

Summary of the Feasibility Study conducted by the Nether Stowey Community Centre Task Force

This is a summary of the Feasibility Study Report which has been put together by the Nether Stowey Community Centre Task Force. The Task Force was formed to look at the option of a combined village hall and sports field facility housed together on the playing field in a new Village Community Centre and Sports Pavilion.

The Goal and objective is 'To provide a self-financing multi use Village Community Centre and Sports Pavilion, which will meet the expected sports, leisure and cultural needs, of all age groups in the village for the next 100 years.' The Village Community Centre and Sports Pavilion will be a brand new building and will provide all the activities of the current village hall with new changing facilities for the playing field.

The existing Village Hall was built in 1928 and the small hall was added sometime before 1944. Both are becoming expensive to maintain and many of its current facilities are dated. Also parking and access to and from the village hall is not suitable for the elderly and disabled members of the community. The hall delivers fantastic activities but it could deliver these and many more in a new, purpose built Village Community Centre.

The playing field now has an excellent floodlit Multi Use Games Area (MUGA), all weather, 5 a side pitch and tennis/netball/basketball court but has no changing rooms to encourage sports men and women to grow and enlarge their sporting clubs. The existing pavilion is in poor condition and rapidly becoming 'unusable'. Its substandard condition results in low value hiring and very little use. There is almost a complete lack of parking. The village has now reached the stage that if something is not progressed in the immediate future the village will lose one if not two of its current buildings.

Given the unsatisfactory state of the existing playing field pavilion, the village hall in its present condition and the increased size of the village population (which has increased by 166% since the existing village hall was built), there is potentially a need to build a new combined facilities on the playing field site, disposing of the existing ones. The Recreation Ground Committee have already got planning consent and a draft design for a new Sports Pavilion.

The village is expected to attract an influx of families when the new Hinkley C power station is nearing completion and this could result in a growing use of the village hall by villagers and also an increasing demand in new activities in the village hall and on the playing field.

Whilst the village has numerous community buildings, collectively they do not meet the needs of the whole community and this is unsustainable in the long term. The majority of villagers attending the open meetings wanted a new hall and a new Village Community Centre and Sports Pavilion it can be proud off.

A new building with modern facilities and the latest energy saving systems would not only be more efficient but would:

- Save the 'village' significant costs of running and maintaining the buildings it could replace. Allowing money saved to be invested to cover repair /refurbishment costs in the future.
- By combining facilities, have the potential to foster a stronger sense of community within the village.

It is not possible to indicate any firm figures as so many of the capital costs are unknown at this stage. However, by browsing the internet, a typical estimate to build a typical new village hall would be between £1,000,000 and £1,250,000, depending on its overall floor area. Therefore, until the exact requirements are known and a design has been produced by an architect, it is not possible to state an accurate estimate.

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Some grants should be available but a major part of the funding will have to be raised by private subscription, which is not yet tested. The amount of money to be raised is formidable but not insurmountable and there are a wide range of sources available. A fund raising strategy would need to be produced. To be successful the whole village will need to get behind and support the project. Depending on the Charitable set up, there will be opportunities for villagers to either buy shares or make donations including the use of Gift Aid both of which have potential tax advantages to the donor.

The study demonstrates that it is feasible to look more closely at the option of a new combined village community centre and sports pavilion to be located on the playing field. We hope that this project will have enthusiastic support of the vast majority of the village and feedback to date supports this. We know though that there are many questions to resolve, which is why we have produced a feasibility study report and intend to conduct a public meeting to share the results of the report with the community.

To take this project forward we will need more volunteers to help, we are particularly looking for people with experience of computer and website skills, Design, Project Management, Project office management, Communications, Fund raising, Planning skills, Grant applications, Charitable trust & Property legal matters and any other skills relating to the work involved with this project.

If you have any interests or experience in these areas and you are able to give up some spare time to help, please send your contact details and brief details of any relevant experience to:

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