

## **Laxton Village Hall Access and Modernisation Project**

### **History**

The hall was originally built to be a school and was handed over to the original trustees on the 1st September 1953. The property has since this date been in trust of the trustees for the purposes of physical and mental training and recreation, social and moral intellectual development through the medium of reading and recreation rooms, library lectures, classes, recreations and entertainments or otherwise as may be found expedient for the benefit of the inhabitants of the Parish of Laxton.

### **Current Amenities**

The village of Laxton is isolated and the residents are vulnerable to access deprivation. The nearest towns offering activities and services are between 3 and 4 miles away. The roads to these destinations are narrow, windy, without pavement or street lighting and as a result they are dangerous and challenging to walk or cycle. Public transport is very minimal, there is no train station and buses only run in one direction, every two hours from 8am - 4pm with no evening or Sunday service. There is a visitors centre, a local village shop, a local public house and a stone built medieval church. The chapel has long been closed and there is now no school in Laxton. Moorhouse has even more limited amenities which consists merely of a church, making these residents even more vulnerable.

### **The Beneficiaries**

Our elderly residents face challenges including loneliness, barriers to access due to limited mobility yet they have a need and a desire for meaningful activity.

Young people also need opportunities in the local area to engage socially and develop skills and friendships.

Families with young children also need opportunities to access local services.

All residents could have opportunities to obtain training

All residents would have increased opportunities for social gatherings

Disabled and Less able residents would benefit from being able to access and use the hall and its facilities

### **What do our residents want?**

Through the consultation exercises it has become very clear that there is an overwhelming desire amongst the community for a warm, welcoming, clean and modern village hall that is fit for purpose and welcomes young, elderly and disabled users. The findings of our consultation are that without exception the users of the hall feel that the existing hall will cease to be used in years to come because it is old and unpleasant, cold, drab and uninviting more so it is not user friendly nor disabled friendly. This is echoed in many letters/questionnaires we have received in support of the project including those from elderly, disabled and school aged children.

### **Key features include:**

A fully equipped and accessible WC for disabled users, to include a child friendly baby changing facility.

New modernised male and female WC's

Sufficient storage space

A permanent disabled access ramp to the main entrance of the building

A new modernised kitchen and bar area - designed to high standards for user friendliness and suitable to facilitate catering events for up to 100 people.

Installation of a new heating system

Complete re-wire of electrical circuits - taking into consideration new regulations for disabled users

Internet installation

Complete decoration throughout, to include soft furnishings, curtains etc

Complete upgrade of flooring - in line with listed buildings requirements

Damp proofing

Installation of an audio visual system

External roof repairs & Internal opening up of original features

Pointing to exterior walls

New guttering, fascias and drainage system

Repaired windows

### **Project Aims**

This project is aimed to reach people from our rural community and neighboring communities most in need. We aim to remove barriers caused by access deprivation currently faced by the most vulnerable members of our community - in particular these are elderly, disabled, the young and families with young children. The project aims to provide people in our community with greater access to training and personal development opportunities - in particular by providing an internet cafe run by volunteers, keep fit classes, training courses and social networking groups. Ultimately we aim to support our community to become stronger by providing a warm, welcoming and facilitating area for people to access and enjoy. It will be a platform to increase local opportunities, activities and services which better meet our needs.

### **Current Users**

Community Lunches

Quiz Night

Weddings/Parties/WI

Keep fit Classes  
History Group  
Village Hall Committee

### **Possible future Users**

Community Lunches  
Quiz Night  
Weddings/Parties  
WI  
Keep fit Classes  
History Group  
Village Hall Committee  
Young Farmers  
Trent Valley Training  
Play Group - Pre School sessions  
Cambridge Weight Plan  
Tai Chi Classes  
Childrens Shows/Entertainment  
Youth Club  
Coffee Mornings  
Internet Cafe  
Brownies/Cubs etc  
Art Classes  
Bingo  
Dance Classes - Adult  
Dance Classes - Children  
Yoga/Pilates  
Drama Film  
After school club  
Computer club  
Book Club/Library  
Parish Council Committee Meetings  
PCO/Councillor drop in sessions

### Options

#### **Option 1 - Do nothing - leave the village hall exactly as it is**

As currently there are no facilities for disabled people, and the number of users of the hall is dwindling due to it's cold unwelcoming and drab appearance and lack of services offered leaving the premises as it is, is not an option as this does not meet the communities needs.

#### **Option 2 - Demolish the existing hall and rebuild**

This would provide a custom built hall with all facilities needed by all sections of the community. The building is however grade II listed and in a conservation area, therefore is afforded greater protection. More so the community wish to retain the character and history of the hall therefore this option was rejected as untenable.

#### **Option 3 - Modernise and Update the existing hall**

Key features as identified above.

### **What do we need?**

Support from the community is crucial to obtaining any large amounts of funding  
There are 4 Phases to complete the project:

Phase 1 - Feasibility Study (£3500)

Phase 2 - Community Support (10% - £6500 - Letters/Questionnaires/Involvement etc)

Phase 3 - Applications to large funders (£90,000)

Phase 4 - Modernisation

### **How can the Parish Council help Support this project?**

Support Phase 1 - Feasibility Study. We need approximately £3500 to fund phase 1 of the project. We have already raised £1800 and therefore ask the Parish Council to help with the remaining £1700. This will allow the feasibility study to begin - without the feasibility study any applications will not be accepted, each time an application is rejected the applicant must wait to re-submit - this creates untimely delays which can be prevented by ensuring we are fully prepared when submitting our applications.

Support Phase 2 - Obtaining Community Support. Research which has been undertaken has clearly demonstrated that applications which do not demonstrate that the community is behind them fail every time. All successful applications appear to have one thing in common - that the community has itself raised 10% of the overall cost. Once again the Parish Council could support this initiative by leading from the front - You should be speaking and acting on behalf of the residents of Laxton and Moorhouse. So show your support. This could be done in a number of ways:

Support Phase 1 and tell people that you have supported it

Provide opportunities for residents to come to your meetings and ask questions/raise concerns or simply show support

Utilise your sources as a public body to seek funding that would also support phase 2 of the project - this clearly demonstrates that we would be working together as a community

Help us to gain that much needed support, lets get people talking about Laxton Village Hall, lets get people excited about the project and wanting to know more, lets try and get more people involved.