

## Hyde Memorial Hall Research Results – summary of findings

### Introduction

Hyde War Memorial Hall Trustees have been considering ways of improving the hall to ensure that:

- it meets the needs of the whole community
- new users are encouraged to use the hall
- existing users continue to use the hall and increase their use in the future.

To this end a Working Group was established in August 2022 with a remit of understanding what the community thinks of the hall and what changes they would like to be made.

Two types of research were carried out during October 2022:

1. Face to face or telephone interviews with the main hirers and stakeholders of the hall. These used an open ended questionnaire so that users could express their own views to topics without the restraint of tick boxes. 13 of these depth interviews were carried out and the detailed results are included in Appendix 1 to this summary of findings. Hirer views are key to the success of the hall because they represent the vast majority of income received each year.
2. Short questionnaires were completed by users of the hall as they visited for an event and were also sent to non users through email. This questionnaire was more structured but also maintained an element of open ended questions to make sure views were not constrained. 41 questionnaires were returned and the results are included in Appendix 2 to this summary of findings.

### What people think of the Village Hall today

There is significant satisfaction with the Village Hall across both types of research. Location, parking, hall size, facilities and value for money are all reasons for choosing the hall as a venue by hirers. In addition they like the space, light, warmth, cleanliness and outlook. It is a convenient location both for local residents and from those outside the parish including Fordingbridge.

All those completing a questionnaire were happy with the hall as a facility for the local community, with 74% very happy. Over half of responses mentioned parking, location, cleanliness, easy access, size of rooms, welcoming environment and the kitchen facilities. However, less than half mentioned satisfaction with toilets, value for money, decoration and WiFi/technology and only one in four mentioned that the hall is “suitable for use by all including those with disabilities”.

### What could be improved at the hall

The depth interviews with hall hirers revealed a **key consistent theme of improved access and inclusivity required at the hall**. This was strongest among Link Lunch users, the NHS, Brownie Groups and the Parish Council but was supported by all other hirers too. The accessibility requirement focuses on 2 areas – being able to get safely into the hall from the car park and having access to suitable toilet facilities when inside the hall.

“Improve the flat access”

“Steps are steep for those with limited mobility”

“Gravel is difficult for those with wheelchairs so a concrete apron for unloading in the car park would be useful”

“Accessible toilet is not fit for purpose”

The top three questionnaire responses in relation to improvements at the hall show that 55% would like to see the toilets improved, 30% would like the hall to be suitable for all including those with disabilities and 15% to have easier access to the hall. Other suggested improvements to be considered for the future include sound and projection facilities, solar panels, and a flexible stage arrangement to allow for more space in the hall when the stage is not needed.

There is also a second theme of **warmth** from hall hirers, both in terms of temperature and the feel of the space. Other mentions include the need for a projector, more storage and some green suggestions.

### **Support for proposal to upgrade the toilet facilities to include a larger, more accessible disabled toilet and shower.**

All hall hirers bar one, who expressed no opinion, support the proposal to upgrade the toilet facilities in relation to the disabled toilet. The idea of one larger toilet which could be multi-functional including shower/wet room, baby changing facilities and space for people to get changed for fitness classes was welcomed.

“Good idea. Wet room would be good for some situations”

“Yes, I think this is important and yes, the shower would be brilliant”

“Baby changing area”

“Good idea, very sensible. Could be more welcoming. Provide somewhere to change. Access not a problem for my fitness group but makes sense for wider use”

Although hirers suggest the priority is for upgrade of the disabled toilet there is also support for all toilets to be improved:

“Yes, very important. First impression 5/10, space not well used. Start from scratch, don’t just refit what is there. Go upmarket, consider unisex”

“Completely agree. The toilets need upgrading. The children are scared to use the toilets because they are so dark...”

Questionnaire responses show 93% of respondents think it is important to upgrade the disabled toilet facilities with 65% of respondents saying it is very important.

### **The role of the hall in the local community**

All hall hirers interviewed agreed that the hall is an important facility for the community

“Yes! Absolutely vital. It is the hall which makes the Parish a community.....The hall is the beating heart of the community...”

“Yes, good size and location. Central for village events”

“Yes, most families with young children use it over the years as families grow up”

Both types of research have given some ideas for future activities and events for the hall to consider in the future. These include more drop-in events like coffee mornings, speaker events, using the hall as a warm centre this winter, hiring the hall for training weekends for keep fit teachers, and promoting the hall to other brownie/scout groups for hire in the school holidays.

Everyone agree that they would recommend the hall to other users:

“Yes, best hall in the area compared to many others. Good hall, people are proud of it, provides identity, links villages”

“Yes, it is a lovely hall and well equipped”

“All told an excellent facility. So much better than many community halls”

### **Conclusions:**

The hall is a well liked facility which serves most of the community well.

A key area for improvement has been identified by the research as accessibility for those with disabilities both internally and externally. By improving this accessibility, and including things such as baby changing and a shower within the overall development, the hall will be able to offer more inclusive events and services both within the community and those who want to visit the area because of its unique location within the New Forest. The working group should pursue how to achieve this development as an immediate priority for the improvement of the hall.

Many other suggestions for the hall have also been provided which the Hall Trustees are urged to consider and plan for in both short, medium and longer term. These are listed in full in Appendix 3 of this report along with a grid that the hall can use to decide priorities.

Lyndsey Whitehead

Working Group member

17<sup>th</sup> November 2022

## **Appendix 1: Hyde Hall Interviews with key users – Face to Face or telephone**

12 depth interviews were carried out by the working group, some with multiple participants, during October 2022. The interviews were with key users and hirers of the hall including fitness class leaders, the school and HSFA, the church, Link Lunch users, dog training leader, art class leader, brownie pack holiday leader and a recent hirer for an exhibition and first aid course. This represents over 90% of regular hall hirers/users this year. An open-ended questionnaire was used which allowed the respondents to express issues that are important to them rather than being constrained by tick boxes.

The following is a summary of the response received by topic.

### **Why did you choose the hall for your event/activity?**

Location, size, availability, value for money, facilities and parking were all mentioned by participants. The school uses the hall because of a lack of their own facility.

### **What do you like about using the hall?**

Space, light, warmth, location and ease of use, parking, cleanliness and outlook were all mentioned by participants. The school mentioned how safe it is to get pupils into the hall, WiFi and storage of PE equipment. Non regular hirers of the hall mentioned the kitchen facilities, outsider space and ambience of the hall. Brownies also appreciate the safety, security and facilities. Users of the hall mentioned the hall is well looked after with clear, open space and lovely gardens/flowers. It is a convenient location for locals those from surrounding villages and Fordingbridge. Link Lunch organisers value the kitchen facilities, decoration and light. The NHS hirer appreciates the chairs, space and clear access. The Parish Council like the ability to use the small meeting room for meetings.

### **What could be improved in the hall?**

A consistent theme of improved access and inclusivity at the hall emerged from interviews in particular with Link Lunch users, NHS users, Brownies and the Parish Council. See comments below:

- Improve the flat access.
- Make the step over the patio doors level.
- Ability to get from the car without walking on gravel.
- Steps are steep for those with limited mobility
- Handrail does not go all the way down
- No disabled parking
- Accessible toilet not fit for purpose
- The toilets (spontaneous response from wheelchair user)
- Gravel is difficult for wheelchairs so a concrete apron for unloading in car park would be useful
- Difficult to get onto stage – no hand holds or steps
- Stage access (but recognise not used that much)

- Facilities for the disabled including having a proper toilet facility for the disabled with enough space and a table for e.g. somebody with a stoma bag
- Outside space – too much gravel around level access
- Too far to walk from main door to level access for some clients, maybe consider having split stairs and a ramp at the front
- Loose patio slab

Another theme is warmth both in terms of temperature and the feeling of the space:

- The front of the stage is looking tired
- Toilets are functional and basic
- Kitchen is OK but they have been somewhere else where it has been upgraded and felt more welcoming and less cold and functional
- Appreciate warmth but realise energy costs are rising (fitness class leader)
- Appreciate warmth (fitness class leader)

Other mentions include toilets and storage:

- Toilets OK (5/10) but could be better
- Loos – get rid of the wooden seats
- Storage space
- Storage space where chairs and tables go is difficult to access
- Stage is too shallow for demonstrations in exercise class
- Size of car park for busy events
- Maybe try to get a larger outside area for outside activities
- Patio furniture
- A projector on stage to show videos
- Boards in the small meeting room for putting up plans/charts
- A bin
- Labelling the electric switches or having a visible plan for the switches
- Remove the stage to make a bigger, more flexible space with a temporary stage instead
- Box of toys for children to use
- Put in solar panels which can be used off-grid
- A shed for Frogham Fair
- Clear gutters more often in the autumn

**The hall is considering upgrading the toilet facilities including a larger, more accessible, disabled toilet. Is this something that you think is important? Why? What needs to be included in this upgrade? Would a shower be useful?**

The suggestion to upgrade the disabled toilet was met positively by all respondents bar one who had no opinion. The majority of users also wanted an improvement of all the toilet facilities in the hall. Most key users of the hall thought a shower would be a useful addition.

- Good idea, very sensible. Could be more welcoming. Provide somewhere for people to change. Access not a problem for my fitness group but makes sense for wider use.
- Good idea. Wet room would be good for some situations. Access to current disabled loo is difficult especially if the meeting room is in use. (NHS)
- Yes, I think this is important and yes, the shower would be brilliant. One shower would certainly help with the brownie pack. The young brownies that would use it in one at a time very quickly, and then the guides and adults would use it taking a bit longer afterwards
- Yes, very important. First impression 5/10, space not well used. Start from scratch, don't just refit what is there. Go upmarket, consider unisex. (Church)
- Yes, important for disabled users. Most don't use the disabled toilet and wouldn't unless they really had to. If they thought that they would need it, it might put them off coming to the hall. (Link)
- The Hall is designated as a safe place in the village emergency plan so disabled toilets and a shower would be useful (Parish Council)
- A shower could be useful (Link)
- Baby changing area (Link)
- Good idea to change the disabled toilet (Link)
- Getting to the toilet is bad at the moment, access is not good enough. Should be able to and use the toilet without assistance (Link)
- Need toilets that are not spring loaded so that you can open the disabled door more easily (Link)
- Handrails in one of the ladies toilets would be appreciated (Link)
- Have never been in/looked in the current disabled toilet but it would make sense to make it more accessible (keep fit)
- Haven't an issue with facilities but it would make sense to improve if not accessible (keep fit)
- Good idea. Showers perhaps a needless expense. Disabled loo needs more room (art)
- Perfect idea re disabled toilets. Quite happy with toilets as they are at the moment, not put off using the hall because of them. Child size toilets not needed. Shower is a good idea, would make it more multi-functional, plus good for young children who have an accident (HSFA)
- Completely agree. The toilets need upgrading. The children are scared to use the toilets because they are so dark – could motion sensor lights be installed so they come on automatically? Maybe one lower sink and hand drying facilities if space (School)
- Ladies loo doors are stiff and difficult to open (Link)
- More modern pans and easier hand washing in ladies (Link)
- Loos are cold, heating needs to be improved (Link)
- Finding the light switch in the toilets is difficult (Link)
- Current loos are functional and old fashioned e.g. gaps under and over doors (Church)
- Shower – a complete waste of time and space (Church)
- Yes to disabled toilet and shower. Makes complete sense. Not necessary to upgrade the other toilets, they are fit for purpose (recent ad hoc hirer)
- Not relevant to this user (dog training)

- Yes, its size makes it a key feature for any large scale meeting in the Parish

**Are there any barriers or difficulties in using the hall e.g. for those with disabilities or younger children/older people?**

Most people interviewed felt that their response to this question had already been answered in the previous 2 questions. 5 said no but with some qualification that people help each other, that the younger children use the Church Rooms so not a problem for Hyde Village Hall and that someone with a mobility scooter does not have problems.

The main comments were around disabled access including the toilets and needing an external level access area. Others were concerned about the steps and lack of a handrail all the way down.

**Is the hall an important facility for the community? How?**

Everybody interviewed agreed that the hall is an important facility for the community.

- Yes,. Good size and location. Central for village events
- Absolutely yes and great that so many people use it
- Absolutely yes, plenty of activities
- Yes! Absolutely vital. It is the hall which makes the parish a community. The village is a collection of spread out hamlets. The hall is the beating heart of the community – publicity through Neighbourhood Watch helps enormously
- Yes, most locals with young children use it over the years as families grow up
- Yes and as it is in the New Forest it is important for the wider community
- Yes. Location for classes, AGMs, meetings, parish meetings, local campaigns, Syria collections, Cancer Research UK, Fundraising for teenagers
- Yes and great that so many people use it

**How could the hall improve its role in the local community e.g. different types of events, encouraging different users of the hall?**

7 respondents could offer no suggestions with caveats that they thought there was plenty already, that you can only offer so much because of volunteers required and that if Link Lunches were held more often then attendance would drop.

Suggestions were:

- Possibly more drop-in events like this coffee morning
- More community events open to everyone.
- Maybe need to promote to local parents more successfully – often don't hear about them until they are over
- Badminton and fencing

- The hall could improve its role by making it more available to groups like brownies, scouts et cetera
- Could be hired out for “training weekends” e.g. Pilates teachers. But would need better screen/projection facility.
- Toy swaps

**Would you recommend the hall to others? Why/why not?**

Everyone agreed that they would recommend the hall to other users. Some very positive endorsements were received:

- Yes, for reasons stated above. I currently teach in other venues but this is the best (keep fit)
- Yes, best hall in the area compared to many others. Good hall, people are proud of it, provides identity, links villages (Church)
- Yes, lovely hall with good facilities. Similar to Damerham in terms of events and facilities.
- Yes, good facilities and accessible ie booking, getting in and out, look and feel (keep fit)
- Yes, my daughter also loves the hall. Can't think of anything else (other than disabled toilets) that need changing
- Yes, it is a lovely hall and well equipped
- Yes am recommending friends in Ringwood to consider it
- Yes have already done so. Good location, room for 22 to stay and well equipped kitchen. Need collection of rubbish though. (Brownies)



## Appendix 2 : Hyde Hall Short Questionnaire Results October 2022

Questionnaires were left in the lobby of the hall for visitors/users of the hall to complete during October 2022. In addition a questionnaire was put on the Village Hall website and links sent to residents through Neighbourhood Watch, a local informal newsletter (the BV) as well as Moviola users.

Number of questionnaires received = 41

### Q1. How often do you use the hall?

|                     | Number | % excluding not stated |
|---------------------|--------|------------------------|
| Once a week or more | 13     | 33%                    |
| Once a month        | 16     | 33%                    |
| Once every 3 months | 7      | 18%                    |
| Once a year         | 4      | 10%                    |
| Never               | 0      | 0%                     |
| Not stated          | 1      |                        |

### Q2 Which of the following do you use the Hall for (tick all that apply)?

|                       | Number | % excluding not stated |
|-----------------------|--------|------------------------|
| Entertainment events  | 23     | 58%                    |
| Coffee mornings       | 17     | 43%                    |
| Moviola               | 17     | 43%                    |
| Keep fit/Yoga/Pilates | 13     | 33%                    |
| Private functions     | 7      | 18%                    |
| Link Lunches          | 5      | 13%                    |
| Art                   | 2      | 5%                     |
| Dog training          | 0      | 0%                     |
| Other*                | 9      | 23%                    |
| Not stated            | 1      |                        |

\*Other uses mentioned are Frogham Fair/HCP/committee meetings, Brownie Pack holidays, annual exhibition, book swap, church plant sale, voting, book of condolence, community worship, village meetings

### Q3 How happy are you with the Village Hall as a facility for the local community?

|                  | Number | % excluding not stated |
|------------------|--------|------------------------|
| Very happy       | 29     | 74%                    |
| Fairly happy     | 10     | 26%                    |
| Not very happy   | 0      | 0%                     |
| Not at all happy | 0      | 0%                     |
| No opinion       | 0      | 0%                     |
| Not stated       | 2      |                        |

**Q4 What do you like about the Hall (tick all that apply)?**

|   | Number | % excluding not stated |
|---|--------|------------------------|
| Car parking   | 35     | 92%                    |
| Good location   | 30     | 79%                    |
| Cleanliness   | 25     | 66%                    |
| Easy access   | 24     | 63%                    |
| Size of rooms   | 24     | 63%                    |
| Welcoming environment e.g. light and warm                 | 21     | 55%                    |
| Kitchen facilities  | 21     | 55%                    |
| Toilets   | 17     | 45%                    |
| Value for money   | 17     | 45%                    |
| Decoration  | 16     | 42%                    |
| WiFi/technology   | 11     | 29%                    |
| Suitable for use by all including those with disabilities | 9      | 24%                    |
| Other*  | 6      | 16%                    |
| Not stated  | 3      |                        |

\*Other likes are light and airy; friendly team supporting the hall; the hall mission in the community; the option to use the outdoor space; the option to open the fire doors in the main hall for ventilation; connection to the outside; the millennium board with illustration of all local houses is wonderful – a real talking point for many visitors; community events; the hall management team are very helpful and friendly, issues are dealt with promptly; attractive building and setting.

**Q5 What would you like to see improved at the hall (tick all that apply)?**

|   | Number | % excluding not stated |
|---|--------|------------------------|
| Toilets   | 15     | 55%                    |
| Suitable for use by all including those with disabilities | 8      | 30%                    |
| Easy access   | 4      | 15%                    |
| Decoration  | 3      | 11%                    |
| WiFi/technology   | 3      | 11%                    |
| Cleanliness   | 0      | 0%                     |
| Value for money   | 0      | 0%                     |
| Other*  | 10     | 37%                    |
| Not stated  | 14     |                        |

\*Other improvements mentioned are disabled toilets/showering for brownie pack holidays, perhaps a wet room in the disabled toilet including a shower; toilets for disabled and small boys loo in the gents; terrace in need of repair; heating; sound; sound quality for moviola; community printer; projector; electric charging point for cars; more space for Frogham Fair storage; day rate hire; mugs rather heavy if one has trouble lifting.

**Q6 The Hall trustees are considering upgrading the toilet facilities at the hall to include a larger and more accessible disabled toilet. How important do you think this is?**

|                      | Number | % excluding not stated |
|----------------------|--------|------------------------|
| Very important       | 26     | 65%                    |
| Quite important      | 11     | 28%                    |
| Not very important   | 2      | 5%                     |
| Not at all important | 0      | 0%                     |
| No opinion           | 2      | 5%                     |
| Not stated           | 1      |                        |

**Q7 What other improvements would you specifically like the hall trustees to consider for the future? NB Responses are colour coded by topic**

- Accessibility for all e.g. slopes to get in rather than steps
- Extend handrail beside steps
- Steps – rail both sides up to the hall
- The biggest improvement would be a clear smooth access for wheelchairs, walkers and those who require a walking stick
- Improve heater in gents toilets
- Some warmth in the toilets
- The toilets are clean but drier is always cold as is the water
- There are never any paper towels in the toilets
- New and easy loo roll holders
- Sound
- Sound baffles
- Projection facilities
- Projector/av equipment
- Solar panels and option to run “off-grid”
- Solar panels to provide local energy source
- Electric charging point
- Badminton court markings
- Badminton court mark up
- Flexible stage to allow greater floor space
- Remove stage – make more floor space – have temporary staging instead
- Nothing
- I think it is fine
- It is one of the best village halls I have seen

**Q8 What other activities and events would you like the hall trustees to consider for the future?**

- allow overlap between pilates and use of Barton Room
- wine tasting, kids moviola or equivalent, more family events, casino night, card clubs
- more music events
- warm centre
- an available warm space during this winter, perhaps with coffee facilities, Love a dance, Visiting speakers on a variety of topics
- Speaker events - "An evening with...." interesting local people/celebs, sports such as badminton/table tennis, live music/shows/small theatre events e.g. the improvisation show from a few years ago, Xmas carols
- plant sales
- pop up pub night
- perhaps have featured local artists with art for sale to cheer up the hall
- more of the occasional photography, art exhibitions. Maybe some talks on local geography, history, locations by those in the know. Community meetings to discuss important local events and relevant info.
- Parish Council meetings
- Broader variation in classes. Pilates is wonderful but over-represented to the exclusion of other classes being able to book in slots.
- Happy with what goes

**Q9 Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the hall?**

- it is good to see the hall is well used every day. Well done to everyone involved with the Hall for making it such a success
- We have loved staying at the hall, it's a great location and very modern and well equipped hall. The two things we would find easier whilst staying with the brownies for a week there would be showering facilities/ waste disposal facilities.
- car park surface isn't great for wheelchairs, Barton Room not usable when pilates in progress is constraining
- very satisfied as it is
- great asset
- The fridge/freezer is permanently on but almost permanently empty. Seems wasteful re energy and CO2. Probably not easy to work around this but worth thinking about? Thank you. It's a superb local facility, we are very lucky to have it and the team of people who manage/look after it
- all told an excellent facility. So much better than many community halls
- thank you, it's a great facility
- It is a credit to those who run, use, look after and maintain it. Have always found it clean and tidy whatever the occasion or weather.
- Thank you

**Appendix 3 Suggestions for Improvement other than accessibility/toilets for the Hall Trustees to consider**

| Suggestion   | Trustee comments | Yes/No | Short term (0-6 months) | Medium term (6 months to 2 years) | Longer term (2+ years) |
|--|------------------|--------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|
| Front of stage looks tired                             |                  |        |                         |                                   |                        |
| Kitchen feels cold and functional                      |                  |        |                         |                                   |                        |
| Improve warmth of the environment                      |                  |        |                         |                                   |                        |
| Improve storage space                                  |                  |        |                         |                                   |                        |
| Access to space with chairs and tables is difficult    |                  |        |                         |                                   |                        |
| Shed for Frogham Fair                                  |                  |        |                         |                                   |                        |
| Stage is too shallow – flexible stage required         |                  |        |                         |                                   |                        |
| Size of car parks for busy events                      |                  |        |                         |                                   |                        |
| Larger outside area for outdoor activities             |                  |        |                         |                                   |                        |
| Projector  |                  |        |                         |                                   |                        |
| Patio furniture  |                  |        |                         |                                   |                        |
| Community printer                                      |                  |        |                         |                                   |                        |
| Sound baffles  |                  |        |                         |                                   |                        |
| A board in Barton Room for displaying plans etc        |                  |        |                         |                                   |                        |
| A bin  |                  |        |                         |                                   |                        |
| Lighter mugs   |                  |        |                         |                                   |                        |
| Labelling electric switches or having a plan for users |                  |        |                         |                                   |                        |
| Box of toys for children to use                        |                  |        |                         |                                   |                        |
| Solar panels which can be used off-grid                |                  |        |                         |                                   |                        |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Electric charging point                              |  |  |  |  |  |
| Clear gutters more often                             |  |  |  |  |  |
| Badminton court markings                             |  |  |  |  |  |
| Allow overlap between pilates and use of Barton Room |  |  |  |  |  |
| Use the hall as a warm centre                        |  |  |  |  |  |
| Don't keep fridge/freezer on all the time            |  |  |  |  |  |
| Day hire rates                                       |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Wine tasting   |  |  |  |  |  |
| Kids moviola   |  |  |  |  |  |
| Family events  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Casino night   |  |  |  |  |  |
| Card clubs   |  |  |  |  |  |
| Dances   |  |  |  |  |  |
| Visiting speakers                                    |  |  |  |  |  |
| Badminton/table tennis/fencing                       |  |  |  |  |  |
| Plant sales  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Pop up pub night                                     |  |  |  |  |  |
| Feature local artists with art for sale              |  |  |  |  |  |
| Photography/art exhibitions                          |  |  |  |  |  |
| More drop-in events                                  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Promote more to local parents                        |  |  |  |  |  |
| Toy swaps  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Promote to brownies/scouts for overnight hire        |  |  |  |  |  |
| Training weekends for keep fit instructors           |  |  |  |  |  |