works have already been obtained and these vary between £300,000 and £400,000.

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The Trustees have appointed 2d architecture (Ridgewood resident) and RTS Surveyors Limited (Palehouse common resident) to oversee the RVH project . This is to ensure the RVH project is cost effective, runs to a minimum time scale with minimum disruption caused to local residents or regular hall users.

Consultation

The Trustees feel it is important that the local community and residents support the RVH Project proposals. In October 2017 a new role of Neighbourhood representative was introduced as an officer role on the committee to bring views of the local residents to the committee meetings. The planning officer at Wealden District Council had many letters of support about the RVH project proposal and support for fundraising events with over 1000 local people attending the last Firework event has shown that the majority of residents are in favour of the project and future development plans; seeing RVH as a vital community hub of the Ridgewood area. The committee are aware that a few individuals have not been in favour of any aspect of the project that will increase noise at the village hall or use of the adjacent recreation area. Discussion with UTC and the Town Clerk are ongoing about ways to minimize disruption to neighbours and as the project as the progresses further discussion and consultations will be welcomed.

The Proposal

Following detailed discussions with both local people and the various regular users, the final agreed layout is shown on the attached drawing and basically breaks down as follows:

Hall complex comparison proposed to existing:

Accommodation	Existing	Proposed
Main Hall	126m ²	162m ²
Level	0m ²	20m ²
Committee/Meeting Room	0m ²	46m ²
Main Entrance Hall	28m ²	42m ²
Kitchen	18m ²	15m ²
Toilets	49m ²	40m ²
Changing/Multi Use Room	0m ²	46m ²
Totals	267m ²	371m ²

In order to minimise any possible increase in heating bills when the size of the hall is expanded, it is proposed as part of the refurbishment to provide cavity wall insulation. In addition and with a view to improving the look of the building external wooden cladding will be added.

Internally a false ceiling will be installed which will not only improve heat loss through the roof but will also reduce the impact of wind and rain noise in bad weather.

It is hoped in a final phase that solar panels can be added to the roof to improve energy consumption and also bring in a small revenue to the hall.

External Areas

It is hoped that the existing car park area can be upgraded/refurbished jointly between the UTC and RVH as part of the RVH Project as it is used by visitors to the recreation ground, RVH and visitors to Millennium Green.

In addition to the parking area a path from the present entrance ramp around the east side of the hall will run to the end of the terrace area. This addition will necessitate the repositioning of the adult training equipment.

Proposed opening Hours

Generally the hall will continue to operate the same hours as those at present. These are 9:00am to 11:30pm Monday to Sunday. The existing premises license will remain in place with hirers obliged to apply to Wealden District Council to obtain temporary sales/consumption license. Again the present music license will remain in place.

Recreation Ground Servery

The servery which will be operated independently of the remainder of the hall will be run by trained volunteers and will provide a limited range of Tea, Coffee, Soft Drinks, confectionary, ice-creams, lollies etc. This will enhance the overall experience that the upgraded play area already provides. It will operate at peak usage times for the play area, the exact details of which are still to be finalised. This facility will provide an additional income stream for the hall. The volunteers will not only be responsible for its operation but will ensure to the best of their ability that the servery, terrace, car park, recreation ground and surrounding areas are kept tidy and free of litter.

It is intended to provide external and internal CCTV monitoring and a new electronic door access system.

Trustees are anxious to ensure that neighbours who live near to the hall are not inconvenienced by undue noise and inconsiderate behavior of hall users and any activities associated with the hall. The condition of bookings include the following statement:

“Hirers must ensure that neighbours are not disturbed by noisy or inconsiderate behavior”

Affordability of running the hall

From the outset of this project careful consideration has been given to the need to ensure that once the new hall has been constructed, it can 'pay its way', with income received for the use of the facilities exceeding operating and maintenance costs.

It should be noted that, being a charity, there is no requirement for Ridgewood Village Hall to have a profit element in its finance: only a need for it to be able to generate sufficient income to pay for the costs of insurance, heating, lighting, cleaning and maintaining the building and external areas, with some monies held in reserve for contingencies at approximately £11,000.

Past Income/Revenue

The main source of income in the past (up to 2016) has been from regular/repeat lettings. This has accounted for approximately 80% of income, with the remaining 20% coming from casual hirers, small events and donations.

Future Expenditure

Although the hall has shown a small surplus throughout its history, it is anticipated that increases, particularly in gas and electricity prices, together with normal replacements and renewals will reduce this surplus further. It is likely that within the next 12 months the main hall floor will need replacing and the kitchen, toilet areas and drains will need renewing. These

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and other upgrades including removal of old broken showers, replacement of flooring in toilet and changing room etc will be carried out during the extension/refurbishment and some of the projected increases in service charges can be offset. By the addition of items such as insulation, grey water recycling and solar panels, these considerations have formed a key part of the design.

It is envisaged that fund raising will continue after the building works are completed to purchase equipment such as projectors, demonstration screen, tables and chairs.

Estimated cost of Village Hall Refurbishment

Funding for the scheme will need to be secured prior to commencement of construction. It should be noted that the works will be carried out in phases, in order to minimize disruption to hall users, and detailed programming of the works with the appointed contractor and project management company will be carried out prior to commencement. It is envisaged that works will commence before the plans submitted to Wealden District Council need to be reviewed in may 2021.

Expenditure Increases

It is considered that with the benefit of the improved insulation and green energy, the power costs of having a bigger building will not increase, over and above an allowance for inflation, even though the output will be much more effective.

With additional rooms, greater floor space and hiring opportunities, it is expected that insurance costs and rates will rise. It will also be necessary to take on a caretaker to oversee the building, increasing costs but providing an opportunity for employment of a local person. In respect of other costs, such as litter picking, licenses, memberships etc – these will rise to a smaller degree (allowing for inflation). To balance this, the ongoing need for making expensive repairs as at present will not arise thus off-setting some of the increased costs.

Income Increases - Lettings

The hall is used extensively on a regular basis and demand cannot always be met. The works will provide a more modern and attractive facility, and with the addition of the meeting room and a multifunction room and external servery/terrace, potential letting income is sure to increase, and it is expected that this will offset cover any increase in annual expenditure.

Future increases in hall income will be obtained not only by hiring of the main hall which currently attracts a rate of £14 per hour for casual users and £12 per hour for regular users, but also by the hiring of the additional rooms. It is envisaged that the meeting room will be hired for a rate of £12 per hour and the multi-use room (which can only be hired when changing facilities are not required) at £10 per hour. Potentially 4 rooms can be hired out at the same time increasing potential income four fold.

Capital Costs and Programming

Building works will be carried out in phases with the overall completed works taking approximately 26 weeks. Whilst the committee are keen not to disrupt the activities of

regular users, it is obvious that on a project of this size, type and nature it will be necessary to close the hall for a period of time. Within the projected costs for the project ,provision has been made for a temporary structure to be built in the adjacent car park for regular hirer use and to minimize disruption.

The committees appointed project management company (RTS Surveying Limited) will carry out detailed programming with the appointed contractor to achieve the best possible scenario. In addition to the detailed programming, RTS Limited initial capital cost estimates indicated a completed build of between £300,000 and £350,000

Funding Opportunities

Please refer to separate “case for support” document.

Conclusion

The village hall and external areas are very important to the social fabric of the local community. The Trustees feel it is incumbent upon them to provide new, up-to-date and modern facilities in our growing and diversifying community.

Considerable research has been undertaken into the nature of the facilities required in order to meet the needs of the community.

The importance of having facilities such as these for local people has been demonstrated through their use from a particularly wide range of groups currently hiring the limited facilities available.

Community Events and Fundraising.

RVH committee has been committed to providing community events throughout the year to appeal to all age ranges. This has increased our fundraising opportunities but has developed community cohesion and support within the community. This is an important role for RVH and its importance must not be underestimated. The RVH project looks to develop these community events and other community focused projects for our diverse and increasing local population. (see case for support document attached)

Examination of the projected income and expenditure flows for the hall demonstrate that the refurbishment would be viable and pay its way. Consequently, the hall trustees consider there is a sound business case for the works and with a great deal of hard work to raise the funding, this will be achievable and will give so many benefits to the local community.

Appendix 1

Since the hall as it is, has been operating with a small cash surplus for the previous 5 years it is not unreasonable to assume that this will continue.

The present income from the main hall area will remain with annual rises in letting fees linked to inflation, offsetting any rises in insurances and statutory requirements etc.

The average income/turnover for the previous 5 years are listed below:

2013/2014	£15,781
2014/2015	£16,423

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2015/2016	£15,654
2016/2017	£16,176
2017/2018	£18,267

Appendix 2

The chart below shows projected additional income following completion of the renovations, it should be noted that the figures do not include any allowance for additional income resulting from the increased lengthening of the hall although it is highly likely that this would occur. The figures are based on rooms being used 6 hours per day, 26 weeks per year which it is believed is a conservative estimate

	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
	Half multi-room £5 per hour	Full multi-room £10 per hour	Meeting room £12 per hour	External kitchen serving recreational ground
Year One 15% use per week	£117	£234	£280	£2,000
Year Two 20% use per week	£156	£312	£375	£2,500
Year Three 30% use per week	£234	£468	£565	£3,000
Year Four 40% use per week	£312	£625	£750	£3,500
Year Five 50% use per week	£390	£780	£936	£3,500

In addition to the above it is expected the hall will be hired out on an irregular basis from Friday 8.pm to Sunday Mid-day at a flat rate of £375 for weddings.

Therefore by year 5, adding columns 2, 3 and 4 the hall would generate an additional income of £5,216. This would therefore give an annual profit/turnover of approximately £23,000.