

Parish Council Survey - Community Halls (2020)

To find out more about the quality, use and need for improvements at the community halls in the rural areas we surveyed each of the Parish Councils between June and July 2020. We received 15 responses from the 27 Parish Councils. They provided details on 19 community halls in the rural areas of the Canterbury District.

Ten of the 15 Parish Councils recorded one community hall in their parish. They include:

- Barham Parish Council (Barham Village Hall);
- Blean Parish Council (Blean Village Hall);
- Hoath Parish Council (Hoath Parish Hall);
- Littlebourne Parish Council (Littlebourne War Memorial Hall);
- Lower Hardres Parish Council (Baker White Memorial Hall);
- Petham Parish Council (Petham Village Hall);
- Upper Hardres Parish Council (Bossingham Village Hall);
- Waltham Parish Council (Waltham Village Hall);
- Westbere Parish Council (Westbere Village Hall); &
- Wickhambreaux Parish Council (Wickhambreaux Village Hall).

Three of the 15 Parish Councils recorded two community halls in their parish. They include:

- Adisham Parish Council (Adisham Village Hall & Holy Innocents Church);
- Chartham Parish Council (Chartham Village Hall & Chartham Hatch Village Hall); &
- Fordwich Town Council (Fordwich Town Hall & Old School Hall).

Herne and Broomfield Parish Council recorded three community halls in their parish (Herne Church Hall, Herne Community Centre & Broomfield Church Hall).

Quality of community halls

17 of the 19 Parish Councils described the physical quality of their community hall(s) to be good quality. However, the survey highlighted a range in size and facilities at the halls. The bigger community halls such as Barham Village Hall and Chartham Village Hall have more than one hall, a kitchen, meeting rooms, storage rooms and toilet facilities. Whereas, smaller halls such as Adisham Village Hall and Waltham Village Hall only have one hall, a kitchen and toilet facilities.

Herne and Broomfield Parish Council described two of the community halls in their parish to be average or poor quality, stating the facilities were basic and parking was an issue.

Use of the community halls

All 19 community halls stated they are available for private hire for events such as birthday parties or weddings, although the number of hours available varied. For example Chartham Village Hall stated opening times varies between 20-30 hours a week, whereas Hoath Parish Hall is only available for roughly 3 hours a week.

This survey was conducted during the COVID-19 lockdown; as a result some Parish Councils were unable to determine how many hours they are available for private hire currently.

Capacity to meet demand

The survey highlighted 18 of the 19 community halls can accommodate the current demand for facilities. The community halls provide a range of services from toddler groups, exercise classes, french classes, dog training and more.

Improvements to community halls

Four of the 17 community halls recorded in the survey stated no improvements would be required to their facility. They include:

- Fordwich
- Herne and Broomfield
- Waltham
- Westbere

The remaining facilities said they would like to see improvements ranging from new roofs, new windows, extension to reach greater capacity, new kitchen and toilet facilities and improved parking.

Blean Village Hall has already gained planning permission for a single storey extension to increase capacity at this facility. Similarly Hoath is currently under construction to extend their facility.

Conclusions

It is clear that most if not all of the community halls surveyed are an important resource for the district's rural communities; providing meeting spaces, venues for events, education and health care and a range of other services.

Further development within the rural areas will place additional pressure on these important facilities. Improvements to quality and/or capacity may be required in order that they can continue to function effectively to meet the needs of their communities.

As the preparation of the new Local Plan continues, further research is required to establish the need for qualitative and capacity improvements at the other community halls located within the district, including in the urban area.

This document will provide a useful resource when negotiating S106 agreements and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) projects. S106 and CIL generate income which can be used to make improvements to existing community infrastructure such as village halls to support anticipated growth. This survey provides evidence of the quality, use and capacity of community halls in the rural areas which can be taken into consideration during negotiations.

Summary of survey responses

Name	Quality	Use	Capacity to meet current demand	Improvements stated
Barham Village Hall	Good Quality	Prior to COVID-19 the facility had several daytime and evening bookings and was in use virtually all the time.	Not known	Improvements not known.
Blean Village Hall	Good Quality	Several daytime and evening bookings	No	Plans have been passed for an additional single-storey extension
Hoath Parish Hall	Good Quality	Several daytime and evening bookings approximately 30 hours a week	Just about	Extension currently under construction
Littlebourne War Memorial Hall	Good Quality	Several daytime and evening bookings amounting to approximately 30 hours a week	Yes generally	A cafe has been requested many times and additional parking
Baker White Memorial Hall	Good Quality	Not known	It is believed to meet the demand	No details provided
Petham Village Hall	Good Quality	Several daytime and evening bookings	Usually	Parking and improvements to the children's outside play area
Bossingham Village Hall	Good Quality	Prior to COVID-19 the facility had several daytime and evening bookings however hours are currently down due to restrictions.	Yes	Improvements to kitchen and toilets currently underway
Waltham Village Hall	Good Quality	Several daytime and evening bookings	Yes	No changes anticipated
Westbere Village Hall	Good Quality	The village pre school use the facility on weekdays and several groups use the facility in the evening	Yes within reason	Improvements not known.
Wickhambreaux Village Hall	Good Quality	The hall is used by the village school on weekday and several groups use the facility in the evening	Yes	Windows and toilet facilities need upgrading.

Adisham Village Hall	Good Quality	Several daytime and evening bookings	Yes	New roof required.
Chartham Village Hall	Good Quality	Several daytime and evening bookings amounting to approximately 27 hours a week	Normally yes	Lighting improvements, e.g. LED lights and boiler will need upgrading to be more energy efficient and maybe the possibility of solar panels.
Fordwich Town Hall	Good Quality	Approximately 2 hours a week	Yes	None possible given the nature of the building.
Herne Church Hall	Average Quality	Well used facility with several daytime and evening bookings across the week	Not known	Improvements not known.
Holy Innocents Church	Good Quality	Several daytime and evening bookings across the week	Yes	New roof required.
Chartham Hatch Village Hall	Good Quality	Several daytime and evening bookings amounting to approximately 22 hours a week	Yes	New roof and maintenance to the car park required and they would like to install Wi-Fi and a burglar alarm. A projector, screen and sound system is also due to be fitted.
Old School Hall	Good Quality	Rarely used	Yes	No details provided.
Herne Community Centre	Good Quality	Several daytime and evening bookings amounting to approximately 15 hours a week	Mostly	None at the moment.
Broomfield Church Hall	Poor Quality	The hall is used Monday to Friday by 1 group	Not known	Needs updating, kitchen and toilet facilities.