



ELSENHAM PARISH COUNCIL

New Community Hall

Business Plan

(D R A F T)

Document Control

Approved on behalf of the Parish Council	
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Change History

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[To be completed]

1. Summary

[To follow]

2. Identifying the need

2.1 Current situation

Elsenham at present has two community halls; the Village Hall and the Memorial Hall, each of which currently offer a range of facilities and services to the village and its community.

2.1.1 Village Hall

The existing Village Hall was built in 1984/85 and is now approximately 36 years old; the hall forms a part of the Elsenham Church of England Primary School, which is located at the eastern end of the High Street, directly opposite to the entrance to Hailes Wood.

The hall is a joint-use hall and the facilities are shared by three parties; the Primary School, the Elsenham Village Hall Charity (the Village Hall Management Committee, VHMC) and the Incumbent and Church Wardens of Elsenham (Elsenham Church). Because of this sharing arrangement, each of the parties has exclusive access to and use of the hall at different times of the week and/or day.

The current hall facilities that are available to users/hirers is the main hall (17m x 9m), a small upstairs meeting room, male, female and disabled toilets, a small, cupboard-based kitchen and good off-road parking facilities adjacent to the hall. The main hall has a capacity of up to 200 people.

The hall is used predominantly by the Primary School, during school hours, Monday to Friday. The Village Hall Management Committee has use of the hall during the weekday evenings and Sunday from 5.30pm and all day on Saturday. Elsenham Church has access and use of the hall during the daytime on Sunday for the holding of church services.

In recent years, Essex Education Authority and the Primary School have introduced a number of alterations to the hall facilities that have changed its use and its availability to the other joint-users. This in turn, has led to the hall becoming more limited in its suitability for use by village-based organisations, activities and social events.

2.1.2 ECA Memorial Hall

The Memorial Hall is located on an area of land within Elsenham Playing Field, adjacent to Elsenham Bowls Club and the tennis courts at the south-eastern corner of the Field. The building was built in 1987 and is now approximately 33 years old.

The hall is owned and managed by Elsenham Community Association (ECA), a registered charity; and although of a limited size, offers rooms and facilities to a wide range of local organisations and businesses. The building provides a main hall (11m x 6.5m), small meeting room, kitchen and servery, male, female and disabled toilets, storage cupboards and an extensive parking area next to the hall. The maximum capacity of the hall is up to 80 people maximum.

The Memorial Hall hosts many of the village organisations and activities, both during the daytime and in the evening, particularly during weekdays. It is also used by various commercial hirers for health-related activities (yoga, keep fit, dance, etc.).

Due to the form and the type of construction used, future expansion of the existing hall is limited and constrained. It is likely that should extensive expansion of the hall be considered, demolition of the existing hall may be necessary to allow a new, larger building to be erected. There are no plans at this time by the ECA to enlarge the hall and add to its facilities.

2.2 Challenges and Limitations

Due to the increasing number and size of new residential developments built within Elsenham over the last 10 years, the size of the village and its population has increased significantly. Over the last 7 years, it is true to say that the village has grown from under 1,000 residential homes to over 1,500 homes in 2021 and this number of dwellings is due to increase further with the addition of further planned new developments.

With the significant rise in the population of the village and the increased demand for community facilities and services that are generated, the ability and suitability of today's Village and Memorial halls to meet these growing demands is becoming more difficult to achieve and sustain.

2.2.1 The Village Hall

The village hall may be regarded as offering limited benefit to the village. However, the following constraints apply:

- Only weekday evenings, all-day Saturday and Sunday evenings are available for public use and hirings.
- The cupboard-kitchen offers very limited/basic catering facilities and space to users and hirers.
- Very little / limited storage facilities for regular hall users/hirers.
- The ongoing requirements and demands of the Primary School/Education Authority can dictate changes to the ongoing usage of the hall.
- It is possible and/or probable that at some point in the foreseeable future, the overall ownership/management of the Village Hall will revert to the Primary School/Essex Education Authority. Should this occur, the continued availability and use of the hall for hire by others (i.e. village organisations, commercial organisations and individuals) is uncertain.

2.2.2 The Memorial Hall

The Memorial Hall is available for use and hire, all-day, 7-days a week and is used by many of the village's organisations, groups, commercial hirers and individuals. However, the following constraints apply:

- The hall and its facilities are limited in size, restricting accommodation for up to 80 persons maximum.
- Limited size of kitchen and its facilities. Kitchen cupboard space shared between regular hall users.
- Adequate internal cupboard storage space; 3 walk-in cupboards off the main hall, but this is heavily in demand by regular hall hirers.
- Meaningful expansion to the size of the existing hall restricted due to structural design and construction-method used for the hall.

2.2.3 Other 'Village Hall' Facilities in other venues

One other building / facility exists in the village that has been used (occasionally) to host certain village activities; this is the Elsenham Bowls Clubhouse, located on Elsenham Playing Field, close to the Memorial Hall. The following constraints apply to its facilities:

- The Clubhouse exists primarily for use for bowling and social purposes by Bowls Club members; there are occasions when the Club committee allows the clubhouse to be used / hired by other, outside organisations and individuals.
- Secondary use of the clubhouse is restricted by the Club committee and only very occasionally allowed.
- Building and site layout has been designed to function as a bowls club, i.e. changing rooms and toilets, a main hall with bar and kitchen (for match lunches, club social activities, etc.) and an external bowling green adjacent to the building.
- The clubhouse is of limited size, similar in size to the Memorial Hall, and therefore space and accommodation is restricted, typically up to 80 people?
- The site of the bowls club and its location close to other buildings and facilities on the Playing Field, effectively limits, or even prevents, any further meaningful expansion of the existing building.

2.2.4 Meeting rooms

In addition to a large new hall, there is also a need for additional meeting rooms. The Village Hall is used very occasionally for large meetings and for events which demand the maximum amount of available space. The Memorial Hall is used routinely for monthly meetings of the Parish Council and for meetings of committees of the Parish Council and meetings of other bodies. Before the pandemic, it was usual for the Hall to be booked solidly through block bookings, making for great difficulties in arranging either further such bookings or for occasional, one-off, meetings.

The only other available meeting rooms are:

- i. 'Old Frank's', in the High Street, nearly opposite to the school. These are the office premises of the Church of England for the combined parishes of Elsenham, Henham and Ugley. The upstairs room can accommodate a meeting of up to eight persons, with space for about another twenty members of the public. The room is subject to availability, with priority obviously being given to church purposes.
- ii. Village Hall, upstairs meeting room. Access is via a narrow winding staircase, with space for no more than six participants. The room is only available outside school hours, and is unacceptably noisy if there are activities in the hall below

2.3 Future Community Facilities going forward

The aim of the New Community Hall project is to create and build a fit-for-purpose, self-sustaining, multi-user Community Hall that includes rooms and spaces of various sizes for community uses ranging from Parish Council meetings, community meetings, out-of-school groups, village clubs, societies and organisations, exercise, keep-fit and dance classes, through to larger events, including birthday parties, weddings and community fundraising events. In addition, it is proposed that the new hall also incorporate a dedicated Parish Council office, together with team changing facilities to support the Playing Field's sports facilities. A good provision of storage space within the hall is considered essential. Overall, the new community hall will provide a major part of the facilities needed to support and sustain an ever-growing and diverse village community.

In order to provide sustainability to the new hall, it is proposed, where possible and practicable, to incorporate the latest energy and cost-saving technologies into the design, construction and ongoing maintenance of the building. These goals will include:

- Reduce energy consumption
- Reduce maintenance costs
- Reduce cleaning costs
- Minimise on-site supervision costs, using a combination of technology and trusted-key partners.

3. Validating the Need

Elsenham has grown substantially over recent years with no commensurate improvement, or extension to, its existing community facilities. All of the recent emerging Local Plan strategies have categorised Elsenham as one of the Key Villages within Uttlesford and, as such, it is seen as a major focus for development in the rural areas, with a role as a provider of services to a wide rural area.

In order for Elsenham to be able to achieve this role, the provision of a wide range of community services and facilities is necessary. Good indoor community meeting space is therefore an essential part of achieving this, together with a need to ensure its ongoing sustainability.

3.1 Characteristics for community facilities

A number of characteristics may be used for indoor community facilities in Key Villages such as Elsenham, these being:

- i) A Key Village should feature at least one large facility which offers extended access to all community groups at competitive rates and should also be available for use throughout the day, seven-days-a-week.
- ii) The village should have at least one high quality main hall space suitable for a variety of uses, potentially including club sport and physical activity; theatrical rehearsals/performances and social functions, ideally in a central and accessible location in the community. The facility should also offer smaller, separate meeting spaces and significant storage.
- iii) All facilities, including toilets, should be fully accessible, or retro-fitted to ensure compliance with Disability Discrimination Act legislation wherever possible. Additional facilities, for example changing rooms, should be fit for purpose and compliant with design best practice (for example Sport England).
- iv) Facilities should include a sizable kitchen/catering area (potentially professionally equipped) for the preparation of food and drink. It is desirable that the hall be licensed, with a personal licence holder, to permit a larger number of events. The facility may also require employed staff.
- v) All new-build facilities should be designed with significant energy-efficiency measures in place. This includes energy efficient lighting (including timers and automatic sensors); double/triple glazing; draught proofing; insulation; appropriate central heating etc. Additional measures, such as the capture and use of grey water, photovoltaic cells, Combined Heat and Power (CHP), should also be explored.
- vi) All current facilities should be upgraded where appropriate and feasible to ensure that management / revenue costs are kept to a minimum.

3.2 Other criteria

Apart from the required facilities, key location criteria also need to be considered, i.e.:

- i) Location within the village centre for easy walking distance for most village residents.
- ii) Site should provide secure parking facilities for those further afield in the parish, or less mobile.
- iii) Potential to integrate and safeguard multiple users, improving utilisation and reducing costs.
- iv) Distance/orientation relative to neighbouring residences to minimise noise disturbance.

Elsenham has only limited “village hall” facilities in other venues:

- i) Elsenham Village Hall – a joint-use hall, large main hall, limited availability and facilities, good parking, but future availability questionable.

- ii) Elsenham Memorial Hall – small hall with good facilities, available 7-days-a-week; good parking and moderate hiring fees.
- iii) Elsenham Bowls Club – private clubhouse, with good facilities but a small main room. Occasional hirings allowed at discretion of the Club Committee.

3.3 Evidence of community consultation and support

A presentation will be given at the Elsenham Annual Parish Meeting scheduled for 22 April 2021, in order to introduce the idea of the new Community Hall to the residents of the village, and so as to gauge support for the concept.

4. Researching possible solutions

4.1 Reviewing design and location criteria

The new facility must meet a number of design and location criteria:

Criteria	Requirement	Approach	Nearest comparator
Size	Concurrent safe use of separate spaces from 30m ² to 200m ²	Flexible spaces capable of being used separately for a variety of purposes	Memorial Hall
Accessibility	Disability-friendly	Disabled toilets for each main space with additional “changing place” for future-proof accessibility	Village Hall Memorial Hall
Noise	Neighbour- friendly	Separation from neighbours to minimise noise disturbance	Village Hall Memorial Hall
Drop-in meeting spaces	Community group and small-business friendly - allowing drop-in WiFi-enabled meeting or work spaces throughout the day and evening	Drop-in business /community group meeting spaces available throughout the day and evening	Memorial Hall No WiFi
Safeguarding	Protecting vulnerable elderly and young	Spaces capable of being “locked-down” when occupied by vulnerable groups	Memorial Hall
Car-parking	Adequate not to exclude residents from within parish but outside village	Adequate parking space to enable concurrent use of the adjacent playing field	Village Hall Memorial Hall
Cycle storage	Adequate to encourage use by all village residents	Per UDC policy ??	None
Centrality	Within village central area to maximise walking	Site is within 800 metre walking distance of the village centre	Village Hall Memorial Hall

Control	Building under Community or Parish Council control	Parish Council favoured	Memorial Hall
Location	Proximity to Elsenham Primary School to provide safe “one-stop” drop-off and pick-up	Site adjacent to existing Elsenham Playing Field	Village Hall
Height	Below that of the immediate environment	Barley House 3-storey flats nearby	????
Style	Imaginative and original so as to extend and renew the distinctive character and traditions of Elsenham built environment	Two-storey pavilion-style within village development framework.	None

4.2 Community Hall location

In 2012 Uttlesford District Council took note of the three large housing applications in Elsenham, and made the decision that provision should be made for a new Community Hall through the Section 106 agreement relating to application UTT/0142/12/OP, whereby an area of land measuring approximately [??? the S106 does not give the size] would be made available.

The land is situated immediately to the west of the playing field, which is in the ownership of the Parish Council, with access either from Leigh Drive or from Isabel Drive/Southfield Close. The location is such that it is believed that all the criteria included in the table above can be satisfied.

The area is intended to include sufficient car parking space. It is adjacent to the ‘top’ playing field car park and thus car parking could be used in common by both areas, but it is assumed that the Hall will need to include sufficient car parking space for its own purposes.

The transfer of the land to the Parish Council should be achieved shortly, having been delayed through legal complexities.

4.3 Planning implications

The site is within the development limits of Elsenham, on a site which was made available through the aegis of Uttlesford District Council. Provision for the connection of services has been made in Southfield Close. It is therefore considered that there should be no major obstacles to obtaining outline planning approval.

5. Design evolution

Initial analysis showed that several requirements needed to be met:

- A large main hall.
- Kitchen.
- One large and one small meeting room.
- Ample storage space for the several groups expected to use the hall.
- An office for the Parish Council. At present, the clerk to the Parish Council uses a dedicated room at her own property, an unsatisfactory arrangement which cannot be guaranteed to continue indefinitely. Sufficient space is needed for the possible future accommodation of a second office employee, and for meetings of committees of the Parish Council.
- Changing rooms. As stated above, the designated location of the hall is adjacent to the playing field, which is much used by Elsenham Youth Football Club.

In summary, the requirements are:

ROOM	SIZE (metres)	AREA	COMMENTS
MAIN BUILDING			
Main Hall	10.0 x 20.0	200	Must be larger than existing village hall
Kitchen / food Preparation	8.0 x 5.5	44	
Servery / Bar Area	4.0 x 2.7	10.8	Adjacent to kitchen
Meeting Room 1	8.0 x 5.0	40	
Meeting Room 2	3.0 x 3.0	9	
Foyer / Entrance Area	6.0 x 3.0	18	Typical size, could be larger
Toilets (female)	4.0 x 2.7	10.8	
Toilets (male)	4.0 x 2.7	10.8	
Toilet (disabled)	2.7 x 1.5	4	
Storage Room 1	6.0 x 3.5	21	Tables and chairs
Storage Room 2	7.0 x 2.5	17.5	Regular Hall users?
Storage Room 3	7.0 x 2.5	17.5	Regular Hall users?
Storage Room 4	4.5 x 2.5	11.25	Regular Hall users?
Storage Room 5	3.0 x 2.5	7.5	Hall cleaning equipment / maintenance
Parish Council Office/Meeting Space	10.0 x 5.0	50	External access to/from PC office
Parish Council Storage / Toilet / Misc.	3.0 x 2.7	8	Room to adjoin PC office
Plant / Electrical Room	3.5 x 3.0	10.5	
SPORTS CHANGING FACILITIES			
Team Changing Room 1 incl. toilets	6.0 x 4.5	27	
Team Changing Room 2 incl. toilets	6.0 x 4.5	27	
Officials Changing Room 1 (+toilet)	4.0 x 2.5	10	
Officials Changing Room 2 (+toilet)	4.0 x 2.5	10	
EXTERNAL FACILITIES			
Disabled Toilet	2.2 x 1.5	3.3	Access from outside of building
Toilet (female)	2.2 x 1.5	3.3	Access from outside of building
Toilet (male)	2.2 x 1.5	3.3	Access from outside of building
TOTAL		574.55	

6. The future Community Hall

[Details to follow later]

7. Capital Finance

In 2011/12, Uttlesford District Council made provision for the financing of the Community Hall through contributions from three large development proposals which were under consideration. Two were approved and are now completed. The third ran into difficulties at the detailed application stage and was eventually replaced by a full application, which has been approved and awaits completion of the Section 106 agreement. An extended period of time has now elapsed since the original S106 agreements were concluded, but there was no provision for any of the contributions to be index-linked.

The three developments are:

Outline application	Detailed application	Dwellings	Status	Amount
UTT/0124/12/OP	UTT/14/3279/DFO	155	Complete	£380,000
UTT/15/3090/OP	UTT/17/2542/DFO	20	Complete	
UTT/13/1790/OP	UTT/15/2632/DFO	165	Complete	£330,000
UTT/19/0462/FUL		130	S106 pending	£310,000
Total		470		£1,020,000

Costings have been obtained from reputable undertakings, and the estimates currently available put the total cost of the new hall variously as £1,681,770, and £2,659,600 excluding VAT (which the Parish Council is able to claim back). The figure excludes the costs of fitting out. These figures are of course estimates, and it remains to be seen what quotations are forthcoming when the project eventually goes out to tender.

Several recent applications have been made for further housing developments in Elsenham, some of which have been approved. The Parish Council hopes that further contributions will be available for the Community Hall, although Uttlesford District Council has not proved helpful in securing such provision.

It is suggested that where such funds are made available, the amount should be calculated from the most recent S106 agreement, that is, UTT/19/0472/FU, on a *pro rata* basis. The calculation would thus be £310,000 / 130 per dwelling.

The Parish Council intends to make good the deficiency through a loan from the Public Works Loan Board, to be financed through an increased precept. Preliminary investigations suggest the requisite amount could be secured through an increase in the parish precept of about £30 pa per Band D household over a period of 25 years. It is understood that such an increase would need to be confirmed through a parish referendum.