

NEW VILLAGE HALL and HARROW MEADOW

Update to Eynsford Community December 2018

As you will be aware the Hall Trustees and Parish Councillors have been working on plans to provide a new hall and enhanced sporting facilities at Harrow Meadow. Aided by the requirements of various user groups, the architect has produced a set of floor plans together with elevation drawings and these were costed by the consultant quantity surveyor.

The current village hall site will be sold to help fund the new hall and indicative plans were produced for three houses. Due to this site being on the flood plain, the Environment Agency has been consulted and the ground floor accommodation will be classified as 'non inhabitable' ie used for car parking and utility rooms.

Guidance has been obtained for both sites in a pre application meeting with Sevenoaks Planning department at which the Planning Officer acknowledged the extensive amount of work already achieved in preparing the two applications. SDC made recommendations concerning both the Harrow Meadow Green Belt site and the current hall site which are being taken forward. The intention of the Trustees and Councillors was to submit a planning application in December 2018.

However, in October the committee met again to discuss funding given that the cost of the hall, car park and professional fees was estimated to be £1.77m. Realigning the football pitch is additional and a costing is being obtained. With the sale of the current hall site and the Trustees' current funds, a figure in excess of one million pounds is required. The committee concluded that this level of funding is not achievable considering community donations and grants from foundations.

It was decided therefore to put the planning application on hold, and to reduce the area of the new hall along with adjustments to the specification in order to reduce the project cost. Revised draft plans have now been received and a meeting in January will assess these drawings and review the specification so that a third cost plan can be prepared. A decision will then be made as to whether the scheme is achievable and whether to submit formal planning applications.

This is an important project for Eynsford and assuming planning consent is obtained community financial support will be vital. The lifespan of our valuable current hall is limited due to structural issues. If new hall funding through donations and grants from foundations cannot be achieved the village eventually will be left without a hall. The fund raising programme will provide opportunities for all in the community to be associated with the new hall, from buy-a-brick to naming parts of the hall for major contributors.

The committee is seeking a volunteer from the community to help with formal fund raising activities and another person to assist in community communication as the project progresses.

Anyone interested please contact Malcolm Richardson tel: 01322 861695 or email richardsonmm@talktalk.net

Eynsford Village Hall Trustees and Eynsford Parish Councillors working for the community.