

Bradfield Village Hall Proposals  
for  
New Community Facilities  
for Bradfield



# Impact Statement



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**Bradfield Village Hall Trustees**  
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## IMPACT STATEMENT

Much effort has been put into meeting the comments of the Planning Department and other commentators, whilst maintaining the aims and objectives at the heart of the project.

The revised plans have reduced the amount of construction on the village hall site. Our proposals will provide a new village hall with suitable accommodation now and into the future, a landscaped car park and considerably improved leisure facilities in the Multi-Use Games Area [MUGA] and playground.

The Management Committee has strived to ensure the proposals will provide a welcoming, safer, uncluttered site with open views, more attractive and more fitting for an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty than that currently.

### 1 Changes to original plans made to obtain Planning

- The housing element which would have helped to fund the project has been removed. An alternative method of funding will now be found and at the same time, cheaper forms of construction are actively being investigated.
- A garden has been added in the area formerly proposed for enabling housing.
- The shape of the roof of the proposed Village Hall has been changed in order to reduce the height.
- The Hall building has been moved an additional 1.5 m away from the New Way houses. The lower part of the building will be 23 m from the houses, the higher part will be 34.8 m. The width of the footpath from the field to the road, between the shop and the car park, has been increased.
- The MUGA has been increased to the size required by Sport England, which is identical to the current court. A footpath along the Bird Rock boundary has been added to give safe access to the field from Cock Lane side of Southend Road.

### 2 Site Layout and Design

Much of the new design has been led by the comments of West Berkshire Planning and Highway Officers. Car parking needs to be in front of the hall, but not adjacent to the front hedge in the area of the current playground. The MUGA has been located in a position to reduce its impact on neighbours and to maintain views through the site.

### 3 The Position of the Hall

By moving the building 1.5 m across the site, it has the effect of improving the view from the New Way houses as the roof will appear lower. Furthermore, it will only be visible to those residents from their upstairs windows, because of the fencing, sheds, a large oak tree and dense hedges in front of those houses. If necessary, this barrier could be thickened.

The vehicular access into the field to the rear will be highly restricted by lockable bollards, thus satisfying the Planners' requirement to keep all parking in front of the hall. The Planners also emphasised their desire to keep the street scene as near to the current scene as possible, hence the plan to keep the current playground area as a garden rather than to bring the car park and MUGA further forward on the site.

### 4 The Size of the Hall

#### 4.1 The Findings of the Feasibility Study

The feasibility study showed the need for two halls that could be hired out separately or simultaneously. The proposed main hall is modestly larger than the current hall. Both can be isolated with its own facilities, a particularly important requirement for accommodating children. Also required are much improved toilets to Council standards and catering facilities, as well as a committee room for small, ad hoc meetings. The latter was specifically requested by the Parish Council to enable them to hold Surgeries. There also needs to be much more storage, a particular problem currently and the one issue highlighted by all other village halls consulted. The overall size of the proposed hall is driven by the need to meet these various requirements.

#### 4.2 Concerns about the size of the Main Hall

it was felt essential to maintain the ability to play Badminton in the new building, albeit on the social level, for example by Sunshine Club, a youth club or as part of leisure exercise for older people playing for fun. The size is as recommended by Sports England and is a requirement of Sport England agreeing to the use of a small portion of the field, that we can accommodate badminton and encourage more physical activity in the community. A shower is included in the plans for the benefit of those partaking in exercise.

## 5 Neighbouring Amenity

The existing village hall site has a frontage of some 72 m along Southend Road and in terms of the hall, the proposal endeavours to set it in a location which minimises any impact it has on neighbouring properties, whilst, at the same time, limiting the amount of green space taken. There is currently a thick hedge between the houses in New Way and the field. Any new hall should have no more impact on neighbouring properties than currently.

Furthermore, the existing good tree screening between the field and the back gardens of the houses in Cock Lane will significantly reduce the views of the MUGA. In addition, the lights will be controlled by timers, set to switch off at a reasonable time and will be much more directional than the current very old ones, [although the use of even these has not prompted any complaints], to minimise annoyance to neighbours.

The new Hall will be much better insulated for sound. There will be noise restrictors to prevent excessive noise from the Hall and the hours the Hall will be open will be restricted as now, so the site will have to be cleared and silent by midnight. In practice, most bookings are finished by 10pm and the security gates locked every night soon after.

## 6 The Use of Green Space

As much as possible, the incursion into the current field has been minimised. Building a larger facility and increasing the parking, whilst maintaining the rural aspect of the site, inevitably leads to a modest loss of green space. However, the garden proposed at the front of the site, together with the removal of the current shed, dilapidated garages and fuel tank [adjacent to the oak tree fronting 14 New Way] will mitigate against some of that loss. The removal of the latter will reclaim over 100 sq. m. The area of the proposed garden is 887.4 sq m.

The area which will be built on is not currently used for formal recreation and is often used now for overflow car parking. The two football goals will remain in place as there will be significant space between the back of the new hall and the first post. Moving the play equipment on the field will mean a far safer space for the children to play.

## 7 The Garden

The garden will be located on the site of the current playground. It will be planted with trees and shrubs. There will be a footpath along the boundary with Bird Rock to allow pedestrian access to the Hall and leisure facilities. At the entry to the garden from the southwest, there will be a 'grasscrete' strip to allow for additional overflow parking on exceptional occasions. It is also hoped that some form of art work could be placed in the garden to provide the village with a focal point. The 2 metre high hedge fronting Southend Road will be moved back by 0.5 m to widen the pavement as required by the Highways department.

## 8 Street Scene

The car park is a vital aspect of the proposed new facilities. The proposed layout provides safe access and exit for its myriad users, parking for the hall, shop, playground, field and court, as well as for the school pickup and walkers. There will be trees and planting to break up the hard surfaces. A grassed area [where the existing playground is now] will preserve the street scene and soften the view through the site. The adjacent car parking will be screened with low hedging.

## 9 Cost

It has always been the intention to get value for money on any new construction, whilst at the same time not finishing with a second rate building and facilities. Lower cost building methods have been investigated and will be used where suitable. The project comprises five elements – the Hall, playground, MUGA, garden and car park, along with landscaping the finished work. It may be necessary to phase the project, tackling one element at a time.

## 10 Support

This project was driven by the response in the Parish Plan that 63% of the Bradfield residents who took part in that exercise wanted a new village hall. Since then, many residents and users of the Hall and its facilities have been prepared to give considerable support in both time and money to work with the Management Committee to draw up these proposals. Every public meeting has received majority support, as did a questionnaire delivered throughout the parish. The Committee is aware that some locals have expressed concern about their suggestions, although there now seems strong support for the idea of a new build. All comments were considered, which has added significantly to the time taken in re-submitting this application. However, as in all discussions, not all opinions can be adopted and much effort has been put in to drawing up practical proposals which will give the maximum benefit to the most people.



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