

Hooe Parish Council

Village Hall Project Committee Agenda

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Date: 11th August 2023

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TN39 5JP

I hereby give notice that all Councillors are summoned to attend a Village Hall Project Committee meeting on Thursday 17th August 2023 at 7pm at the village hall when it is proposed to transact the business stated below.

Signed: J. Warrener – Clerk / RFO to Hooe Parish Council

Public Attendance

The meeting will be conducted in accordance with Standing Orders and any person attending the meeting must abide by these rules. The Parish Council may choose to exclude a person under section 1(8) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 if a person fails to meet the standards and comply with the Chairman's requests.

Public Questions

Public participation on matters on the agenda are at the chairman's discretion. In accordance with Standing Orders 3(e-k), the session will last for no longer than 10 minutes with a person speaking for no longer than 2 minutes.

End of public participation.

Business To Be Transacted

1. To receive nominations and select a chairman for the Village Hall Project Committee
2. To receive nominations and select a vice chairman for Village Hall Project Committee

3. Disclosure of Interests

Interests in accordance with the Localism Act 2011 and the Parish Council code of conduct.

To receive councillors' declarations of interest regarding matters on the agenda and consider any written requests or dispensation as a result. Any changes to register of interests should be notified to the clerk.

4. To receive apologies and reasons for absence in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972 S85 (3)

5. Minutes of the Previous Meetings to be agreed and signed as a true record.

To approve and sign the minutes of the Village Hall Project Committee meeting held on 26th October 2023 as a true record.

Matters For Consideration and Resolution

6. To discuss and agree the Terms of Reference for the Village Hall Project Committee
7. To consider the **Appraisal of Options for Village Hall Report (April 2023)** and agree any action as necessary.

In accordance with The Data Protection Act 2018 all attendees of the meeting are hereby notified that the meeting will be recorded as an aide memoire for the clerk when compiling the minutes. The recordings are held securely and are deleted after the resolution that the minutes are a true and correct record. Members of the public should be aware that being present at a meeting of the Council or one of its committees or sub-committees will be deemed as the person having given consent to being recorded (photograph, film or audio recording) at the meeting, by any person present. A person or persons recording the parish meeting are reminded that the "Public Session" period may not be part of the formal meeting and that they should take legal advice for themselves as to their rights to make any recording during that period.

HOOE PARISH COUNCIL

Terms of Reference for the Village Hall Project Committee

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The Village Hall Project Committee is constituted to consider a review of the village hall development options and agree to adopt and implement a plan of action.
- 1.1 The Village Hall Project Committee shall undertake a review and evaluation of all village hall studies, designs and consultations undertaken to date.

2. GOVERNANCE OF THE VILLAGE HALL PROJECT COMMITTEE

- 2.1 The Village Hall Project Committee shall comprise of all members of the Parish Council
- 2.2 The Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Parish Council shall be members of the Village Hall Project Committee in an ex-officio capacity.
- 2.3 The Village Hall Project Committee may choose to appoint a non-councillor to the Village Hall Project Committee under section 102 (3) of the Local Government Act. Any non-councillor appointed will have no voting rights.
- 2.4 A non-councillor may only be appointed to the Village Hall Project Committee if the non councillor meets the terms of section 104 of the Local Government Act 1972, failure to meet these requirements will result in the disqualification of the non councillor to undertake the role (all councillors are required to meet this obligation as part of their declaration of office).
- 2.5 Any councillor or non-councillor appointed to this committee shall make a declaration to include the requirements of section 2.4 of this document, and shall accept an undertaking that by participating in this committee, the councillor or non-councillor shall agree to the obligations set out as follows:
 - To accept and work within the parish council's standing orders, regulations, policies, procedures and other statutes as imposed by law.
 - To accept any work undertaken is pro bono, is not confidential unless stated by law, or subject to copy right, as the sole purpose of the committee is to deliver the objectives set out by this committee for the benefit of the residents of Hooe parish.
- 2.6 The Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Village Hall Project Committee shall be elected by the membership at the first committee meeting following the Parish Council's Annual General Meeting.
- 2.7 The Village Hall Project Committee shall approve and review the terms of reference annually following the Parish Council's Annual General Meeting.
- 2.8 The Village Hall Project Committee shall be constituted each year at the Parish Council's Annual General Meeting.

3. QUORUM

- 3.1 The quorum shall consist of a minimum of three members.

4. POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 4.1 The Village Hall Project Committee shall have the powers to determine on all matters set out in this document including any financial considerations.

5. VILLAGE HALL PROJECT COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

- 5.1 The Village Hall Project Committee shall carry out a review of the options considered by the previous parish council, including the results of public consultation exercises and Parish Councils resolutions and decisions.
- 5.2 The Village Hall Project Committee shall assess existing demand studies and data justifying the need for a larger village hall, undertake comparative studies of other parishes in Wealden regarding their facilities and the size of the populations served.

- 5.3 The Village Hall Project Committee shall consult with Wealden District Planning Department to establish:
- a. Whether permission would be granted for development on the Recreation Ground and what restrictions might be placed on such a development if it were to be approved.
 - b. Whether the existing village hall could be redeveloped for housing and the likely number of dwellings that may be approved
 - c. Whether permission would be given for development of the garden / allotment plot for car parking and the creation of a new access onto Denbigh Road.
 - d. Whether permission would be given to extend the existing village hall.
- 5.4 The Village Hall Project Committee undertake a review and approve a short list of options for further evaluation. The Village Hall Project Committee shall shortlisted options, confirm the elements of each option, i.e. facilities provided, total floorspace and seating & dining capacity, car parking provision and cost estimates, capital and running. The costings should be based upon current building costs and robust enough so as to give a realistic estimate of the financial costs and thus risks.
- 5.5 The Village Hall Project Committee shall establish relevant criteria for the evaluation of a shortlist of options and undertake a multi-criteria analysis of these options. This analysis should include the quality of facilities provided, accessibility, financing, including the impact of any schemes upon the parish precept, operational issues and environment and sustainability.
- 5.6 The Village Hall Project Committee shall prepare a draft feasibility report of the work carried out. This shall include the conclusions of the parish council as to the preferred way forward.
- 5.7 The Village Hall Project Committee shall ask the clerk to send out an approved summary document to every resident in the village to obtain a mandate, setting out a timescale for response. The findings submitted to the Village Hall Project Committee for consideration and agreement as to the option to go forward on behalf of the residents of Hooe.
- 5.8 The clerk shall investigate and seek sources of funding for the village hall project and report the findings to the Village Hall Project Committee.

6. **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

- 6.1 The Village Hall Project Committee meeting will be open to members of the public to attend. The members of the public may be allowed to speak for 3 minutes in accordance with the parish council's standing orders on matters (not classed as confidential) as set out on the agenda at the public section of the committee meeting.

MEETINGS

The Village Hall Project Committee meetings will only be convened when business is required to be transacted.

Village Hall Project Committee Meeting to be held on the 17th August 2023

Clerk's Briefing Note for Council Members

Appraisal of Options for Village Hall Report (April 2023)

The Parish Council agreed on the 26th October 2022 that a report would be undertaken to review the options for the provision of a village hall and that Wealden District Planning Authority would be consulted to provide a view of the schemes proposed.

Cllr. Crawhurst having the appropriate skill set and understanding of the proposals undertook the role to prepare the report to present to the Parish Council and the residents of Hooe. The report was circulated to the residents on the emailing list and placed on the Parish Council's website on 2nd May 2023 and was reported in the June edition of the Parish News.

Cllr Crawhurst gave a presentation at the Annual Parish Meeting on the 26th May 2023 whereby the meeting was well attended, and the public were able to express their views. Criticisms were raised at Cllr. Crawhurst that he had shown bias in the preparation of this report and had directed the conclusions based on his own views. Residents also questioned the legality of whether Cllr Crawhurst should have written this report.

I consider the report to be a well-balanced report and has been drawn up in accordance with the instructions issued by the Parish Council. Cllr Crawhurst is legally entitled to write a report and put it before the Parish Council for consideration.

However, I would recommend that Cllr. Crawhurst does not participate in the Village Hall Project Committee meeting to debate the report, or be part of the decision-making process to ensure transparency and not to be perceived by some as asserting any undue influence on the decision-making process. Cllr. Crawhurst may answer questions at the public section of the meeting as this does not form part of the legal meeting.

In the fourteen weeks since the report was issued only four residents have submitted written responses to the Clerk. Two responses stated the existing village hall should be closed and two stated nothing should be done further. Further points were raised at the Annual Parish Meeting as shown in the minutes, but no general consensus was reached.

Financial Consideration

Each Council Member has a fiduciary duty to consider the financial implications when making any decision on behalf of the Parish Council and its Council taxpayers.

The Financial Responsible Officer (RFO) has a statutory duty under section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 to manage, advise and report on the financial affairs on behalf of the Parish Council in accordance with all relevant laws and regulations.

Should Hooe Parish Council decide to implement one of the schemes identified in this report, and consider that funding is required in the form of a loan, the process to make an application is required as follows:

- All loan applications must be approved by Central Government following an assessment of the loan application by the East Sussex Association of Local Councils.
- A resolution must be made at a Full Council Meeting to seek the Secretary of State's approval to borrow a specified sum of money for a chosen scheme.
- A copy of the Parish Council's budget or cash flow forecast must be provided for the current year (and following year if available), showing the provision made to meet the loan costs, as well as a copy of the latest Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR).

- A business case must be submitted that outlines the proposed works, estimated costs, financial planning to fund the loan repayments and for the Parish Council to explain what steps it has taken to mitigate the risk for not being able to afford the loan repayments.
- For the Parish Council to provide information on how the Parish Council will afford the loan repayments, to provide a breakdown of funding resources, amounts to be used from reserves, and any increase of the precept to fund the borrowing.
- If the precept is to be increased to cover the loan repayment, to confirm the amount and percentage of the planned increase related to the loan only, and how much the increase will be for house holders at Band D.
- If applicable, provide evidence of public support to increase the precept to cover the loan repayment e.g. the results of any consultation.
- The Parish Council will be required to provide details how local residents were consulted on the project and associated borrowing even if you are not increasing the precept to fund the loan e.g., correspondence, newsletter, website or in the agenda of public meetings.

I have prepared a chart that summarises the loan costs dependant on the amount borrowed, the repayments that would be made and the impact on the precept for the Band D Council taxpayer of Hooe should the Parish Council decide to take out a Public Works Loan with Central Government.

Due to the complexity of the proposals set out in the report, that the integrity of the report is under question, and with the implications of the long-term financial commitment to the taxpayers of Hooe, I recommend that the Parish Council seeks the opinion of the internal auditor (Mulberry & Co.) to evaluate the findings and conclusions set out in this report.

The purpose of the evaluation would be to verify the Parish Council has produced a balanced and factually correct report, whether it has a sound business case to move forward, and whether it is financially sustainable to request a loan from Central Government should this course of action be agreed by the Parish Council.

I would suggest the scope of the brief would include:

- To provide an overview of the findings and conclusions of the report and to make any recommendations to the Parish Council to assist the Parish Council to consider the conclusions of the report.
- Whether the Parish Council has a business case to build a new village hall or undertake the refurbishment of the existing village hall?.
- Whether the Parish Council would meet the criteria to be accepted for a Public Works Loan?.
- To advise on the affordability and financial impact to the Parish Council's finances and to the residents of Hooe.
- To consider the implications for the Parish Council should a bridging loan be required.
- To identify the risks associated with such a financial commitment and the legal restraints that the Parish Council must consider.
- To advise whether the community should be consulted and recommend how this should be done.

A report undertaken by the internal auditors Mulberry & Co. would be charged at an hourly rate of £65 + VAT. I consider that such a report would give the Parish Council the confirmation that any future decision made will be based on facts approved by a professional body and in the best interests of the residents of Hooe.

Jane Warrener

Clerk to Hooe Parish Council

Hooe Parish Council

Increased Annual Charges to Council Tax Payers to include the Repayment of a Single Public Works Loan for One Project

Public Works Loan Value (Annuity)	Length of Loan	Government Interest Rate	Precept Charge for 2023/24	Band D Annual Payment for 2023/24	Annual Cost of Loan Repayment to Tax Payer	Revised Precept Charge including Annual Loan Repayment	Revised Band D Annual Payment to Council Tax Payers	% Increase on Annual Council Tax Payment	Total Cost of Public Works Loan to Council Tax Payer	Amount of Precept for loan repayment	% of Precept for loan repayment
£50,000.00	50 Years	5.57%	£30,999	£149	£2,976	£33,975	£163	10%	£148,791	£14	9%
£100,000.00	50 Years	5.57%	£30,999	£149	£5,952	£36,951	£177	19%	£297,582	£29	16%
£200,000.00	50 Years	5.57%	£30,999	£149	£11,903	£42,902	£206	38%	£595,165	£57	28%
£300,000.00	50 Years	5.57%	£30,999	£149	£17,855	£48,854	£234	58%	£892,747	£86	37%
£400,000.00	50 Years	5.57%	£30,999	£149	£23,807	£54,806	£263	77%	£1,190,330	£114	43%
£500,000.00	50 Years	5.57%	£30,999	£149	£29,758	£60,757	£291	96%	£1,487,912	£143	49%
£600,000.00	50 Years	5.57%	£30,999	£149	£35,710	£66,709	£320	115%	£1,785,494	£171	54%
£700,000.00	50 Years	5.57%	£30,999	£149	£41,662	£72,661	£348	134%	£2,083,077	£200	57%
£800,000.00	50 Years	5.57%	£30,999	£149	£47,613	£78,612	£377	154%	£2,380,659	£228	61%
£900,000.00	50 Years	5.57%	£30,999	£149	£53,565	£84,564	£405	173%	£2,678,242	£257	63%
£1,000,000.00	50 Years	5.57%	£30,999	£149	£59,516	£90,515	£434	192%	£2,975,824	£285	66%

Notes:

All figures rounded to nearest £ / % for ease of reading. The loan figures quoted above have been obtained from the Public Loan Works Board being a statutory body of the UK Government. Precept Charge is for current year 2023/24 £148.53 Band-D - no guaranteed implied that this rate will be on-going - actual precept in any following year subject to change Revised Precept does **not** include any allowance for building running costs as these are not known at this time. No other future project costs are known/included.

Example use of figures above

Initial loan £500,000 -planning/construction/open new hall/sell existing hall/land (7 year timescale) - repay £300,000 with £200,000 loan remaining (43 year timescale)

Precept Years 1-7	£291	96%	Extra precept	£143	pa
Precept Years 8-50	£206	38%	Extra precept	£57	pa
Overall loan cost to tax payer (Band D) over the 7 year timescale			Total Extra 7yrs	£998	
Overall loan cost to tax payer (Band D) over the 50 year timescale			Total Extra	£3,451	