

## **New Partridge Green Community Facility project – Frequently Asked Questions**

[What is the general background and history of this project?](#)

[Which local organisations are involved in this project and how is it being taken forward?](#)

[Community consultation process](#)

[What steps of consultation has this process been through to date?](#)

[What plans are there for further community consultation?](#)

[What research has been done on community facilities in other local villages? What learning resulted?](#)

[What is the wish-list of main features for a new community facility?](#)

[What are the main reasons why the project is targeting a new facility in the KGV field?](#)

[Considerations relating to a new community facility being located in the KGV](#)

[Isn't it unusual for a community facility to be located outside the centre of a village?](#)

[Won't walking time/distance create an access problem?](#)

[What about the impact of a new KGV facility on near neighbours of the field?](#)

[Will a new facility in the KGV have negative environmental impacts?](#)

[Will there be a loss of sports/recreational area in the KGV?](#)

[How will residents' experience of the KGV as a recreation area be protected and enhanced?](#)

[What other kinds of provision to benefit the community could a new facility attract?](#)

[What are the current plans for redeveloping the current Village Hall site?](#)

[If a new facility is built in the KGV, what will happen to the current Village Hall site?](#)

[If the current Village Hall site is redeveloped will this impact on public parking there?](#)

[If WGPC takes over the Village Hall car park doesn't that make a case for rebuilding at the current site?](#)

[What will the KGV scheme cost, how will this be raised and how might your precept be affected?](#)

[How will a new community facility be set up and operated?](#)

[Responses to criticisms that we have received regarding the consultation process to date](#)

[The response rates to consultations to date have been too small to be valid](#)

[The January 2025 exercise did not present information about likely build costs or fundraising approaches](#)

[Responses to suggestions that the January 2025 consultation process was misleading](#)

## General background and history of this project

Partridge Green is currently served by a small multi-purpose village hall located near the High Street. The original modest brick and timber hall dating from 1904 gained a single-storey wrap-around extension in 1976, which provided toilet facilities, kitchen, meeting room and Parish Council office. Since 1971 the hall has been managed by the Partridge Green Village Hall charitable Trust (PGVHT), in close liaison with West Grinstead Parish Council (WGPC). The Trust owns the building freehold and recently re-incorporated itself as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, with the object: *to establish and run a village hall ... for the benefit of the inhabitants of the parish of West Grinstead*. This involves a duty to deliver the best facility that it can for the community in the long term, including modernising to meet changing community needs and expectations, and when necessary to consider alternatives to just adapting the current building.

Concerns about the fitness-for-purpose of the current village hall building, and its capacity to be adapted to changing needs, date back to at least the early 1990s. By the late 1990s this had led to well-developed plans, in partnership with WGPC, for a new facility with a proposed location in the KGV field (the Hopit Centre). Although that project lost momentum and was eventually shelved, both PGVHT and WGPC saw the need to begin setting aside funds to renew our main community facility – a process that has led to the two bodies currently holding approximately equal reserves totalling around £150K, earmarked specifically for this purpose.

The current hall has continued to be used by many local groups, including a week-day/term-time pre-school, clubs and societies meetings, amateur dramatics, parties and village events. Follow [this link](#) to see a detailed analysis of activities in the current hall, showing also how this compares poorly to the range of activities typically available in more modern community facilities of other comparable-sized villages in this area.

PGVHT's longstanding concerns about the current hall's fitness for purpose have only increased over the past two decades - despite regular investment to update heating, lighting, etc. The building's limitations, as well as frustrating existing regular building users in terms of limited space and equipment, have restricted PGVHT's capacity to grow bookings income, which has remained stuck at a very modest level, unsustainable in the long term. Therefore in 2023 trustees approached WGPC and reached agreement to jointly launch a new round of community consultation, with a view to hopefully creating momentum for a new hall renewal project.

Both groups feel that it is important not to lose further time. The fact that our village hall has not seen material modernisation for 50 years has left it feeling out-dated and less relevant to many residents' needs (and not only younger people). Meantime, most other villages in the area have significantly upgraded their facilities. This may not have felt an urgent issue over decades of static or declining parish population, lower numbers of children and an ageing demographic profile, but that situation is set to change in the near future. The outlook for housing development around Partridge Green over the next decade features likely approval of 3 or 4 major sites and up to 355 new homes (equating to 38% growth for the settlement). This is therefore an important moment to properly review what our main community facility should deliver for the future, and to get on with making it happen.

[For the recent history of phases of public consultation follow this link](#)

## Which local organisations are involved in this process and how is it being taken forward?

Since 1971 the hall has been managed by the Partridge Green Village Hall charitable Trust (PGVHT), in close liaison with West Grinstead Parish Council (WGPC). The Trust owns the building freehold and recently re-incorporated itself as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, with the object: *to establish and run a village hall ... for the benefit of the inhabitants of the parish of West Grinstead*. This involves a duty to deliver the best facility that it can for the community in the long term, including modernising to meet changing community needs and expectations, and when necessary to consider alternatives to just adapting the current building.

WGPC and PGVHT share an agenda to identify and progress the best viable option for major renewal of our ageing and sub-standard main community facility. Awareness of the need for such a project has a 30-year history and has been strongly endorsed by Partridge Green residents via two recent passes of community consultation (January 2024 and January 2025). PGVHT trustees approached WGPC to help with their dilemma that they

cannot continue to deliver their core charity aims in the medium-long term without a major upgrade of facilities (see section on [background/history of this project](#) for further information on this).

It is natural for WGPC to take a co-leadership role in this project. The role of a Parish Council includes taking an active lead to enhance major facilities in their community, which they often either run directly, or support indirectly as financial guarantor. In this case WGPC feels bound to respond supportively to the PGVHT's request for assistance. The PGVHT has a strong track record in running the existing hall, and it comprises representatives of most of the largest and most active community groups in the parish. At the same time, the KGV Sports and Social Club management group has also agreed to fold itself into the PGVHT organisational structure, to help secure renewal of our very out-dated sports pavilion facilities in the KGV as part of the same project.

WGPC and the PGHVT (with KGV Sports & Social Club group) are therefore working together to identify and pursue the best available long-term options regarding the existing hall building, and to create a new facility that will meet local needs for the foreseeable future. After 18 months of [consultation and feasibility work](#), and with clear evidence of community support, in March 2025 both WGPC and PGHVT agreed to commit to progress the project path that has the strongest arguments and community feeling in its favour, i.e. to seek to build a new community facility in the KGV field. This phase of the project is being taken forward by a new joint PGHVT/WGPC Project Steering Group, which meets monthly. This is a transparent process, with the work of the Steering Group being fully minuted, and all major decisions, including financial, referred to both parent bodies for decision.

As well as committing further substantial time input by their members, PGVHT and WGPC have both agreed to use some of their earmarked reserves for professional support to progress a KGV-based scheme to the planning pre-application stage. This process will clarify and test all of the key feasibility elements of the project, including:

- drafting a new building design that delivers for both current user groups and expansion of new activities;
- drafting a residential redevelopment plan for the current village hall site to contribute to the project's funding needs, involving a design that is acceptable to neighbouring residents and planners;
- confirming that we can put together a viable plan for project costs and funding; and ...
- sounding-out the positions of key external agencies (e.g. Horsham District Council planners, West Sussex CC, Fields in Trust), including any objections they may raise.

It is fully appropriate to use the reserves that were specifically set aside to enable a major upgrade to our main community facility to work towards these milestones. Although the project is not simple, we believe it has a good chance of success. However, even in the worst case that the project hits a short-term blockage, we will have still gained a much better level of understanding, allowing an easier return to the drawing board.

What PGVHT and WGPC are agreed on is that there is no good case for returning to a passive 'wait and hope' approach. The current village hall building is clearly inadequate and the community supports the need for a step-change. It will take sustained effort to secure a community facility that meets the residents' current and future needs in a financially and environmentally sustainable way, so it behoves us to get on with it.

## Community consultation process

### What steps of consultation has this process been through to date?

#### **First pass of consultation: December 2023-January 2024**

In December 2023 all 1200 households in West Grinstead were surveyed for their views of the strengths and weaknesses of the current village hall, and what improvements they would like to see. 297 responses were received (92% from Partridge Green residents; 8% from the wider parish): a very respectable 24.3% return rate for the parish as a whole, and a high 29.5% rate for Partridge Green households only. The resulting January 2024 report by specialist consultants Action in Rural Sussex, analysing responses received, [can be read here](#). It is worth noting that this survey cost £4,800 – hence not an exercise that we can afford to repeat frequently.

This consultation confirmed that although many residents have affection for the current hall, its age, size and ad-hoc layout mean that it does not offer the range of facilities that the community is seeking. Although responses

appreciated the building’s history and character, they also confirmed dissatisfactions with its spaces. 47% said more space is needed: specifics including the limited size of the main hall, the layout relative to the stage, and inadequate storage space. The fact that access to both the kitchen area and the toilets is restricted to users of the main hall (which is occupied weekdays by the pre-school) was a key complaint. Telling comments included: ‘It seems a space that limits community events rather than inspiring and enabling the local residents’; ‘Too cold and bare to be inviting and not suitable for sports classes’. 20% of comments criticised toilet facilities.

An overwhelming 94% of respondents supported a project to review and improve our community facilities and over 50 people offered help with this. With these messages in mind, in February 2024 PGVHT set up a Feasibility Steering Group to scope out the options available. In October 2024 the Steering Group reported to the Trustees with an appraisal of which options were available and feasible for a major community facility renewal project.

Both the PGVHT trustees and WGPC fully endorsed the analysis presented by the Feasibility Steering Group and agreed to consult further with the community on the two options that the report identified as potentially feasible, before deciding on the best project path to pursue.

**Second pass of consultation – January/February 2025**

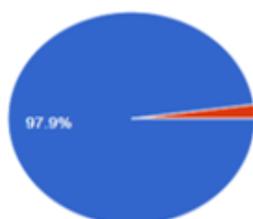
A further public consultation process was run from 15 January to 9 February 2025, to inform decisions on next steps. The community was presented with a [synopsis of key points from the Steering Group’s report](#), via a web page and a ‘storyboard’-based public exhibition event on 24/25 January. The focus was on the two potentially feasible options identified by the Steering Group, i.e.:

- **Option 1: Demolish the current hall and rebuild on the same site, or**
- **Option 2: Build a new hall facility in KGV**, including replacement of the existing sports and social facilities there.

Participants were surveyed regarding their level of support for both these options, plus qualitative comments on their strengths/weaknesses, and other points that respondents wished to raise.

**Results of the early 2025 consultation phase** - the tabulated results from 142 responses are set out below.

**Q1: Do you agree that Partridge Green would benefit from a project to renew our Village Hall by rebuilding a larger and more modern community facility?**

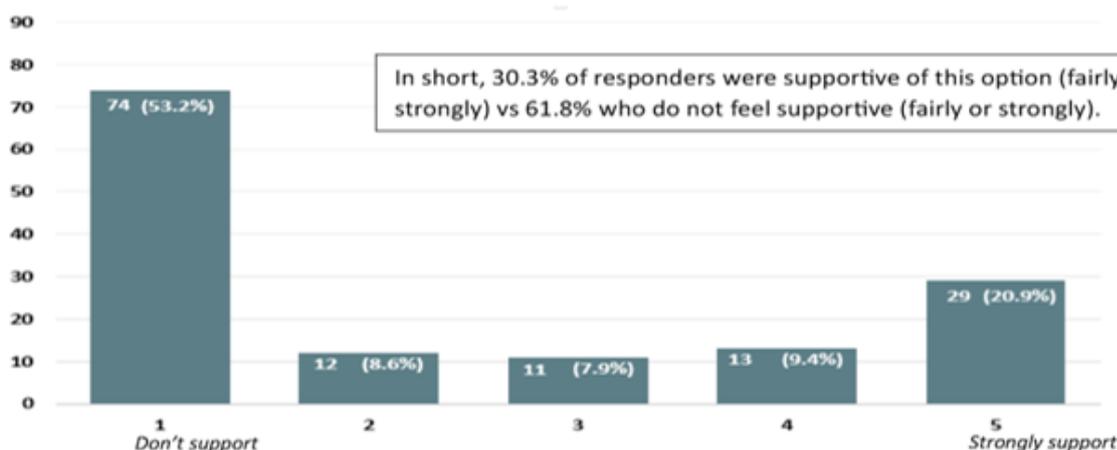


● Yes  
● No

This result shows overwhelming support for the general view that the village hall facility needs a major renewal project in the near future.

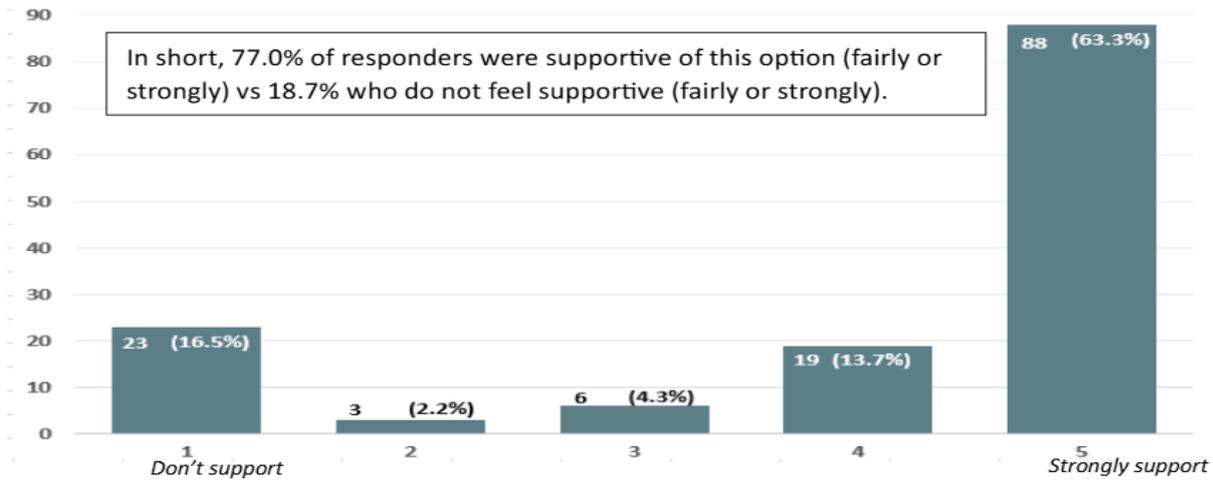
The report identifies two feasible site options. Please rate your support for each option below.

**Option A) Demolish the existing hall building and rebuild a new facility over 2 floors within the footprint of the existing site**



In short, 30.3% of responders were supportive of this option (fairly or strongly) vs 61.8% who do not feel supportive (fairly or strongly).

**Option B) Build a new village hall facility, and renew existing sports and social facilities, in the King George V field.**



In summary, **98% of responses support a major project to renew our Village Hall**, and in relation to the two site options, the balance of preferences was:

Options	Supportive	Not supportive	Neutral
<b>1. Demolish and rebuild on the current site</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>2. New build at the King George V field</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>4%</b>

**A large majority of responses therefore favoured Option 2: a new build at the King George V field** (i.e. 77% of those scoring this option, or 80.5% if one excludes neutrals).

The summary analysis of qualitative comments provided is:

- In relation to Option 1 (Rebuild on current site): 50 comments in total, of which 16 were supportive;
- In relation to Option 2 (KGV site): 71 comments in total, of which 52 were supportive;
- Other general comments: 87, largely reflecting support for one option over the other, but also making other points about the project.

Focusing mainly on comments made relating to the (overall strongly preferred) KGV option, the following key themes emerge as needing to be addressed for a successful outcome:

- **Car parking:** it seems likely that existing KGV provision will need to increase;
- **Access:** the need to review and make changes to ensure safe access onto Shermanbury Road and updating security/gating arrangements;
- **Lighting:** street lighting on the approaches to the KGV entrance clearly needs improving, and within the site it will be important to create a space that people feel safe in, whilst also minimising nuisance to neighbours and light pollution impact.

Other important points made included:

- **Future of the current Village Hall site:** if a new facility in the KGV is confirmed as the project direction, this will need to involve clear information and further community consultation regarding the future redevelopment of the existing Village Hall site.
- **Financial Planning:** given the significant costs involved, thorough business/financial plans for both the capital construction phase and the future sustainable operation of the new facility will be needed.

## **Decision on the favoured site for a new Village Hall**

In light of both the analysis set out in its 2024 Steering Group report, and the clear balance of public support in terms of the feasible site options, PGVHT and WGPC agreed in March 2025 to undertake further joint work to seek to progress a major project to renew our Village Hall facility at the King George V site.

For further information about how the project is being managed, [follow this link](#).

You may also like to read the section on '[Responses to criticisms of the consultation process to date](#)'

## **What plans are there for further community consultation?**

PGVHT and WGPC have agreed that if the scheme for a new build facility in the KGV gets through a successful pre-application engagement with HDC planners, and also clears other key financial and legal viability hurdles, there will be a further community survey on whether to proceed. This process will involve distributing hard copy forms to every parish household, presenting full information about draft designs for both a new facility in the KGV and a redevelopment scheme at the current village hall site. This information will include cost estimates and other financial information, including any ongoing implications for the level of parish precept. The survey will be a simple majority-based referendum on whether or not to proceed with the proposed schemes.

## **What research has been done on community facilities in other local villages? What learning resulted?**

### **Review of local village facilities**

The 2024 Feasibility Review Steering Group conducted a desktop review of all of the village halls serving local rural communities, with particular focus on similar-sized settlements. Site visits were made to three halls. This work confirmed that most local villages of similar size to Partridge Green - even the hamlets of Dial Post and Ashurst - already have superior hall facilities. Several of these settlements were fortunate to undertake new builds or major refurbishments during the period of very low interest rates in (2009-2022), which enabled borrowing levels that are now unaffordable for parishes the size of West Grinstead (council tax base of ~1300).

### **Examples of specific learning from this research include:**

- Most villages have taken steps to ensure that their main halls are sufficiently large and regularly-shaped to support a range of popular indoor sports as well as theatrical and musical performances;
- It is normal for the main hall and at least one other meeting rooms have independent access to toilet and catering facilities (unlike our hall where both toilets and kitchen are only accessible via the main hall);
- In most cases at least the main hall, and often also a second meeting room, have direct outdoor access which attracts bookings for parties, conferences and other activities;
- Several halls offer useful insight on design specifics, e.g. Dial Post successfully combines underfloor heating with a sprung wooden main hall floor, and Bolney's main hall has a reconfigurable stage;
- For a number of sites (Wivelsfield, Ashington, Washington, Barns Green) the fact that their hall is located in/beside a recreation field has facilitated building extensions and adaptations over time;
- Other halls (e.g. Bolney) confirm that it is possible to accommodate a community pre-school like ours, which uses only a meeting room in the daytime, leaving the main hall available for other bookings.

### **Income generation comparisons**

Community halls need sufficient income and reserves to renew facilities over time, and to survive economic shocks. Partridge Green village hall currently generates only a modest £17K p.a., which falls well below that of local halls with modern facilities - including those in smaller settlements (e.g. Thakeham attracts more than £50K p.a. booking income). This is a symptom of the restricted space availability and lacklustre facilities in our current hall building, and presents PGVHT with a major concern for the future.

## **What is the wish-list of main features for a new Partridge Green community facility?**

Based on experience of the current village hall and having taken note of what works well elsewhere we have arrived at these core space priorities for a new facility. These features are additional to the need to fully replace and modernise the existing KGV pavilion sports changing and social spaces.

**i. Two main spaces, i.e. a main hall and a 2nd large meeting room**, with both spaces having independent access to a good-quality kitchen area, and ample toilet facilities;

**ii. Size of main hall ideally to be 20m long x 9m wide** (overall), to properly support staged events and most indoor sports. This should include a good quality stage area at one end of the hall. The main hall almost certainly needs to be double height;

**iii.** We assume that **the Pre-School will continue to be accommodated** in securable space that meets Ofsted standards. It is highly desirable that the large meeting room provides the internal play area, leaving the main hall bookable during daytimes. In addition the Pre-School needs its own core admin/storage space, continued access to secure outdoor play space and ideally its own child-suitable toilets;

**iv. A single main entrance with automated access control** should serve all internal spaces (although there may be a case for a separate pre-school entrance, if possible);

**v.** We assume that the **WGPC Clerk's office is still needed**, with access to shared kitchen/toilets;

**vi. A hall admin office** is highly desirable, for a part-time hall manager who would support customers and market the facility, and also to provide a work base for trustees/volunteers;

**vii. An entrance lobby** suitable for ticketed events, conference registration etc;

**viii.** Regular users need **ample storage** – as much as possible within the building footprint.

Other key features: designs should focus on securing **lowest possible emissions** for heating, lighting, and ventilation; **flexible temperature control** of all spaces and the **best IT/AV infrastructure** that can be afforded.

### What are the main reasons why PGVHT & WGPC decided to pursue a KGV-based new hall proposal?

The site options are in practice very limited. Our 2024 feasibility work considered three variations of re-using the current Village Hall site, of which only one (i.e. replacing the current hall more or less on its existing footprint) was found to be feasible in practice. [Follow this link for further detail on options around the current hall site.](#)

In terms of other possible sites, the following potential candidates were considered but excluded:

- WSCC-owned Fire Station site – not only is this an important local emergency service, but there is no practical prospect of it becoming available. Even if WSCC wished to dispose of it they would expect full commercial value for the site, which in addition to the build cost of a new facility would make the project unaffordable.
- Huffwood Trading Estate or Star Industrial Estate – there is no practical prospect of the owners of either estate offering to sell a substantial site area (at an affordable price), nor would HDC Planners/Economic Development team be inclined to permit change of use and loss of relatively scarce commercial property.
- Methodist Church – even if this site became available it is unfeasibly small (~500m<sup>2</sup>) to contain a full community facility, and would certainly not allow any parking space. Nor is there any reason to expect it to be available for less than full value, which would make the project unaffordable.
- An area within one of the three HDC-supported new housing sites in the village. None of these developers have offered a meaningful discussion around community facilities, and none of the sites are of a size that could give away a plot of the size needed by a new community facility and still meet their profit expectations.
- A new greenfield site – although such a site *might* crop up, it is unlikely and not something we can plan around. It is not clear why any landowner would offer a suitable site anywhere near the village centre when they could get a far higher price for a residential development proposal. And any site available only at commercial value would, in addition to the build cost of a new facility, make the project unaffordable

By contrast, the potential attractions of a new village hall facility within the WGPC-owned King George V (KGV) playing field have been recognised in the past and are clearly worth exploring again. This option would re-use the current site of the Sports & Social Club building, so would also involve renewing these existing changing rooms and social space facilities, which is another pressing current need that will have to be addressed separately if not as part of this project.

Critically, the KGV is the only available site (apart from the current hall site) without a land cost. Therefore the KGV was agreed as the only feasible alternative site to consider - alongside rebuilding at the current hall site.

In comparing the option to rebuild on the current village hall site vs the KGV site option, key factors emerging are:

- a. **Space available and best-value facilities.** The KGV site (centred on the current Pavilion) offers sufficient space to deliver a building large enough to accommodate all of the key 'wish-list' facilities. By contrast, the space available to rebuild on the current village hall site is very tight (even if some of the car park is absorbed). As a result, it cannot deliver a full-sized main hall, and the Pre-School's monopoly use of the ground floor most daytimes would probably have to continue. Since the costs of a new building at both sites will be broadly similar, it does not make value-for-money sense to invest in a smaller, less financially sustainable scheme. This is especially true at a point in time that Partridge Green's population is likely to significantly grow. By contrast, investing in a new facilities at the KGV site carries a better prospect of good long-term value for money, by creating an extremely attractive facility capable of generating a self-sustaining level of bookings income.
- b. **Continuity of facilities for hall users.** We feel it is a project priority to minimise (ideally eliminate) any period of extended disruption with no hall facility. That would mean a high risk of groups folding entirely, or moving elsewhere - and having done so, not necessarily returning to a new Partridge Green facility, which is bad both for community cohesion and future financial viability. Plans that involve use of temporary facilities also require care as this would involve, for instance, multiple Ofsted re-inspections for the Pre-School. A new build at the current village hall site would necessarily involve an extended period with no hall facility, whereas a KGV-based scheme offers the possibility of current hall users moving only once, when the new build is complete. (It is fair to note however that the KGV option may need temporary sports changing arrangements.)
- c. **Financial viability.** The financial climate for this project is challenging. Real-terms building costs have risen sharply since 2020 and interest rates for local authority borrowing are also historically high. Building a new fit-for-purpose community facility will be very expensive – probably in the area of £3M currently (whichever site is used). However, since there is no reason to expect these conditions to significantly improve in the foreseeable future, now remains as good a time as any to seek to progress this project.

In this context, the KGV site option holds the great advantage of enabling a significant part of the project cost (potentially >30%) to be raised by selling the current village hall site for redevelopment (probably residential). This would still leave a significant (~£2M) cost balance to be found from a combination of grants, borrowing (by WGPC), CIL income from new housing and other fundraising – but this is potentially achievable. Conversely, however, rebuilding a facility at the current Village Hall site would have to find the full £3M build cost from these same sources, and that extra £1M is considered a bridge too far.

### Considerations relating to a new community facility being located in the KGV

#### *Isn't it unusual for a community facility to be located outside the built centre of a village?*

Locations similar to our KGV proposal are not at all unusual; in fact in this area it is more common than not for rural village community centres to be located towards one edge of the settlement, often adjacent to open spaces to synergise with sports/recreation facilities. Examples: Ashington, Barns Green, Bolney, Barcombe, Findon, Hassocks, Mannings Heath, Rudgwick, Southwater, Sullington, Thakeham, Warnham, Washington, Wivelsfield.

#### *Won't a KGV location create an access problem in terms of walking times/distances?*

Although the current hall site is very convenient, the proposed KGV is just a 6-8 min walk from the village shops, as the walking-time map below illustrates.

We also need to bear in mind that the built-up area of Partridge Green is likely to change under current district housing plans and the KGV is relatively close to 2 of the 3 new housing sites in the current draft HDC Local Plan.

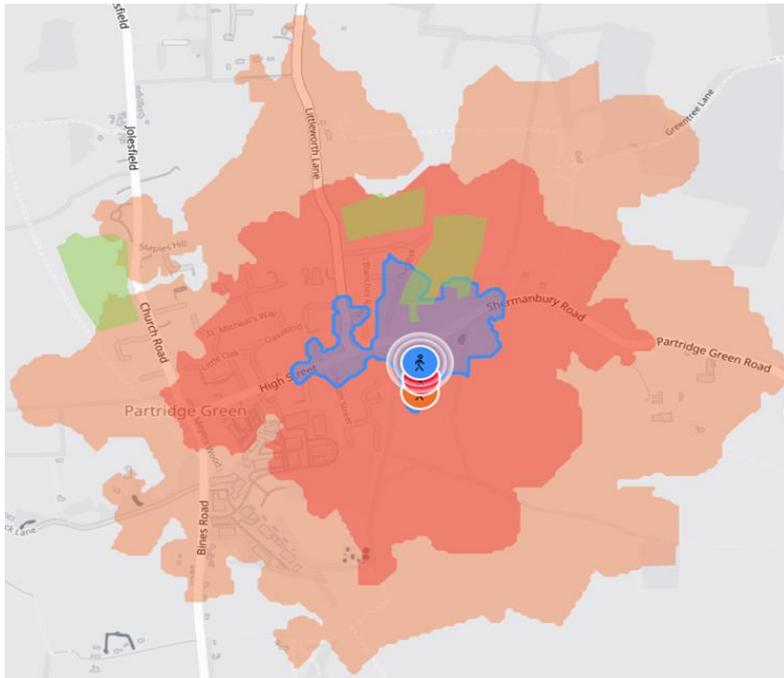


Illustration of walking times to access a new community facility in the KGV

- 5 Minute Walk
- 10 Minute Walk
- 15 Minute Walk
- Housing site in HDC local plan

**What about the impact of a new KGV facility on near neighbours of the field?**

This is clearly an important consideration and the project will give a high priority to minimising/mitigating any impacts. We have already anticipated potential areas of concern including ensuring minimal change of views, careful control of access, traffic and parking arrangements, and particular attention to avoiding lighting and noise disturbance. The current draft design is to keep the proposed first floor social area facing south-east over the playing fields, to avoid light and noise disturbance to neighbouring houses to the west and north. Future management rules for the facility will also control times and types of bookings in the evenings. There will be direct consultations with neighbours to ensure that all concerns are heard and addressed as far as possible.

**Will a new facility in the KGV have negative environmental impacts?**

This project is very much about positive environmental impact. The planning process will in any case require detailed environmental impact assessment and plans for biodiversity net gains. As the ground footprint would include the existing pavilion site it is partly ‘brown field’, and the remaining part of the footprint is routinely mown grass, not used for sports, with low biodiversity value. The new footprint will be kept as small as possible and will occupy the area between the tennis court and car park as efficiently as possible. Our aim and current expectation is that no mature trees will need to be felled. The scheme will include developments to benefit nature elsewhere in the site, such that the overall net result will be a biodiversity gain for the KGV area.

The design of the new building will incorporate a green roof area, and best standards of energy conservation, ventilation, insulation, and heating to future-proof future costs and carbon impact of the building. While it is true that redevelopment of the current village hall site (to help finance the project) will involve carbon release, we will ensure high standards of environmental design to create new low-emission dwellings on that site for the long term.

**Will there be a loss of sports/recreational area in the KGV?**

The only loss of green space will be a relatively small area to the north side of the existing pavilion, which is currently mowed but is not used for sports. The new building will not be allowed to encroach southwards onto the cricket outfield. Therefore the scheme involves effectively no loss of sports/recreational area in the KGV.

**How will residents’ experience of the KGV as a recreation area be protected and enhanced?**

*Views*

We are very conscious of minimising the visual impact of the new building on the experience of users of the KGV. The way that the new building will feature in views from all angles is being carefully considered. The draft scheme for the building features a tight footprint centred on the existing pavilion, with no loss of mature trees. The ridge height will be kept as low as possible, and facades will mix natural and local building materials.

## *Facilities*

The draft new building design will replace the existing seriously out-dated pavilion changing facilities and bring those facilities up to modern standards. Being part of a bigger project will also deliver this much-needed upgrade more cost-effectively than would otherwise be possible. Design work is referencing all relevant national sports body specifications, in part to ensure that our facility will qualify for future grant funding from those bodies.

The vision for replacing the current pavilion social area involves creating a flexible first floor social/club/sports bar area with balcony overlooking the cricket pitch, and with views southwards to the Downs. This space will be a great place from which to watch and support events in the fields, and the children's playground. It will also be an attractive space for all kinds of activities and bookings, helping to make the new facility financially self-sufficient.

The new full-sized main hall will facilitate many new sports/fitness activities, including table tennis, indoor bowls, fitness and dance classes. It will also provide indoor training options for outdoor sports teams. We are also working with the Partridge Green Players to ensure that they have the full-size stage and other spaces needed to support amateur dramatics and musical performances are of a high standard, to meet future community needs.

Our long-standing community Pre-School will move into its own securable part of the building. The large meeting room will function as its play area (while still being used for other activities at other times), and a purpose-designed area will accommodate catering space, administration, storage and toilets.

Overall, the plan is to create a venue that is so attractive that it will encourage higher levels of membership of sports clubs, spectating and participation, and likewise to provide a great base for drama and music groups.

## **What other kinds of provision could be attracted to benefit the community?**

As well as ensuring that our existing successful village Repair Café will have a great new home, we have looked at other common provision at modern local village facilities and we foresee opportunities for the new building to be a regular hub for external providers (public and private sector) to offer outreach services. Examples of potential medical/wellness-related services include health visitors/healthy start programme, breastfeeding support, mental health-related support, blood donating and various wellbeing outreach clinics. Other potential outreach includes Citizens Advice, help to apply for disability access funds and disability living allowance; accessing Early Years Funded Entitlement, and other agencies who specialise in support for young, elderly and disabled people.

## **What are the current plans for redeveloping the current Village Hall site?**

### **If a new facility is built in the KGV, what will happen to the current Village Hall site?**

To make the finances of a new facility in the KGV work, we will need to achieve best value in selling the current village hall site, and it seems almost certain that this would mean a residential redevelopment.

More specifically, our need for 'best value' from the site, plus our perception that Partridge Green would benefit from some additional modestly-priced housing, currently point towards the residential redevelopment being in the form of low-rise flats, similar to several existing adjacent buildings (Woodcot and Oakleigh).

Naturally, the potential impact on neighbours in relation to things like size/massing, ridge height, materials and finishes will need to be carefully considered in designs. Neighbouring households will be consulted on early draft proposals, and will in any case be able to make representations via the normal planning approval process.

Our current expectation is that the footprint for the new dwellings will remain centred on the plot of the existing hall building, with little encroachment towards neighbours in any direction. We are very aware that the existing car parking provision helps support local businesses, and that this needs to be maintained at adequate level.

The plan would be that the current users of the village hall will have moved into the new KGV facility before any work begins. It is unfortunately inevitable that any redevelopment at this location will involve some temporary impact on access along Village Hall Lane, car parking and a certain level of construction nuisance for neighbours. However, we will seek to ensure high standards of construction management and shortest possible build period.

### If the current Village Hall site is redeveloped will this impact on public parking there?

We are very aware of the need to protect parking provision to support local businesses. We cannot promise that there will be *no* impact on the shape and exact number of parking spaces, but care would be taken to ensure that sufficient public (and still free!) parking space will remain, while also taking account of the fact that some of the current use of parking spaces is related to village hall use, which will move to the KGV.

### If WGPC takes over the Village Hall car park doesn't that make a case for rebuilding at the current site?

The fact that WGPC is engaging with Horsham District Council with a view to taking over ownership of this car park does not affect the reasons for concluding, during our 2024 feasibility work, that seeking to rebuild a new community facility within the car park area is not feasible, for a range of spatial, financial and disruption reasons.

**a) Impact on parking spaces.** There are only two ways to place a new building with the required 530m<sup>2</sup> ground footprint within this car park, and both would involve unacceptable loss of parking spaces.

*Option 1: footprint based on the current village hall plot.* The diagram below illustrates that the building footprint (white line) plus external pre-school space (green area), would (after allowing for 5m wide access lanes) involve net loss of at least 12 parking spaces. This leaves insufficient parking for the community hall and local businesses.



*Option 2: footprint based on the north side of the car park.* The diagram below illustrates that placing a building + pre-school area towards the north boundary would involve net loss of ~24 current parking spaces, and the need to allow for 5m wide access lanes means that probably only half of these could be replaced on the levelled current hall site, resulting in a similar net loss of ~12 parking spaces. This would leave insufficient parking for the community hall and local businesses. In addition, this option would severely encroach on neighbours to the north.



**b) Impact on village hall users, and car park users, during the rebuild phase.** Any plan to rebuild a large facility within the current site/car park would imply a 1-2 year period with no community hall, nor a usable car park. We think this level of disruption is unacceptable; it risks groups folding or moving elsewhere - and having done so, not necessarily being inclined to return to Partridge Green. By contrast the construction impact on the current hall site of a residential redevelopment means a relatively small/contained construction site allowing ongoing parking for shop users during the build and a shorter construction process involving much less impact on near neighbours.

**c) Affordability:** costs of rebuilding a new community facility within the current village hall car park would be somewhat higher than those in the KGV, due to the need to demolish the existing hall and a very constrained building site. But more importantly, rebuilding at the current site means there would be no income from sale and redevelopment of the current hall site to offset project costs. (*For more detail on this, [follow this link.](#)*)

### What will the KGV scheme cost, how will this be raised, and how might your precept be affected?

We current estimate the likely build cost of a new community facility in the KGV to be in the region of £3M – although this is being validated by consultants and will be updated. Our broad plan for raising this sum involves a mixture of income from:

- The sale of the current village hall site for residential redevelopment;
- An angel donor with whom we are in active discussion;
- Development-based funding, i.e. CIL payments to WGPC relating to some or all of the major housing proposals around the village that are set for approval by Horsham District Council;
- Other smaller grants (e.g. national sports bodies), borrowing and local fundraising.

We accept that this is a challenging and ambitious ‘ask’, but we see no reason to expect that future times will present any easier opportunities or conditions. We will update this section and fill in the bullet points above with clear numbers as work progresses.

The eventual impact of this project on the WGPC precept element of your council tax bill isn’t knowable yet, but we are very aware that residents’ finances are under pressure and that there will be limits on any precept increases, and around the financial risks of the project in general. We will only bring proposals to the point of a referendum consultation if we have a clear, expert-validated and risk-assessed financial plan to present.

### How will a new community facility be set up and operated?

We envisage that the new building will owned by WGPC but leased on a long-term basis to the existing Partridge Green Village Hall Trust (CIO) for operational running. The Village Hall Trust CIO will re-structure itself to take on the responsibility of running the facility in a financially sustainable way for the benefit of the community, with a part-time hall manager generating income from bookings so that the facility operates without WGPC subsidy.

### Responses to criticisms that we have received regarding the consultation process to date

#### The response rates to consultations to date have been too small to be valid

The general answer is that response rates have in fact been *higher* than is nationally typical for the types of consultation exercise we have run so far. Firstly one needs to be clear about what response rates are normal. Community consultation response rates in the UK are typically low, often between 1-2%, with 4-5% considered high - although surveys on controversial planning issues can see higher rates of 8-12%. Any consultation securing a >20% response rate is exceptional.

Secondly, there is the issue of whether a survey addresses *households* as opposed to *individuals*. For community project proposals the unit of consultation is more often the household than individualised votes.

Thirdly there is the geographical scope - which in this case is the West Grinstead, which comprises 924 dwellings in Partridge Green plus a further 276 houses in Littleworth, West Grinstead, Dial Post and outlying areas – a total of 1200 dwellings.

In that context, the December 2023/January 2024 survey run via AIRS, which sought residents’ general views on the current village hall situation, was delivered to 1200 households. 297 responses were received, which is a 24.3% return rate for the parish as a whole. Of these responses, 92% (273) were from Partridge Green residents, giving a 29.5% response rate from households in the village itself. These are very high response rates for this kind of exercise and the feedback it yielded can be considered a valid reflection of community views. For comparison, total responses to the 2021 local Neighbourhood Plan consultation on potential housing sites was 148. The feedback from this first consultation showed that although the current hall remains well-used (and liked in some ways) its age, size and ad-hoc layout mean that it does not offer the level of facilities the community would want; 94% supported a major project to review and improve facilities.

The January 2025 consultation exercise was significantly different, as it focused on presenting pros and cons of the two site options that PGVHT/WGPC had agreed were viable following an in-depth feasibility study. This required consultees to engage with substantial detailed information, which was made available via an in-person poster/slideshow exhibit over 2 days and also online slideshow, with responses via both hard copy and online survey form. This consultation was advertised for about a month in advance via the December 2024 village newsletter, the WGPC website, repeated Facebook posts and a poster campaign. The exercise sought mainly household-level responses from residents of Partridge Green itself (although we could not control how individuals responded).

The 142 responses to this second consultation equates to 15.4% of the 924 households of Partridge Green or 11.8% of all 1200 households in the ward. Alternatively, one could view this response rate as 9.5% of the ~1,500 adults resident in PG. Whichever comparator one uses, this was again a very respectable level of response given the type of consultation – certainly in line with typical response rates for controversial planning issues. The feedback confirmed firstly that 98% of consultees agreed with the need for a project to renew our VH facility by rebuilding a larger modern community facility, and also that a large majority of responses (77%) favoured a new build at the King George V field.

### **The January 2025 exercise did not present information about likely build costs or fundraising approaches**

This is true but it reflects a conscious decision and agreement that the best focus of the January 2025 consultation was to gauge the community's preference between the two viable site options, without that choice being unhelpfully influenced by a complicated and quite uncertain financial outlook. We felt it was better to simply ask residents: *leaving costs aside, which site would you prefer?*

However, we fully agree that if/when we reach the stage of a referendum-style consultation on a specific proposal for a new facility in the KGV, then the community needs full information about costs and funding.

### **Responses to suggestions that the January 2025 consultation process was misleading**

*Suggestion 1: Was the January 2025 consultation misleading because the summary phrasing of option 4 (KGV new build) did not highlight that it would involve demolition/redevelopment of the current VH site?*

We believe that this suggestion is inaccurate and does not give sufficient credit to the level of engagement of most respondents to this consultation. We are confident that the vast majority of consultees will have read and noted the key slide 20 *Summary of Feasible Options* which clearly states that KGV option 4 would (for financial reasons) involve 'redevelopment of the current hall site'. We are confident that consultees can be credited with having appreciated this key point.

*Suggestion 2: Did the January 2025 consultation mislead by emphasising the major impact that building a new village hall on the current site or car park would have on neighbours, while glossing over the impact on immediate neighbours of the current village hall site there is a residential redeveloped there?*

This criticism wrongly suggests that both types of development in the current hall site would have similar impact, which is untrue. The consultation slides correctly flagged that demolishing the current hall building and constructing a much larger (including taller) community facility on the same site would likely face planning problems and (if permitted) a lengthy construction process that would severely impact adjacent neighbours.

By contrast, although it would have *some* impact on neighbours, a new residential redevelopment based on the current village hall site footprint would be relatively small and contained, with massing/design that is much less visually impactful for neighbours, and a considerably shorter and simpler construction process.

The two scenarios are materially different and way that the consultation materials were framed reflected this.

*Appendix comparison of the range of activities available at modern local community facilities, with the current range of activities at Partridge Green Village Hall*

This table illustrates the quite restricted range of activities currently supported by the current village hall, largely due to the building's deficiencies.

Activity category	Range of activities common at modern local facilities	Partridge Green VH current offer	Other notes
<b>Exercise/dance</b>	Dance exercise/Zumba/Move It (all age groups)		
	Pilates / Yoga / Qigong / Tai Chi / Stretch		
	Fitness/circuit/weight training (various target groups)		PG offer limited to Legs, Bums & Tums
	Line dancing		
	Dance classes various		
<b>Sports</b>	Table tennis		
	Short mat bowls		
	Badminton/Pickleball		
	Indoor youth football (winter)		
	Martial arts: Karate, Judo, Taekwon-Do etc.		
<b>Youth/elder activities</b>	Young childrens' playgroups		PG Pre-School
	Youth clubs for teens		
	Elder clubs, coffee mornings, bingo etc.		Infrequent: in 2025 only quarterly Bingo eve
<b>Clubs/group pastimes</b>	'Mindsports': Bridge, chess, mah-jong, etc.		
	Art and craft-related clubs & lessons		
	Other regular club/society meetings, talks etc.		Modest volume: Bird Soc, Hortic. Soc; WI
	Education/cultural: drama, choirs, languages		Infrequent band rehearsals
<b>Cultural events</b>	Amateur Dramatics		PG Players
	Musical concerts/gigs		Very infrequent: in 2025 just 1 x ceilidh
	Film clubs/screenings		
<b>NHS/Local govt outreach</b>	Blood doning		<i>Nb. this needs large main hall + kitchen</i>
	Health visitors/healthy start/wellbeing outreach misc		
	Clubs for health conditions, e.g. Parkinsons, AA etc.		
<b>Advice outreach/clubs</b>	Recycle clubs / initiatives (Repair Cafes)		Repair Café monthly
	IT literacy/advice services (Computer Club)		
	Citizens Advice; i-Rock (youth)		
<b>Commercial &amp; other</b>	Conferences		
	Private parties		Modest frequency: approx 1 per month
	Parish council meetings		Regular: 2 per month normally
	Indoor markets/fayres		Infrequent: in 2025 only 1 x Xmas fayre
	Public consultations & Exhibitions		Infrequent: in 2025 only 3 such bookings

(Green shading = this type of activity does currently happen in the PG Village Hall; lighter shading denotes low activity level; blank cell = no activity)