

Community Centre Working Meeting Notes - Wednesday 23rd of September 2026 -5:30 PM - on Teams

Present: R Simpkins, R Wallond, V Peddle, G Merry, H Hardy

Apologies: J Gregory

Members of the public: 0

Summary:

The meeting reviewed funding constraints and options to reduce the community building scheme while preserving essential facilities and its overall character.

- Full rebuild replaced by basic refurbishment approach
- Potential council funding remains approx. £800K
- Scheme may reduce from 600 to approximately 400–500 square metres
- Essential facilities and multifunctional space prioritised
- Tree constraints may affect ground-floor design

Action Items:

- * GM - Hanslope PC will clarify whether approximately £150,000 in potentially unallocated S106 funds and relevant carbon-offset funding can be used for the project.
- * HH will assess an earlier, smaller design option as an alternative basis for the project.
- * HH will review the existing design and identify reductions needed to bring it within the target budget.
- * HH will seek initial feedback from the quantity surveyor on the design and cost options.
- * HH will present the reviewed design options at the next meeting.
- * GM will contact the relevant tree officers and explore arranging a site visit with HH and Richard.
- * HH will revise the design to test what can be delivered within the budget and identify the resulting programme impacts.
- * HH will obtain structural costings from the supplier for comparison with alternative construction approaches.
- * The council will decide the preferred level of physical security and whether to use shutters or rely on a more open, community-focused approach.
- * HH will circulate interim drafts of the revised design for feedback before the next meeting.

Key Discussion Points:

Finance, Fundraising and Potential Council Funding

The meeting began with a finance and fundraising update, including modest GoFundMe donations and the lack of larger contributions. The group discussed a possible S106 opportunity and potentially unallocated council funds, but their availability remained uncertain.

Tree Constraints and Ground-Floor Expansion

The team examined whether the nearest tree could be removed or whether construction could take place around the tree roots using lightweight foundations. HH emphasized the importance of obtaining the tree officer's support, while the group also considered replacement planting, drainage issues, and the possibility of a site visit.

Shift from Rebuild to Refurbishment

HH outlined updated quantity-surveyor work on structural framing and asked whether the project should remain phased or move to a redesigned renovation scheme. The Parish Council's

preference was confirmed as a more affordable refurbishment or renovation rather than a full rebuild.

Revising the Building Brief and Priorities

The group considered how to use the available budget beyond a basic renovation and agreed that the earlier priority list and community consultation could guide a revised brief. Ideas included adapting the ground-floor plan, improving the scout hall, retaining sports and catering facilities, and providing flexible community space.

Cost Reduction and Scheme Options

HH described ways to reduce the scheme, including removing or reducing the second floor, adjusting the central block, reducing floor area, and omitting selected features. The discussion focused on achieving a construction budget potentially around £600,000–£700,000 while preserving essential facilities and meeting relevant sports requirements.

Earlier Designs and Roof Configuration

VP compared earlier design stages and suggested using a smaller scheme as the basis for internal cost savings. The group also discussed whether a pitched or raised roof would support community uses such as children's parties, while recognising that the roof solution could materially affect cost.

Operational Requirements and Next Design Review

The GM highlighted practical requirements arising from facility bookings, including a sufficiently high hall, a divisible space for simultaneous activities, and a smaller room suitable for meetings. HH then confirmed that he would test reductions to the existing design and, if necessary, revisit an earlier design option before reporting back.

Flexible Café and Community Space

The group explored reallocating existing rooms, making the main hall multifunctional, and using the rear area for community activities. HH presented the idea of a lightweight, enclosed or covered external space that could extend the café's usable area without the cost of a fully enclosed permanent building.

Design Reassessment and Construction Costing

HH explained that fixed requirements such as toilets and kitchen facilities would be protected first, while flexible open-plan areas could be reduced to meet the budget. The team agreed that the design should be tested against the budget and that the additional referees' changing room from the latest option must be considered.

Design Quality and Security Strategy

Participants reaffirmed their positive view of the design and expressed a preference to retain its look and feel despite possible reductions. The group then discussed whether the new café would need shutters and considered community ownership, secure glazing, locks, and CCTV as alternatives or complements to heavy physical barriers.

Next Steps and Meeting Date

The next meeting was set for Tuesday, 20 October, with HH encouraged to circulate interim design drafts for feedback.