

Much Birch Community Hall Project

The intention of the Management Committee is to extend and refurbish the Community Hall to provide a building of greater size with improved facilities. Since the opening of the hall in 1979 it has been in constant use, is financially sound, and is successful in its operation, but there is now a demonstrable need for a new extension and refurbishment which will provide for an enlarged lobby area and the provision of two additional meeting/activity rooms as well as the refurbishment of facilities.

The extension will be energy efficient, light and welcoming, with a commitment to sustainability. The design of the build will ensure that it will be easy to maintain, will have minimal heating costs and consequently will be more environmentally friendly. The project is split into stages, and the pace of completion of those stages will be dependent upon fundraising. Stage 1 has already been finished by building the extension up to damp course level which also includes the drainage system. We are about to embark on Stage 2, which comprises of the construction of all exterior and interior brickwork, all roofing structures, tiling, and installation of roof lights, doors and window frames, thus making the new structure watertight. Further work will be done according to funds becoming available i.e. completing the interior finishes, refurbishing cloakrooms and providing separate toilet facilities for disabled people and eventually to extend and refurbish the kitchen.

The identified reasons for these works are;

- An improved entrance lobby which would provide easier access to the building, with not only immediate cover from the weather for attendees but would also assist with heat retention. The present lobby area is small, with awkward access for wheelchairs and pushchairs, and re-quires people to queue in the open before gaining entry to the building.
- the cloakrooms need a general upgrade and there is an urgent need for separate facilities for disabled people, as not all wheelchairs can access
- the provision of two additional activity/meeting rooms to allow multi use of the building at any one time.

It is important to say that the hall will remain open and in use during the works.

Once the extension and refurbishment is complete, it is intended to widen the scope of the hall's use by encouraging other activities such as fitness groups for all ages, a social meeting place for older people and to provide a meeting place for those living alone. In the last Parish Plan some time ago, people stated that they would like to see the introduction of adult education classes, activities for young people, keep fit activities, aerobics, yoga, and clubs for children and senior citizens.

There is an identified need therefore to expand the use of this central rural community facility and for it to become more of a venue to provide opportunities for people of all age groups to participate in activities and social events With the extra space the Management Committee would aim to introduce as many of the above activities as possible.

The project is intended to enhance the community facility for the present day and for future use. The committee would welcome any donations, offers to help with fundraising or to give support in any way.

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