

Corfe Castle is an iconic chocolate box village that masks the problems of deprivation that the real community faces, from cash strapped public services, a lack of affordable housing for youngsters, to an increasingly elderly population. This community needs to be 'future proofed' from these problems so that it can remain a vibrant living community for generations to come. Whilst we cannot solve the economic or housing problems we currently have a unique opportunity to revitalise the Village Hall into a thriving community hub.

The Village Hall Charity is tasked with **“establishing and running a village hall for the benefit of the inhabitants of the Parish of Corfe Castle without distinction of sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, nationality, race, politics or religion, to provide facilities for the recreation of other leisure occupation of individuals who have need of such facilities by reason of their youth, age, infirmity or disablement, financial hardship or social and economic circumstances or for improving the conditions of life of the said inhabitants.”**

We are trying to do this with a building that was rebuilt on a very limited budget in 1985, but this utilitarian and Spartan agricultural shed also has underlying drainage from the 1940s or earlier and roofing materials that are reaching the end of their life span. Whilst there are some other smaller venues around the village the main hall is the only one large enough to hold over 150 people at once, but even this is limited by the amount of furniture and equipment that has to be kept around, and cluttering up, the main hall itself.

We therefore have three main objectives:-

A) to carry out Essential Building Works

- improving ingress and egress for disabled persons.
- constructing new drainage across the whole site.
- improving and extending toilet facilities.
- installing modern and efficient heating.
- replacing the old roof coverings with thermally efficient roof panels.
- replacing existing guttering and rainwater pipes and drainage.
- carrying out essential electrical and plumbing works to facilitate the above.

B) to Improve Facility Provision

- providing technology adequate for today's world.
- extending and modernising the kitchen.
- enlarging the foyer for sufficient coat space and a more attractive focus.
- upgrading the interior décor and lighting to improve the aesthetic appearance.
- providing adequate 'out of hall' storage for all essential furniture.
- installing solar panels to save energy and even cut costs but feeding back into the grid.

C) to provide Flexibility For The Future

- relocating, enlarging and updating the “committee room” to allow dual booking.
- extending the building to provide storage for essential and regular users equipment.
- providing the framework for a future first floor room and additional flexibility.

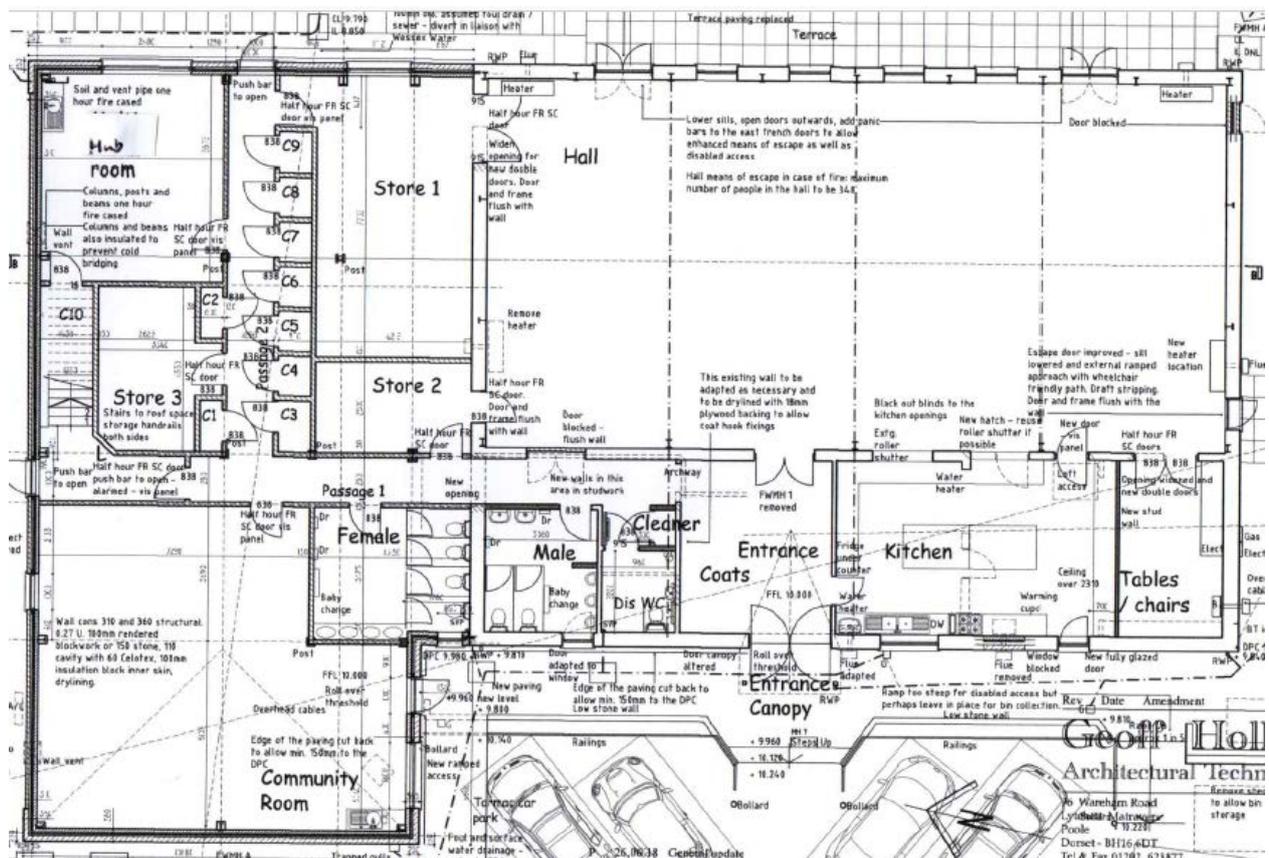
We are principally trying to target the problems of mobility and financial deprivation that exist in the village. Being a rural community, miles from main amenities and workplaces, car ownership is essential, but this results in low income families using a high proportion of their scarce resources. Both they and the many older residents need services within walking distance, and more activities to enhance their physical, mental and social wellbeing.

There is a considerable amount of social housing in the village, and with surveys indicating that many occupants are of moderate and pressed means, we would like to use the potential savings in running costs from the proposed solar panels, to set up a fund to be able to subsidise the charges for those on benefits and the elderly, and to carry out further improvements.

The increasing number of second homes in the village has the effect of raising house prices, which forces local youngsters to move away to start families so that the village demographic is predominantly towards the senior age range. The limited public transport needed to reach key health services for the elderly is under threat from budget cuts. The local councils are looking to provide services for less money and where actually needed at the point of delivery. So now is the time to improve the Village Hall into a larger community facility that can provide a flexible approach to more services and activities at this focal point of the village.

Initial plans back in 2013 were based on information gathered from numerous public meetings, and discussions with regular users and other village organisations, and focused on repair. After feedback and further reflection, we decided we should be 'dreaming bigger' to provide a more lasting flexible legacy. A questionnaire was circulated to every home in the parish, and the response was positive. With the full backing and support of the Parish Council revised plans were drawn up and gained initial Planning Approval in November 2013. Fund-raising started in earnest in 2015, and by the end of 2017 we had raised our initial target of £514 000. This was due to generous support from villagers through "Buy A Stone" and support for events. We also received a substantial legacy and donations from local firms. Around 40% of the funding came from grants from various funding bodies.

Building work started in December 2017 on replacing the roof, with improved insulation and solar panels. By the end of the current building works in autumn 2018 the village will have a hall which has renewed ceiling, lighting, fire safety and drainage, together with greatly improved cloakroom and storage facilities and a large extension. The fit-out phase of the project will involve constructing a medium sized community room within this extension. We are confident that this will prove popular as a venue for smaller family events and also for numerous new regular activities. We are also hoping to construct a hub room which would provide a venue for MP surgeries, the Police, Housing Associations and other third sector providers, enabling them to meet villagers who have concerns to raise.



Trustees have started work on fund-raising for the fit-out phase, which will also involve improvements to the kitchen. Appeals for support have already been made to several funding bodies, and applications to others are currently in progress.