

Marcham Community Facility

Feedback on draft plans



Users Forum in Marcham School hall 29 February 2012

A report to Anson Trust and Taylor Wimpey Oxfordshire

**Marcham Community Group
10 March 2012**

Community facility - Feedback on draft plans

Summary

It was clear at a preview of the Consultation Event exhibition put on by Taylor Wimpey Oxfordshire (TWO) on 2 and 4 February that the layout they were then proposing for the community hall would need reworking. TWO accepted MCG's offer to facilitate the consultation on a revised plan and agreed to participate in a Users Forum that MCG would arrange. On 22 February TWO provided multiple copies of three alternative layout plans for distribution to local organisations. The consultation period ended on 10 March.

MCG has consulted with a number of user groups in Marcham to understand whether the new plans showed a facility that they could use for their activities:

- participants at a long-planned MCG Open Meeting on 23 February
- the Users Forum at Marcham School on 29 February
- separate meetings with people unable to attend the Users Forum

We have also had a meeting with Lyne Newin, Community Buildings Adviser, ORCC.

This report summarises feedback collected by MCG over the short time since the revised plans became available. It is aimed at enabling the Anson Trust and TWO to finalise plans (for an application for planning consent) in order to meet, as far as is practicable, expressed community needs in Marcham.

Principal concerns raised:

- Storage space – external and internal - needs to be increased
- Conflicts between drama and sports use at back of stage area
- Lack of youth provision
- Foyer area does not make best use of available space and could still be an effective social space even if reduced in scale.
- Management of noise/disturbance between adjacent activities.
- Area behind the bar(s) is larger than needed and encroaches too much into adjacent spaces – lounge and foyer. Alcohol/cold stores need to be larger.
- If we can never afford a lift, we need to provide all public space on ground floor and use upper floor for non-public access/storage only.

This report provides:

1. Feedback from User Groups at and after the meeting on 29 February, mostly specific to the activities that they envisage holding in a new facility;
2. General comments raised about the proposed plans;
3. Notes of a meeting with Lynne Newin, Community Buildings Adviser (ORCC), held on 4 March 2012 to review the 'Compromise' plan;
4. Proposals from MCG which address several of the more significant concerns raised in the feedback.

If these concerns are appropriately addressed in the final plans (but not otherwise) the MCG committee would feel it could report back to the membership that it considered the facility design meets the needs expressed by the community for full community use.

1 Feedback from User Groups

The following notes summarise feedback from the User Groups that attended the Users' Forum on 29 Feb 2012 at Marcham School. The groups reviewed three plans – DHA1, GP1 and COMP (a compromise between DHA1 and GP1).



Users Forum in Marcham School hall 29 February 2012

Marcham Society

- Would probably use large hall – some meetings could be in small hall, provided that there are projection/sound facilities available there too.
- Like the open social area in the foyer
- Concern about disturbance from users of bar/kitchen area on plan DHA1
- Will sound-proofing measures be installed?
- Drop-down screen in main hall for Powerpoint presentations
- Storage of display panels for village exhibitions
- Display cabinets for historical artefacts – the foyer/open area would provide useful exhibition space.
- Will storage area be sufficient for chairs and tables?

Village archives – upstairs area would be ideal

- Archiving needs identified for Marcham Society and also Parish Council, PTA, PCC.
- Needs secure storage – lockable cupboards/cabinets
- Lockable work room/research area
- A hoist arrangement, perhaps in the stairwell, would assist in moving small but heavy items to the upper floor.

Marcham PCC

- Likes big hall with kitchen next to it for big meetings.

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- Likes big hall with kitchen next to it for big meetings.
- Will car parking be adequate for large meetings?
- Make provision for parking a few coaches – e.g. grasscrete off one end of the car park to give flexibility.

Abingdon Operatic Society (unofficial comment from a member)

- Proposed hall much better than Unicorn Theatre that AOS uses.
- Conflict when changing rooms needed for sport and for stage performances.
- Has been in a hall with a moveable partition that was useless as it didn't cut out sound.

Village Café (mid-week 2/3-course lunch for 50-70 people)

- Would use main hall because of capacity needs and position of kitchen (comp plan). Size of kitchen and proximity to hall are important practical factors.
- Need an easy way to take out tables and chairs and put them back.

Pilates, keep-fit

- Small hall (as shown on COMP) would be suitable if the floor is sprung

Marcham Players

- Productions need a fixed 5m stage (with a demountable extension for larger productions – but needs storage space for demountable (could be outside lock-up) and audience size is more limited). Note: the Institute stage was 3.4m deep and had two stage doors, so did not need space to cross at the back of the stage; this would be required in a stage configuration as shown on the COMP plan.
- With a 5m stage, the double doors from the hall into the storage area need to be moved westwards to clear the stage.
- When there is a sports match on, the shower/changing area behind the stage is totally unusable and is, in fact, locked off.
- Although most productions would take place in the autumn/winter months so that evenings shouldn't clash with sports, setting-up and rehearsals often take place during the day, especially at the weekends. The “chair store” (the only other

space on stage side of locked door) is not big enough to contain cast, back stage people, costumes, make up, props, etc.

- Two entrances needed onto stage.
- Could use small hall for initial rehearsals.
- There must be sufficient sound insulation between main hall and rest of building so that noise from other users is not a problem during performances.
- The main hall has many windows – what blackout provision will there be?
- Although a proscenium arch is not required, something from which to hang curtains is essential.
- Storage: under the stage would be ideal but understand that tables have to go somewhere. Share the space? Dave's suggestion of excavating beneath stage to create more space is feasible.
- Power supply to stage for lighting would be needed – linked to gallery for lighting/sound control.
- Would the sound system be Marcham Players specific or common to all?

Other points raised by general members at the table:

- A sprung floor in the small hall would enable exercise classes/Pilates to take place there.
- A small “catering corner” (coffee machine, kettle etc) in the small hall would make it attractive to childrens' parties.
- Toddlers storage should be in the building.

Rainbows

- Small Hall would be suitable size – need some storage space for equipment boxes. Welcome addition of storage space to the small hall in COMP.
- Occasional use of the kitchen with groups (note: currently use Baptist Hall on Packhorse Lane – low rental).
- No concerns with COMP design; likes the foyer/coffee/social area – e.g. parents waiting to collect children, opportunity to see displays, notices.

Sports & Social Club/Lounge bar

- Lounge space is too small; alcohol/cold stores are too small – suggest reduce area behind the bar, but moving bar back out of the open room space and expand size of alcohol/cold stores internally.
- Could the external walls enclosing a triangular area to NE of Bar Lounge be flipped to bring that space within the building – and/or adjust the internal corridor wall to increase lounge area?

- Folding doors between the Small Hall and Lounge bar are not ideal – a single wide door (or double door) would be more effective for sound proofing during periods of simultaneous use by different users.
- Does the bar need two doors to outside? One door or one door plus hatch instead?
- Groundsman store needs to be nearer to the cricket field (e.g. other end of the car park) and needs to be large enough for all mowing equipment, including gang- and ride-on mowers; roller; seed; goal posts.
- Floodlights are required for football training, even if MUGA is not built in first phase).
- Space for cubs storage?

Little Angels/Nursery

- Layout at size shown on COMP is suitable for nursery activities.
- There is no need for two sets of lock-down doors from the end of the corridor. One set is enough and will save some dead space.
- There is no requirement for double doors between the Nursery and the Small Hall, which simply create another lock-down requirement. Remove these doors.

2 General Comments on drawings

The following are comments gleaned from notes attached to the plan drawings at the Users Forum meeting:

General site plan

- Will double garage be large enough for cutting equipment/goal posts?
- Floodlights (for football training)

DHA1

- Coffee/foyer area too large – no separate room for sports club/lounge
- Nursery/small hall both too small

GP1

- Not flexible enough / not sociable / no coffee area

COMP

- Storage/Plant room – suggest doors in end of store room to take long objects e.g. goal posts
- Up to 5 bookable function areas at one time - desirable
- 5m stage needed; badminton court space
- No divider in main hall (expensive, easily damaged and limited effectiveness); not soundproof and in any case no access to far end of hall.- could be added later if really needed.
- Sprung floor desirable in main hall
- No need for two sets of lockable doors to nursery
- Could area below stage be sunk down for additional storage?
- Bar/lounge area needs to be bigger to accommodate sport and community usage
- Alcohol store too small?
- Take bar straight across, rather than L-shaped to give more space in lounge area
- Move internal wall of lounge back into corridor space to enlarge lounge a little; or move Nursery outdoor area, small hall end wall and Small Hall in a SW direction to enlarge lounge.
- Move double-door entry into Small Hall SW towards Nursery entrance to give more opportunity for storage space in the corridor.
- Storage for cub tents and equipment?
- If upper floor is used for storage space, how is access controlled to authorised people only?
- What are noise levels likely to be, inside and outside the facility?
- What audio-visual equipment is envisaged?

- Partition not needed in main hall
- Is the main hall storage large enough for all tables and chairs?

Kitchen

- The kitchen size must be retained as shown at present – not just for catering, but also for cooking demonstration/training, e.g. for youth groups.
- Serving hatch to seating area?
- Will the building have a gas supply for cooking?

Small Hall

- Chairs and tables will be needed for some uses; could these be stored in a cupboard area in the corridor, which is otherwise over-wide?

Youth room

- Absence of provision explicitly for youth/teenagers would be a major shortcoming. A dedicated (not necessarily large) room is needed (could be upstairs, but only if lift installed). Use on current plans is limited to shared use of the small hall, booked alongside demands from other users. Note: pool table and table tennis tables currently used by youth club. A small dedicated room, plus easy direct access to pool and table tennis could work.

Office/reception desk

- There is currently no provision for manager/caretaker office space – possibly under the stairs?

Building services

- We take electricity for granted; we should also allow for telephone/broadband access and WiFi throughout the internals of the building, enabling a 'SmartPhone/iPad café'. If this requires any non-trivial service connections, these should be included up front. Also a hearing loop in the main hall and small hall.
- Will there be a mains gas service into the building?

GENERAL COMMENTS

Storage

- Need sufficient storage in main hall for tables, chairs, table tennis tables, badminton equipment.
- Current design of storage could make moving tables difficult – need full width access to storage alcoves.
- Need storage in or by small hall not just for cubs' equipment but for tables and chairs.
- Archive storage needed (on upper floor) for Marcham Society and also Parish Council, PCC, Anson Trust, WI and Marcham Players.

Noise

- Concerns about noise transmission within building and noise projection from building.

External facilities

- Leave the construction of a MUGA for a second stage when opportunities can be taken to fund raise from youth/sport support sources to enable it to be built without impacting solely on the AT budget.
- Floodlighting will be needed for a training area, which could be on the MUGA site. This needs to be provided, with mains electrical supplies at the start, to enable like-for-like replacement of existing facilities on the Anson Field.

Comments on building geometry

Some views have been expressed amongst the community that other shapes for the building should have been considered.

A minority of respondents has questioned the building footprint and asked what the 'kink' is for. This minority believes that the footprint chosen does not represent the best value-for-money. It feels there should have been consultation with the community on the pros and cons - including building costs - of layouts with different footprints, a comparison that should have included layouts based on more traditional village hall designs. A more cost-effective design might have included a dedicated youth space for the same overall cost.

For this minority, the 'kink' in the proposed design is an unnecessary added cost. Taking c. £25 K as the amount it adds to the building cost (compared to a building of the same design and floor area without it) the 'kink' is being included at the expense of 20-25m² of more storage space. More storage is something everyone has asked for.

3 Notes on meeting with Lynne Newin of ORCC

Monday 5 March 2012

2.00 pm – 4.15 pm at 13 The Farthings, Marcham

MCG was represented by Jessica Brod, James Crafer, Sheila Dunford and Mike Hudson

Some building costs for background information (NB: be checked with TWO):

1. Cost of building c. £1500 /m² overall
2. Cost of kink (for equal floor area) c. £25K
3. Cost of fitting out the upper floor, including providing a lift c. £235K
4. Cost of lift c. £90K. Maintenance contract c. £500 pa. Lifts typically need replacing after c. 15-20 years. So cost of lift is effectively £5500-£6500 pa

We are grateful to Lynne for both a very useful discussion and for correcting and expanding these notes which are a summary of her comments.

MCG's QUESTIONS AND LYNNE NEWIN'S COMMENTS AND ANSWERS

(1) Overall impression of plan COMP 2

Like shape from outside but main lobby looks like wasted space. Kitchen a long way from small hall. Ideally kitchen adjoining or close to both halls. Will tea & coffee always be available from bar? What happens when bar closed (alcohol security)? If no access to nursery from main lobby could use (part of) space freed up for separate small kitchen for small hall. An additional small room would be useful. Possibly create room in space at top of main lobby where chairs and tables drawn. Could make large hall more attractive for meetings if small break-out room available. Also useful for small meetings (e.g. Parish Council).

(2) Detailed comments on layout

See (1) above

(3) How does layout compare with other village halls? Is there a more cost-effective building footprint with the same floor area and spaces?

See (1) above. Many different existing layouts.

(4) How does the storage space compare with that in other village halls? What is the experience of other village halls over the use of storage space?



Do not skimp on storage. Halls that have cut down on storage to save building costs have found that the inconvenience puts people off using them. Suggestion to add storage all along south side of main hall to replace the partial storage on north wall of main hall. Will need to keep control of what is stored by clubs and societies. Strong advice to charge for permanent storage space used.

Further comment added by LN to 1st draft

With regard to storage also suggest you add that if the hall wished to add further storage at a later stage this is very difficult to obtain further funding for so advise to allow for as much

storage as possible with initial build. Depending on user groups it can put them off hiring the venue if another hall can offer this.

(5) How are other halls heated? What real experience is there of sustainable energy sources? How does the extra capital investment stack up against longer-term savings?

Did not have time to discuss this.

(6) What experience is there of sports and community use being catered for in one building?

New buildings tend to have separate pavilions for sports use. Sports can dominate use of a single building if used widely for cricket and football, especially at weekends.

(7) How effective are foldable hall dividers?

Not very for sound. A space closed off by a divider is more difficult to rent out than a room with full walls and a door. Suggestion to visit Carterton Community Centre where dividers used extensively. Maybe divider useful to create a smaller space at entrance end of main hall for smaller meetings.

Further comment added by LN to 1st draft

Foldable hall dividers can work depending on types of groups using venue i.e. band practice in one room and yoga in the other do not ideally work well together. Booking Secretary needs to be mindful of type of users using halls at the same time.

(8) Do other halls have problems with noise transmission inside the building and noise coming from the building? What practical measures can be taken to minimise this?

No time to discuss this.

(9) Do any Oxfordshire village halls have lifts? What is their experience?



Only Chinnor. Got grant to make use of upper floor and install lift. Finding maintenance expensive. Also a committee member needs to be on call all the time in case someone gets stuck in lift. Unlikely that a hall could raise an additional £6K pa for lift.

Further comment added by LN to 1st draft

I am only aware of Chinnor VH with a lift although could possibly be others in Oxfordshire, Ramsden Memorial Hall have a stairlift.

(10) Upper floor would be available for archive storage. Are there any issues with access for a limited number of people without a lift? Could an upstairs without a lift be used by non-public clubs?

No issues if no public access. But could not be let to a club.

Further comment added by LN to 1st draft

Any new building would need to comply with Building/Planning Regulations at District Council and Disability Discrimination Act.

(11) Do other halls incorporate a nursery? What is their experience?

Replacement below for paragraph in 1st draft.

Further comment added by LN to 1st draft

Recommend that a Model Occupation Licence is used for Nursery for two reasons 1. To support the need for a security of tenure greater than offered by some hiring agreements. 2. A document which provides clarity for Trustees of charitable community building about the extent of obligations towards the welfare requirements of Early Years Foundations Stage regulations. It is best practice that this Licence should be drawn up each year.

(12) What non-local uses do other village halls attract?

Many organisations and small businesses now have meetings in village halls instead of in hotels. Both space and catering cheaper. ORCC gets asked what halls are available and keeps a database of venues. Wootton and Little Milton are widely used by outside groups.

(13) Is there anything in the layout that would prevent any potential commercial lettings that other village halls attract?



Badminton court lines make it difficult to let out a hall for weddings.

Some halls are now giving up badminton, which can be played at leisure centres, and reducing ceiling height to cut down on heating costs.

(14) Is there anything that would be a particular attraction for commercial lettings?

An easy booking system with simple tariffs. A good website with lots of pictures.

Only two or three halls big enough for more than 150 people. 14.

Further comment added by LN to 1st draft

Also include ease of access to the building opening/closing of hall, catering provided (either voluntary or commercial), Wifi, overhead projector and screen.

(15) Do all halls of about the same size employ a caretaker? Full-time or part-time?

Warning on legal obligations as an employer. Can buy services either from individuals or a contract cleaning service (c. £15 per hour for a contract cleaner). Some halls find contract cleaners convenient and worth the extra cost.

Further comment added by LN to 1st draft

If you employ a caretaker trustees must be aware that they have to comply with Employee's Statutory Rights - NMW, Holiday Pay, Income Tax, NI, Statutory Sick Pay etc. This does work well in some halls although some halls prefer to employ contract cleaners.

(16) What turnover do village halls of about the same size achieve from lettings and bar?

No time to discuss this

(17) What are typical hire rates for local use and commercial use?

ORCC collects information annually. Would let us know averages. But we would need to check local market. Suggestion to have local and non-local per hour rates for community use and a lower rate for regular users. Advice against having a lower special rate for some groups because it leads to complications. Commercial booking should be by negotiation. Suggestion that for Saturday weddings should have a set price for Friday midday to Sunday midday. Ask for a hefty deposit. Some halls refuse bookings for 18th or 21st birthday parties because of the potential damage.

Further comment added by LN to 1st draft

Deposits can vary depending on type of activity/age group of people attending event.

(18) Alcohol licences and premises licences for regulated entertainment – do village halls normally have these to cover all activities by groups that use them?

Licence cost depends on rateable value. (On subject of rateable value, nursery space would have to pay rates as a dedicated space.)

Further comment added by LN to 1st draft

The hall would require a Premises Licence for regulated entertainment and depending on user groups other licences may be required i.e. Performing Rights. In order to sell alcohol the premises would either need to have a dedicated Premises Supervisor - cost is based on rateable value or alternatively Temporary Event Notices can be applied for at a cost of £21.00 each, although these are limited to only 12 in any one year.

(19) What experience do other village halls have of being open during the day and the evening 6 or 7 days a week?

Village hall use varies a lot from place to place. Amount of use depends to large extent on how hall is marketed. Halls are usually available to hire 7 days a week.

(20) Do any halls have experience of a 'coffee bar' space? How is it run?

Newer buildings tend to have a mingling space with a bar e.g. Wootton and Chinnor. In Oxfordshire only Carterton has a coffee bar open every day. They have catering trainees providing the food. Suggestion to start on one or two designated days a week. Could combine coffee & cakes with having newspapers available. Get mobile library to stop at hall. If open all the time who would be there to manage it?

(21) How do other halls manage security: key holders, access to different parts of building, general security inside and outside building?

Bar must be (and be seen to be) securely locked. Some halls have key to building in key safe that can be opened using a code – need to change code frequently! Some have sets of keys held by a number of people. It's expensive to have paid staff locking up 11pm. In the end you have to trust people.

Further comment added by LN to 1st draft

Regular hirers can be given own set of keys. Hirers have to take responsibility of the building hence the importance of always asking for a deposit.

(22) What types of management arrangements do halls of this size have?

No time to discuss this.

OTHER POINTS FROM DISCUSSION

- Need an office. (Upstairs possible but could not disadvantage a disabled applicant for a manager/caretaker position by insisting s/he had to work in the non-public space upstairs if no lift provided.)
- Football and weddings don't mix.
- Move sports changing rooms to outside small hall and have a room behind the stage end of the main hall?
- Northleigh and Wootton have dedicated youth club space.
- Organisation from outside village might want to use hall regularly and have storage needs, eg a band.
- Suggestion that as funds limited give up idea of large upper floor space for future expansion. Have some upper floor space for storage only. Use available funds to increase space on ground floor for use for storage and a small meeting room. Future expansion by adding to building at ground level.

jb 8/3/12

4 Potential modified solution based on COMP

The following plan solution is strongly recommended by the Marcham Community Group committee to provide a youth room, increase storage space, and provide more flexible drama access in the stage area:

1. Leaving the nursery in its present location, move the services block NE-wards into the open foyer area, opening up a gap between the services block and the nursery, to provide space for a small dedicated youth room (about 4m x 6m in Figure 2) with an entrance opposite the entrance to the small hall.

This has the merits of making better use of the building footprint, placing an added and potentially noisy activity between the nursery (unused in evenings and at weekends) and the toilets, so noise impact is minimised. Youth meetings would make additional use of the small hall pre-booked for youth club nights.

We understand that the Anson Trust now proposes to include a games room, where the pool table could go, between the bar and the small hall. The extra space would be provided by increasing the footprint and moving the small hall further down the west wing. We welcome this addition. The combination of a dedicated youth room (if possible, larger than 6m x 4m) games room and small hall all close together should provide a practical and flexible youth venue.

2. Build additional storage (solid lean-to configuration) on south side of main hall (mimicking north side) with double door access near the stage from the hall, and an access door through the main wall behind the stage area to the short stairs up to the back of the stage. This would allow drama productions to access space off-stage and outside the main hall with easy access to both stage left and stage right.
3. Figures 1 and 2 below show suggested ways in which this could be achieved.
4. Clearly, implementing this proposal would require adjustments to the layout to optimise these arrangements, but they would significantly enhance the flexibility of the facility with little impact on footprint and cost.

By implementing these proposals, the principal concerns raised by user groups and MCG would be seen to be addressed, and the MCG committee could report to members that the appropriately modified plans appear to meet known community needs.

Figure 1a – Modified foyer, small hall and youth room layout



Figure 1b – addition of storage to south side of main hall, with access from hall and access to back of the stage.

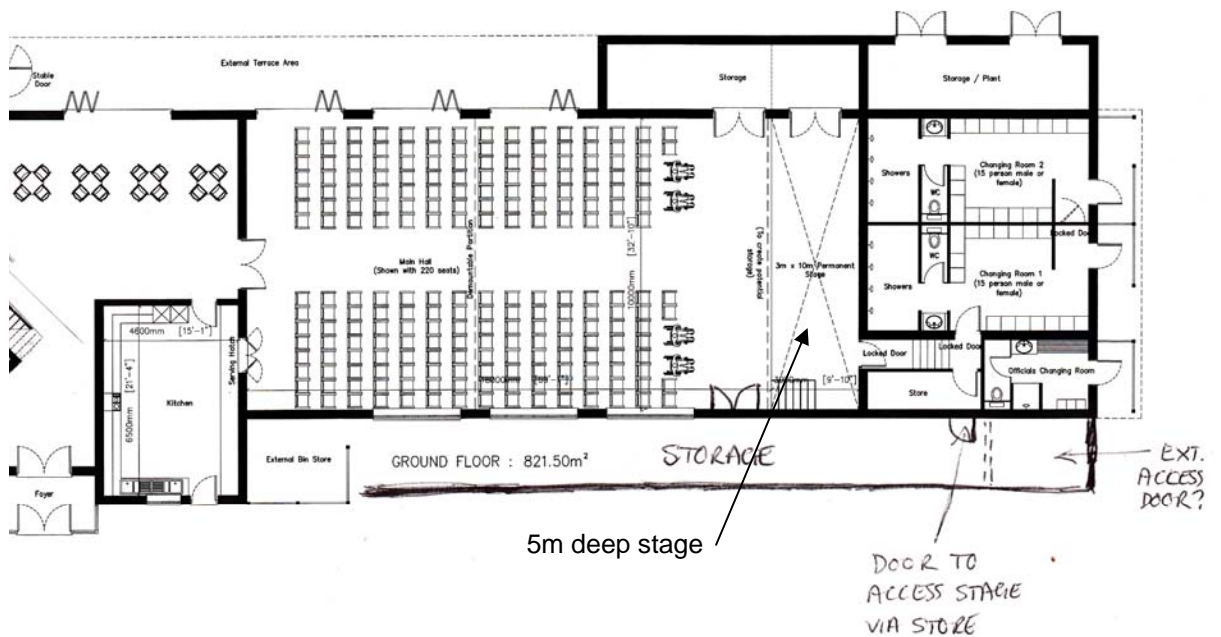


Figure 2 – to illustrate insertion of a youth room (highlighted in yellow)

