

## **NEWS ABOUT THE NEW VILLAGE HALL**

You can hardly miss the amazing progress that has been made on our new village hall. The main structure is complete, the scaffolding is coming down and the roof, apart from the final tiles to be fitted around the chimney is finished. Edgar Brothers have proved themselves an excellent choice as the contractor; they are now working hard on the building's internals, fitting the electrics and plastering the walls ready for the finishing fit-out of all the spaces.

**Programme:** Owing to the poor summer weather, the project completion date, originally scheduled for 10 November has slipped. We now expect that the handover of the new hall might take place during the week commencing on Monday 11 December with the hall becoming available for the first time in the two or three days just prior to Christmas. Since there will always be some uncertainty regarding the handover process, testing and tuning and correcting snagging items, the project team would not wish to disappoint villagers' expectations and have therefore advised the Management Committee, led by Geoff Stone, that it makes sense to plan to take firm bookings for the hall after Christmas and perhaps plan for a great New Year's Eve bash! After nearly five years work to get to this stage, it would simply not be sensible to rush in before we are all confident that the hall is fully ready for use/hire. The Project Team are looking for a formal opening ceremony, however, this will need to take place a short while after the hall is brought into use.

### **What can we all expect:**

The new hall is designed to provide welcoming, accessible, functional and flexible accommodation for multi-use activities. The building has sufficient circulation space to ensure that a

full range of activities can be carried out without detriment to each other. The hall meets all requirements for disabled people and will be able to host two concurrent events. A smart and secure, card operated, proximity access system will be utilised on the two main doors of the building and linked with the alarm system. The access cards will be tied to periods of booking and remote control of the access arrangement will also be possible.

**The Foyer (and coffee shop/café):** The large foyer is accessed through the main entrance off Vicarage Street. It is a place to arrive and where information and exhibitions can be shown. It hosts, within its general area, an integral coffee shop. It provides access to the Main Hall, the Service Point, the Kitchen and Meeting Room.

**The Main Hall:** will support all major events, with the stage to one end. It is 17m long and 9m wide and can seat 150 people as an auditorium or accommodate 128 people in a function/dining arrangement. 150 new, more comfortable, stacking chairs have been purchased for use in the hall. We will utilise the tables from the old hall and will plan in the future to buy a number of 10 place round tables for use for weddings and other dining functions. General LED lighting panels are let into the ceiling and mood lighting will be provided on the side walls. The hall will be heated and cooled as required through ceiling mounted air conditioning units. It is big enough to host short mat bowls if required. The screen and audio/visual systems from the old hall will be re-installed. A dedicated chair and table store is accessed from the side of the Main Hall.

**The Stage:** This is elevated 1m above the main hall. It is 9m wide by nearly 4m deep with a curtained proscenium arch. There is stepped access from both the hall and from the rear which also has a disabled access lift. An over-stage

gantry for lighting and stage dressing effects is provided. Sound and lighting control arrangements are being implemented taking advice from the Drama Group. A large storage area is provided under the stage.

**Dressing /Changing Rooms:** Two Dressing/Changing Rooms are provided in the backstage area. They provide access to the stage for performers. A single unisex toilet and washbasin is fitted between the Dressing Rooms for use by actors/presenters. A rear stage cross passage connects the Dressing Rooms with the Stage allowing cross stage movement by actors and equipment during a performance.

**The Service Point:** This area butts onto the Foyer. It is a small (3.3m x 2.8m) multi-use space that has hatches with roller shutters to service both the Meeting Room and the Foyer area, a small sink and storage cupboards. It can function as a bar or a sales point and will also provide the village hall “office function” as needed.

**The Meeting Room:** This is situated to the immediate left of the main foyer. New small tables have been purchased so that the room can be configured in many ways. As a general meeting space it will seat 36 people or for a boardroom layout, 20 persons. The meeting room can be served through a hatch from the Service Point thereby providing a bar type facility. This will prove a hugely useful room for small conferences and private hire.

**The Coffee Shop:** is to the right of the main foyer. The aim is to recruit a coffee shop manager and volunteers in order to open the coffee shop several times per week initially. The area will have its own bespoke furniture and will be able to seat up to 24 people. The coffee shop will be served through a roller hatch from the kitchen. On the advice and experience of other

halls and village coffee shops, it is not initially planned to fit a “full monty” espresso coffee machine in the kitchen. However, if the coffee shop proves to be really popular this option might be considered in the future.

**The Kitchen:** A semi-commercial standard kitchen (5.5m x 5.3m) is provided for the storage, preparation, cooking and serving of meals for 120 covers. It will have a suite of modern stainless-steel kitchen equipment and appliances including a very fast (4 minute cycle) dishwasher. This will enable the hall to be used for all village events, weddings and commercial functions. The kitchen can serve directly the Main Hall and Coffee Shop areas through roller-shuttered hatches. The Kitchen has direct access to the bin storage area.

**Toilets/Washrooms including facilities for disabled people:** Separate toilets and washbasins are provided for each sex and one separate toilet/washroom for disabled people. Each has a baby changing table. These facilities are located at the south end of the building close to the alternate entrance.

**Car Parking:** There will be 2 disabled parking spaces & 7 others within the new village hall car park. The Parish Council owned car park alongside the Lamb Inn will be fully line marked providing a further 15 spaces; it will also provide a bicycle rack & 3 motorcycle spaces. St Margaret's Road car park, also owned by the Parish Council, will be lined for a further 5. In all, 29 spaces will be provided.

**Post Box:** The post box has been refurbished and will be re-installed in the new wall to be built in front of the hall, between the entrance and the parking area. However, action for bringing the post box back into operational use will rest with the Parish Council in negotiation with the Post Office.

**Fundraising:** Thanks to the wonderful generosity of village donors and benefactors and a grant from the lottery's Awards for All scheme, we have been able to fit out the kitchen and other spaces with most things we think the hall needs to be fully up and running. However, we would gladly welcome further funds to ensure that all finishing touches are catered for....**SO** if you are still considering giving a donation, **PLEASE DO GIVE NOW** because it will help us to plan out the budget. All personal donations are eligible for 25% Gift Aid on top of what you give. Please forward funds to any of the Project Team members or the Parish Clerk, who can also provide Gift Aid Forms. Once the Hall is handed over to the Management Committee, a full audit of expenditure will be made available for everyone to see.

**Finally:** whilst the Hall Management Committee will run the hall when it opens, the Project Team have a wealth of knowledge about the hall, its design and its projected operation so if you have any questions about the hall please do ask us - we are NOT DROPPING OUT yet but will be continuing to shepherd this fantastic project to final completion and will assist the transition to the developing Hall Management Committee with whom we are working closely.

Tony Brunt, Richard Le Flufy, Gerry Hunt and Keith Hoare