

# REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EARDISLAND PARISH COUNCIL OF THE FEASIBILITY STUDY GROUP FOR THE VILLAGE HALL

## Background and process

Following the awarding of a grant to Eardisland Parish Council from Herefordshire Council for a Feasibility Study (FS) into the future of the village hall and the possible provision of associated community housing, a Feasibility Study Group (FSG) was set up in July 2018 to undertake the work. The group consisted of parish councillors, a representative from the Eardisland Village Hall Management Committee (EVHMC) and interested parishioners.

Over the rest of 2018 and early 2019, the FSG met 10 times and undertook various activities, principally:

- Arranging a pre-application advice request to Herefordshire Council planning department
- Meeting with an architect to draw up plans and costings for various options for the current hall and site and a possible new site
- Meeting with a survey company to produce the consultation questionnaire to go to all parishioners
- Holding a community consultation event.

## Results of the study

The consultation event was held on 2 February 2019 and was attended by 79 parishioners, who were given a questionnaire to complete and return. Following the event, the questionnaire was sent out to all houses not represented at the event with one response sheet per person over 18, therefore allowing individual responses from the electorate of Eardisland parish. 404 parishioners were either given the questionnaire or sent it. Follow-up was undertaken by the survey company to all households that had not responded by the requested date, on the second visit another copy of the questionnaire was left. The final attempt to gain responses was another mailing to all households that had not responded at this stage.

256 fully completed responses were finally received, 63.3% of the electorate. A further 16 people did not provide an address and were excluded from the results. 15 voters refused to complete a response and a further 3 were either moving out or into the property and did not wish to respond. 28% of the voters did not respond to the questionnaire at all, many from the out-lying areas of the parish. The results from the analysis of the 256 completed responses are given below, in percentages with actual numbers in brackets.

### Question 2

**Rank the option you prefer most down to the least preferred. Please indicate solely which option you consider would be best for your household and the parish as a facility and venue for events and for this question do not consider the cost.** All respondents gave their most preferred option, however some respondents only gave this answer (therefore percentages do not all add up to 100). The options are summarised as follows:

Option 0 – Recommendations of structural survey addressed, shipping container or similar for storage

Option 1 – Recommendations of structural survey addressed, current kitchen turned into storage, new kitchen in current meeting room, improvements to main hall (acoustic panels, rewiring, new lighting/heating, insulation)

Option 2 – As option 1 plus extensions to west and east

Option 3 – Demolish existing hall, rebuild on current site

Option 4 – New build on green field site

|                    | Option 0 | Option 1 | Option 2 | Option 3  | Option 4  |
|--------------------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| Most Preferred     | 14% (37) | 34% (88) | 37% (94) | 8% (20)   | 7% (17)   |
| 2nd Most Preferred | 8% (20)  | 38% (98) | 30% (76) | 8% (21)   | 2% (6)    |
| 3rd Most Preferred | 26% (67) | 14% (36) | 21% (53) | 21% (53)  | 3% (8)    |
| 4th Most Preferred | 16% (40) | 7% (18)  | 2% (5)   | 45% (116) | 14% (36)  |
| Least Preferred    | 25% (63) | 0%       | 0%       | 0%        | 62% (159) |

The following table shows the responses when ranked 1-5 for least preferred to most preferred.

|                      | Ranking | Option 0<br>votes | Option 0<br>Ranking | Option 1<br>votes | Option 1<br>Ranking | Option 2<br>votes | Option 2<br>Ranking | Option 3<br>votes | Option 3<br>Ranking | Option 4<br>votes | Option 4<br>Ranking |
|----------------------|---------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Most Preferred       | 5       | 37                | 185                 | 88                | 440                 | 94                | 470                 | 20                | 100                 | 17                | 85                  |
| 2nd Most Preferred   | 4       | 20                | 80                  | 98                | 392                 | 76                | 304                 | 21                | 84                  | 6                 | 24                  |
| 3rd Most Preferred   | 3       | 67                | 201                 | 36                | 108                 | 53                | 159                 | 53                | 159                 | 8                 | 24                  |
| 4th Most Preferred   | 2       | 40                | 80                  | 18                | 36                  | 5                 | 10                  | 116               | 232                 | 36                | 72                  |
| Least Preferred      | 1       | 63                | 63                  | 0                 | 0                   | 0                 | 0                   | 0                 | 0                   | 159               | 159                 |
| <b>Ranking Total</b> |         |                   | <b>609</b>          |                   | <b>976</b>          |                   | <b>943</b>          |                   | <b>575</b>          |                   | <b>364</b>          |

### Question 3

***What is the highest level of Public Works loan that you would support in addition to the current precept, if any?***

|             |          |
|-------------|----------|
| £0.00       | 16% (42) |
| £25,000.00  | 18% (45) |
| £50,000.00  | 11% (29) |
| £100,000.00 | 16% (40) |
| £200,000.00 | 16% (41) |
| £300,000.00 | 15% (39) |
| £650,000.00 | 5% (12)  |
| £850,000.00 | 3% (8)   |

### Question 5

***How often do the adults in your household use the village hall?***

|                       |           |
|-----------------------|-----------|
| More than once a week | 7% (7)    |
| Once a week           | 11% (27)  |
| Once a fortnight      | 1% (3)    |
| Once a month          | 12% (30)  |
| Less often            | 52% (134) |
| Never                 | 18% (45)  |

### Question 6

***How often do the children in your household use the village hall?***

|                       |    |
|-----------------------|----|
| More than once a week | 0% |
|-----------------------|----|

|                  |           |
|------------------|-----------|
| Once a week      | 0%        |
| Once a fortnight | 0%        |
| Once a month     | 2% (4)    |
| Less often       | 11% (29)  |
| Never            | 5% (14)   |
| Not applicable   | 82% (209) |

#### Question 8

***If the village hall was improved or extended or rebuilt/new built, would you be likely to use it more often?***

| Not likely<br>1 | 2        | 3        | Very likely<br>4 |
|-----------------|----------|----------|------------------|
| 1               | 2        | 3        | 4                |
| 48% (122)       | 18% (47) | 22% (56) | 12% (31)         |

#### Implications of the results

It can be seen that 71% of respondents most preferred either option 1 (improving the current hall) or option 2 (improving the current hall and extending it). 15% of respondents preferred option 3 (demolition of the current hall and a new building) or option 4 (new build on a green field site), with 62% stating option 4 was the least preferred. When the responses were ranked with 'Most preferred' scoring 5 and 'Least preferred' scoring 1, it can be seen that overall option 1 is the most supported, closely followed by option 2. Therefore, the study has shown that it is not feasible to provide suitable and acceptable evidence to support applications for funding, whether lottery, other grants or a Public Works Loan, to undertake any work on the hall other than improvement of the current facility or possibly extension of the current facility.

In terms of the parish council applying for a Public Works loan, 84% of respondents support an increase on the precept for a loan of £25,000 (52.9% of the total electorate for the parish). 66% of respondents support an increase on the precept for a loan of £50,000 (41.8% of the total electorate of the parish).

Significantly, 48% of respondents state they would not be likely to use the hall more often, even if it was improved or extended. However, the possibility of an improved facility may lead to increased use, from within and outside the parish, if more activities are provided in the hall.

#### Pre-application advice from the planning department

The advice from the planning department considered 3 proposals:

1. Extension to the village hall
2. Demolition of the existing hall and rebuilding on an extended footprint
3. Advice on the possibility of constructing a new village hall and community housing on land outside the settlement boundary in Flood Zone 1.

The Officer concludes that extending the current village hall is likely to gain Officer support, once details of materials, height and design are provided with realistic measures to mitigate against any increase in surface runoff and flooding. Demolition and rebuild on the same site may gain Officer support, depending on similar details being provided as well as information on the loss of the green space involved. However, a new build on a green field site outside the settlement boundary is unlikely as the Herefordshire Core Strategy discourages the abandonment of existing social and community facilities in favour of new facilities. In addition, if a new hall was built, the current hall site would be most unlikely to gain permission for conversion to housing, as it is in Flood Zone 3.

#### Recommendations of the Feasibility Study Group to Eardisland Parish Council

The FSG makes the following recommendations:

- To take forward option 1 of the Feasibility Study – The recommendations of the structural survey to be addressed, the current kitchen to be turned into storage, a new kitchen to be installed in the current

meeting room, improvements to be made to the main hall (acoustic panels, rewiring, new lighting/heating, insulation)

- To set up a parish council project working group to take the project forward – various members of the FSG have offered to be on a new working group, with the suggestion that another EVHMC representative and any parishioner with specialist skills for the project be included in the working group
- Detailed costings are required as soon as possible and the FSG considers a quantity surveyor should be appointed to provide costings and act as project manager working with the parish council working group
- Funding streams should be investigated with the objective of having no Public Works Loan if possible
- Results, analysis and the parish council decision to be printed in the parish magazine, with thanks to parishioners for responding to the questionnaire
- Letters of thanks to be sent to the landowners who offered land
- FSG to be wound up as the study has completed.

Eardisland Parish Council Feasibility Study Working Group, March 2019