

Member Newsletter #3

8th July 2024

The Planning Application SDNP/22/01621/FUL.

In our last newsletter, we mentioned that we had just received feedback from the EHDC Case Officer on our planning application. They asked questions about the community engagement process and the proposed size of the village hall for our 650- strong community. We are encouraged by this as it starts a dialogue and tells us what we need to address to move towards approval of our application.

The current planning application is the one submitted in 2022, with the floor plans that were displayed at the event in the church. At June's Trustees' meeting we discussed a range of possible responses to the case officer's questions and comments:

- A main hall to accommodate a slightly reduced capacity.
- Removal of the space originally designated for games/rental/shop/cafe.
- Removal of the four-person rentable office space (except for what is needed for village hall admin, parish clerk desk/storage).
- The office space was included during the pandemic when it was assumed more people would work from home and require nearby office facilities.
- Rebalance the toilets to include more female cubicles.
- Retain the IT cupboard for storage.
- Retain the committee room but reduce the capacity.
- Consider partitioning the main hall, although this would be difficult with the vaulted ceiling; consider reducing the height of the roof to save on building cost.
- Reduce the capacity of permanent car parking by up to 18 permanent spaces and use other off-road parking on the site.

We discussed but were not in favour of altering the position of the committee room and kitchen for logistical reasons. Similarly we considered the amount of storage space that would be needed and felt it should not be underestimated.

We are not proposing the unnecessary expense of a complete redesign, but rather revising what has been submitted. We will be uploading the existing and revised floor plans on the FVH website, and we welcome your thoughts and views on the revised proposals, as well as any suggestions of your own to assist with planning.

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Other Matters

Developers

We have received approaches from developers, and a joint village hall with housing was originally considered as a means of funding. However, the Trustees feel we should focus solely on the application for planning permission for a village hall at this stage.

Community engagement

Whilst the planners were concerned about the level of community engagement, they were not clear about what they considered as part of it, what more or different engagement they wanted to see and why. However, we do feel that the original business plan may have relied too heavily on the revenue from external users when making the business case. We will provide concrete examples of why the village needs a hall of this size for village use (e.g. size needed for village activities, film nights, and suppers)

Hall visits

We plan to have a programme of village hall visits both in the area, and in similar sized communities, e.g., Beech, Easton (near Winchester).

Please feel free to contact the trustees with questions or concerns/comments at trustees@farringdonvillagehall.org.