

Hawkhurst new community centre

Frequently Asked Questions

Update February 2021

Background

1. Why do we need a new community centre?

The current centre, Copt Hall, is beyond economical repair, the site is very restricted and a new community centre is required. This has been supported in all the recent village surveys such as Village Appraisal 2012 and NDP survey in January 2018.

2. There were some plans for village halls – didn't we go through this before?

Yes, but some time ago and we want to make sure the new community centre reflects the needs of today and the future.

3. Where is the new community centre going to be built?

The preference is for a site near Highgate, but no sites are available. Therefore, it was decided in January 2019 to build the new community centre at King George V Playing Field.

4. What will happen to the Copt Hall?

We currently have planning permission to redevelop the site for up to 3 dwellings. Once the new community centre has been built, the Copt Hall site will be sold and the proceeds will help fund the new Community Centre.

5. What will happen to the other Halls in the village?

The Copt Hall will be closed and the site sold to help fund the new community centre, but Dunks Hall, Royal British Legion etc. will remain open.

6. Why don't you use All Saints Church?

All Saints Church is being developed as apartments.

7. Why can't it be the Victoria Hall?

The Kino rents it from the Parish Council and runs a popular and successful cinema. In addition, it is a listed building which limits size and flexibility plus there is limited parking so it is not ideal for community use.

8. Why that location?

We have undertaken feasibility studies on up to 17 sites over the years.

By late 2018 only the King George V Playing Field site was available and the potential development site at Hawkhurst Golf Course, which is a current planning application. We did a SWOT analysis of both potential sites.

Potential site - Hawkhurst Golf Course

Strengths	Weaknesses
NDP – preference for site near Highgate	<p>Strong opposition from the village to the proposed development</p> <p>Location down the hill and on slope</p> <p>HPC do not own land</p> <p>Developer led project</p> <p>Timescale - When?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When would planning application for the whole development be agreed • When site location available <p>No public transport – Cranbrook Rd buses will be removed in proposals</p> <p>Public Works Loan required</p>
Opportunities	Threats
<p>Developer contribution of Land</p> <p>Access to other development sites</p> <p>Section 106 funding</p>	<p>Public perception – development led</p> <p>Will come with additional housing development (@420 houses)</p> <p>Alternative call on land / developer</p> <p>Section 106 funding</p> <p>Lack of control of project</p>

King George V Playing Field

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Land is owned by Council – deliverable</p> <p>Not dependent upon housing development</p> <p>In Hawkhurst latest NDP, TWBC Local Plan 2006 – 2016 and latest draft</p> <p>TWBC Local Plan up to 2036</p> <p>Open space – link to community facility</p> <p>Level site</p> <p>Space for car parking</p>	<p>Preferred site near Highgate Hill</p> <p>Public Works Loan required</p>

Utility services on site Playground on site On Bus route Fields in Trust agreed project in principle Sport England agreed project in principle Reduce operational costs of HPC	
Opportunities	Threats
Available now Could help provide community shop? Access to developer Section 106 Funding	Perception – all village facilities at The Moor

The SWOT analysis illustrates King George V Playing Field as the preferable site.

TWBC have included the King George V Playing Field site as the site for a new community centre in their Local Plans since 2006 and it is included in the draft Local Plan 2016 - 2036.

9. How did you get to this design?

We worked with local groups and users to draft an architect brief in 2018 / 2019. We appointed an architect in 2019 and developed the design over the last few months. No doubt the consultation will influence the final design.

10. Who are HCT 2018?

Hawkhurst Community Trust 2018 are a charitable community trust set up to operate the new community centre on behalf of the community, for more information www.hawkhurstcommunitycentre.co.uk

11. Are HCT 2018 linked to the Parish Council?

HCT 2018 are a completely independent charity. No Parish Councillors are allowed to be Trustees. The Parish Council can nominate 4 Trustees out of 12 Trustees.

King George V Field

12. What will be the impact on King George V Playing Field?

We will keep the football pitches but also aim to improve the junior playing surfaces and provide new changing rooms to FA standards. The land used for the community centre will be the existing building, car park, garages etc.

13. Will we still be able to play football?

Yes, the pitches will be retained and we aim to improve the junior pitches area.

14. Will it be the home to Hawkhurst FC and Hawkhurst Juniors FC?

Yes, the aim is to have improved playing pitches and new changing rooms, to FA standards for the teams to use.

(note during the building phase the pitches can be in use and we will provide temporary changing so football can continue)

15. What about the playground?

We will relocate the existing playground on the site and aim to engage young people in the design of the playground as part of the project. We will seek to deliver the new playground before the other work starts.

16. What will happen to the tennis courts?

We are upgrading them into a Multi-Use Games Area in early 2020 and should be open for use in spring 2020.

17. What will happen during the building work to existing users of the KGV?

The football teams will have temporary changing rooms and use KGV. The Post office will use the Parish Office. We will try to accommodate the users at the Copt Hall.

18. Will the new facility extend any further forward and will any of the existing playing space be lost?

The current plan brings the facility slightly forward to the existing one. The playing pitches are being retained and as part of the project the junior pitches are being improved. The playground will be relocated.

19. Will the drainage on the football pitches be improved as part of the works?

The project includes improved drainage for the area where the junior teams play.

20. To what extent will the existing space and pitches be useable during the construction period and how long will this be?

The football pitches and MUGA will be usable all the time. The build time will be about 12 – 18 months. We will aim to redevelop the playground first.

Costs and Funding

21. How much will it all cost?

At this time the project is estimated to be around £2 - £3 million. Following the consultation, we are refining the design and we will then be able to confirm the cost.

22. How will it be paid for?

It will be a mix of funding sources:

- Council reserves,
- Proceeds from sale of the existing Copt Hall site,
- Funds linked to Copt Hall,
- Potential section 106 developer contributions
- Grants
- Public Works Loan Board funding.

The Public Works Loan Board funding will require a village poll with a majority of 51% of respondents supporting the project. The repayment costs of the loan will be added to the Council Tax.

23. What is the format of the village poll and is the 51% response based on number of residents or responses?

The Village Poll follows the process set by the Public Works Loans Board, it will be overseen by TWBC elections team. It is open to those on the Hawkhurst electoral role. A majority is 51% of responses.

24. Will Copt Hall need to be sold first to allow this to proceed?

No, it should remain open until a new community facility is available. We have planning permission for up to 3 dwellings on the Copt Hall site.

25. What is Copt Hall site worth?

We will get it valued in 2020.

26. So how much will it cost me?

At the moment the estimated additional cost is in the region of £3.50 - £7.00 per month per Band D (average) property. Once we know the costs we will include the actual increase for Council Tax Band in the village poll so people know what they are getting and how much it will cost them.

27. How likely is it that FA funding will be obtained?

We are liaising with the FA and this is part of their draft Development Strategy for the TWBC area. But we will still have to apply for grants.

28. Grant aid has been mentioned, what about Lottery Funding?

We will be seeking all sorts of grants including lottery.

Design

29. How many car parking spaces will there be?

We are aiming for 53 car park spaces plus overspill parking for large events.

30. What are the proposals for heating and acoustics?

We are considering sustainable, environmentally friendly heating and cooling systems. Acoustics will be important part of the design

31. Is there sufficient storage space?

This will be considered as part of the refined design.

32. What will be provided by way of projectors and Audio Visual installations?

Yes, the aim is to have projectors and Audio Visual in the main hall and studio.

33. How do the room sizes compare with some of the existing spaces?

Room	Dimensions	Capacity
Copt Hall	10.5m x 8m (plus stage)	84msq
KGV Sports Pavilion	11m x 5m	55msq
Royal British Legion	13m x 7m (est)	91msq
Hawkhurst Golf Club	9.75m x 6.4m (est)	62.4msq
Dunks Hall, Hawkhurst	8m x 5m (est)	40msq
New community Hall – ground floor		
Main Hall – all	17.25m x 11m	190msq
Main hall 1	10.4m x 11m	114msq
Main hall 2	6.8m x 11m	76msq
Stage area	4.9m x 9.3m	46msq
First floor rooms		

Studio	10m x 7.83m	78msq
Meeting room	5.5m x 6.2m	34.1msq
Archive Room	5m X 7.5m	49msq

We will update this when we have the final design – and will have an accommodation schedule –for further detail.

34. Will there be direct access to the children’s play area?

The play area will be accessible from the KGV. We have consulted with local children and working with HCT 2018 on the design.

35. Will the existing access be retained and is it large enough?

Yes, we aim to use the same access but increase the width and add a separate pedestrian access. We are consulting with KCC Highways and will follow their recommendations.

36. Why is the roof slate and the weatherboard vertical?

We will consider in the refined design.

37. Have other positions for the car park been considered?

Yes, this seemed the most effective use of the space.

38. Appears to be ‘all things to all people’ – have separate sites been considered?

Yes, and this option is considered the most appropriate and cost effective long term option.

Operational

39. How much will it cost to hire the facilities?

The current room hire cost of the Copt Hall and Sports Pavilion are relative low and reflect the facilities. The pricing structure we are considering is a mix of: peak and off peak rates plus concessions for local community groups and discount for regular users. This will be developed in the business plan as the designs are being finalised.

40. Who do you think will use it? Who is it for?

We want it to be a real community resource, for everyone in Hawkhurst to use such as; Hawkhurst Football Club, Children’s Parties, Youth Club, activities such as Pilates, Yoga, Short Mat Bowls, Table Tennis and Film Club etc

41. When is HCT 2018's AGM?

Their AGM's take place in autumn each year, their first took place on 5th September 2019. Visit their website for details.

42. Will there be enough demand?

Based upon current studies yes. We are working with HCT 2018 to develop the Business Plan as the design evolves. This project has generated interest from emerging groups interested in using it. Local villages such as Benenden and Headcorn have similar facilities that are well used.

43. Will the new facility be let out on a fair commercial basis?

This is an integral part of the business plan as we need to ensure that local people and groups can afford to use it but we cover the operating costs. Overall the community centre will need to cover its operating costs and any surplus will go back into the operation of the facility.

44. How will the café area be used and how many covers will it have? What will happen to football teas / coffees?

At the moment in the region of 30 covers (seats). The aim is the Café will be open when the centre is busy but local groups / clubs could still make their own teas and coffees.

45. Will the community centre have an alcohol licence?

Yes, the aim is that the community centre will be licenced, we are liaising with the TWBC Licencing Committee on specific details.

46. What will the normal weekly use be like and what input will the specific user groups have?

The draft design is based on input from user groups, we have a specific meeting for user groups, potential user groups during the consultation process so they have another opportunity to put forward their views.

47. Will direct access to the balcony be permitted?

At the moment access is from the first floor rooms only.

48. Will there be dirty foot traffic in the community centre?

All community facilities need regular cleaning and the aim is that the outside activities will use the outdoor changing rooms.

General

49. If there is the possibility of more developer funding, will it change the Parish Council approach to development applications?

No. As a consultee the Parish Council considers each planning application on merit. For instance, we opposed the Golf Course application. For all large applications we request Developer Contributions in case they are approved or win on appeal.

50. How is developer funding/ S106 funding allocated?

Developer funding / Section 106 is a complicated process and is a legal agreement between the developer and the planning authority TWBC see www.hawkhurst-pc.gov.uk for summary paper.

51. Will the Copt Hall site be used as access to the neighbouring planning application site known as Westfield?

No.

52. What are the proposals for the new medical centre and has the KGV playing been considered?

The Health Authorities and GP Practices' were approached some time ago but they ruled out a joint project with a community centre. It was then briefly considered again in late 2020 but the Health Authorities preference is for the Fowler Park site – currently in the draft Local Plan from TWBC.

Next Steps

53. When will it be built?

COVID 19 has delayed the progress of the project, but we are aiming for the following –

- Consultation Jan – 1st March 2020
- Design – during 2020
- Submit planning permission spring 2021
- Permissions by autumn 2021
- Village Poll early 2022
- Tender 2022
- Building commence in late 2022 early 2023

54. How can I get involved?

There are several ways you can get involved;

- become a “Friend” of HCT 2018 who will be doing a series of events and projects during the year
- make a donation of time / money to HCT 2018
- you could consider a “legacy” towards the project

**We will add to this list of questions and answers
as they are asked.**