

# Cottenham Parish Council – emerging Neighbourhood Development Plan – extract from pre-submission version – AF/2 Village Hall & Nursery

## Multi-purpose Village Hall including Nursery

The Village Hall began life as a sports pavilion and has evolved to include changing rooms, a hall, social club facilities and polling station over nearly 50 years but is now dated and no longer fit for purpose.

The hall is not compliant with the Disability Discrimination act, is energy-inefficient and costly to maintain. Various renovation options considered during 2015 led to the conclusion that demolition and replacement was the best option with the added advantage of better views over the Recreation Ground landscape.

Cottenham provides a spectrum of educational opportunities for local children up to the age of 16 with 6<sup>th</sup> form provision mostly in Cambridge, imposing travel time on students and cost overheads on parents.

Cottenham Village College and Cottenham Primary School are very well supported, attracting children from neighbouring villages to the east and west. The recently-expanded Primary School is the largest in Cambridgeshire and operates near its physical capacity, despite a recent building expansion.

There are facilities for pre-school and out-of-school groups, although demand exceeds supply in these age ranges, especially for all-day all-year-round care.

Expansion places considerable pressure on educational provision in the village. Concentration on single sites for primary and secondary education helps with village cohesion but at a price in terms of scale. Cottenham Primary School is already one of the largest in Cambridgeshire.

The known shortage of early-years provision and need for more indoor community space led to the outline design of a larger building on the site, adjacent to both the Ladybird nursery and Primary School.

## Meeting the need

The proposed design of Village Hall provides some 600 m<sup>2</sup> of new space, albeit with a loss of around 180m<sup>2</sup> – a net gain of some 400m<sup>2</sup>, enough to cater for likely population expansion under this plan.

For sustainability, the Hall should be located within 800 metre of most residents and the integrated Nursery as close as possible to the Primary School to simplify logistics for parents with children attending both. Integrating the two on the same site as the current Village Hall meets both requirements and integration of all these facilities is the most cost-effective solution.

We envisage a two-storey building on an extended footprint (forward towards the football pitch) compared to the existing building in a style empathetic to our new Sports Pavilion. The anticipated usage will require several zones with independent entry and exit points and provision of additional car parking.

- One ground floor zone will provide a Hall similar in size to the existing Hall but with integral toilets including DDA-compliant ones, a kitchen and adequate storage space for the likely long-term users, including the Day Centre and Out-of-School Club.
- A second ground floor space has been provisionally allocated as a nursery to provide facilities for 12 \* 0-2, 12 \* 2-3, and 26 \* 3-5 as a quasi-independent facility with access to its own outdoor play area. It can be reconfigured as a space for small businesses if required.
- The upstairs is planned as a flexible entertainment space ranging in size from 39 to 226 m<sup>2</sup> and incorporates provision for a members club similar to the existing Sports & Social Club.

The building, which also includes provision for a Parish Council Office and drop-in business space, has been designed to segregate user groups when necessary for security and the protection of elderly or the young.

The footprint will be slightly larger than its predecessor necessitating some reconfiguration of sports pitches on the so-called “first field” which constitutes the majority of the King George V Playing Field.

- The main football pitch for Cottenham United FC is to be relocated more centrally within the field and, by using mobile goal-posts, allow the playing surface to be moved to minimise wear.
- The junior cricket square is no longer fit for purpose as young players are now too strong for the limited boundary provision. The Parish Council has invested in additional playing strips within the main cricket square on the second field to replace this.
- Two mini-pitches on the first field have not been used for some time as Cottenham United Colts FC play has been concentrated onto the third and second fields, a practice which will continue with further investment in drainage of the third field.

A temporary Hall will be established on-site to provide limited continuity of operations during the demolition and construction.

## Evidence

In 2009, the District Council conducted an audit of indoor community space within each parish to provide an evidence base for a planning obligations supplementary planning document. Although superseded by CIL regulations, the policy required 11 m<sup>2</sup> of indoor community space for each 1,000 people based on the recommendations of an external audit and needs assessment (SCDC...). This policy has been used as the basis of claims for developer contributions where on-site provision is not feasible or desirable.

In the SCDC study, Cottenham was reported as having a recognised shortfall of around 383 m<sup>2</sup> in indoor community space, only partly closed by the provision of around 250m<sup>2</sup> of space when the Cottenham Community Centre opened in 2011 (SCDC ..).

A recent Planning Officer report verified a need to improve the Village Hall (G..) and early years and primary education provision in Cottenham to accommodate a development of around 200 homes. G27

Demand for early years provision exceeds supply and the County Council has agreed to divert previous s106 early years funding to the Parish Council project to help integrate a nursery into the new Village Hall.

## Support from the NP survey

Evidence from the NP survey conducted in 2016 which elicited 973 responses:

- 58% were concerned that future development in Cottenham would lead to pressure on pre-school places, rising to 67% of households with pre-school children
- 44% felt it was important to improve the number/availability of pre-school places, rising to 66% of households with pre-school children
- 79% thought we should improve welfare and day care facilities for the elderly and less able
- 68% thought it was important to improve leisure and recreation facilities
- 44% of over 75 year olds felt the day centre of older residents required improvements
- 55% with pre-school children felt the Early years/pre-school facilities in the village required improvement
- 64% of respondents with children aged 5 – 10 felt that the village hall needed improvement (and 40% of the total sample)
- at least 57% of respondents with children aged under 11 felt that the public toilets needed improvement (and 45% of the total sample)
- 69% of residents with pre-school children felt that the parish council should identify land and/or money for an additional pre-school facility (and 39% of the overall sample felt this)
- 57% felt the parish should identify land and/or money for a day centre for older residents, rising to 66% or more amongst over 65 year olds

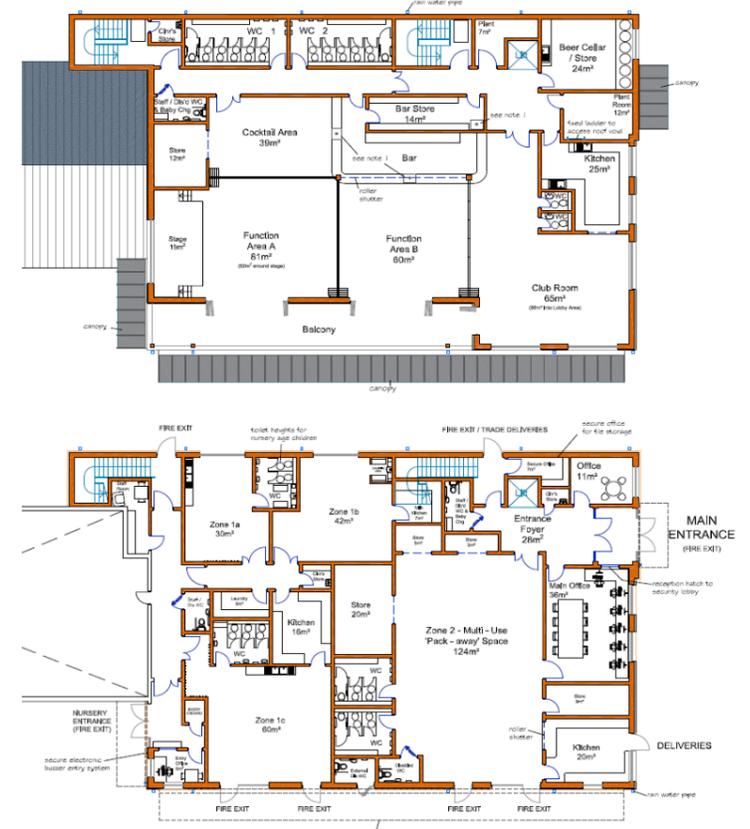
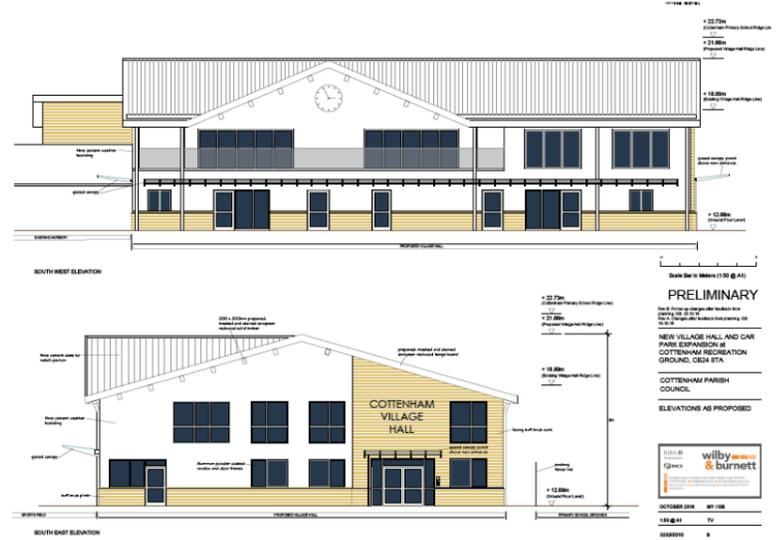
## Support from the VP survey

The Vision Plan survey conducted in 2014 attracted over 200 responses within which:

- 46% wanted a new or refurbished village hall

## Policy Table AF: Amenities & Facilities

Reference	Policy	Objective 1 amenities and facilities	3 employment	4 impact of traffic	5 character
AF/2	Development of a modern multi-purpose Village Hall (with Nursery, Parish Council Office etc?) will be supported on the Recreation ground, provided these create safer traffic movements by including appropriate parking facilities	Y	Y	Y	



## Planning Policy issues

DP/7 has the most significance in terms of the relationship with the proposed development and meeting all requirements. DP/7 states that only developments in the countryside concerning agriculture, horticulture, forestry and outdoor recreation will be permitted. In practice, the existing hall and adjacent nursery contain all the functionality of the proposed design, albeit on a smaller, more restrictive scale.

The Village Hall plays a big role in the daily life of the village and is a focal point for many recreational activities, which come together both indoors and outdoors. To move the Hall elsewhere in the Village would break the ties with the Recreation Ground and the community element of the existing site. The scale, while being kept to a minimum is necessary to meet the current needs of the village.

Because the Village Hall is located in the open countryside and in conflict with DP/7 of SCDC's Planning Framework, the pre-application study (based primarily on drawings and a site visit) has recently identified planning restrictions which are partly mitigated by re-using today's site:

Our emerging Neighbourhood Plan comments:

- although the chosen site is technically in the countryside, there are no other suitable sites in the village that have the necessary space and provides a “safe cluster” including the Primary School, Ladybird nursery and the new Nursery permitting minimum-distance safe off-road transfers between the facilities when children transfer between Primary School and out-of-school club or parents are dropping off or collecting children from any of these facilities
- the site is immediately adjacent to the existing Development Framework and, from every viewpoint outside the school, the physical building will appear in the immediate foreground of the recently extended and height-increased Primary School rather than countryside.
- the village, over the last 50 years, has outgrown the existing Hall which has itself aged and is neither disabled-friendly nor energy-efficient, necessitating larger spaces for the community; this has been recognised in recent Planning Officer reports on development applications
- today's Hall is not DDA-compliant and has safeguarding issues for young children in the out-of-school club and vulnerable adults in the Day Centre as a result of the Hall and Social Club sharing facilities. The increased space available as a result of adding a second floor has enabled a secure, flexible design serving the multiple needs of the community.
- demand for early-years nursery care / education has outstripped the available supply in Cottenham; this has been recognised by both Cambridgeshire County Council, who have committed current and future early years s106 contributions for Cottenham to this project, and by SCDC Planning Officers in reports on major development applications.

From the Vision Plan and Neighbourhood Plan surveys and exhibitions at various village events, villagers welcome the proposal, including – at exhibitions - raising the precept to finance its cost.

Following the pre-application advice, measures have been taken to modify the design:

- The proposed design has been modified to reduce the overall height from over 1 metre above the backdrop Primary School to 1 metre below that height. The height reduction has forced some minor changes to internal layouts.
- The noise assessment of the proposed design indicates no significant increase beyond today's hall. Nevertheless the proposed design has also been modified to increase the sound-proofing, control sound production and screen off the balcony end nearest residential neighbours.