

Neighbourhood Plan Working Group Update

In the August PEW magazine we highlighted the need to consider what village facilities might be needed over the next 10-15 years – and where these should be located. We will be issuing a survey later this month to collect your thoughts. To help inform and stimulate thinking please read below views from some of the village organisations responsible for managing and operating these very valued facilities. What are your views? What else might need to be considered? Given summer holidays not all organisations have been able to send us their thoughts .

Community Shop

The Westbury sub Mendip Community Shop sees relocation of the Shop and Post Office as a priority should the Court Farm brownfield site be redeveloped. Having a shop in the village is an important attraction to residents: the Shop provides vital services to the community and adds to the value of houses. Development of the site could offer a unique opportunity to acquire a new retail premises with more space and easily accessible parking, without sacrificing the Shop's location in the heart of the village or its visibility to passing traffic. Any new facility should have a footprint of at least 60m², to include provision for back-office activity, storage, a small kitchen area and an accessible toilet. Our interest in either a long lease of such a facility, or in purchasing outright, would be conditional upon provision of a safe crossing over the A371, since the move would otherwise worsen access for the majority of villagers. Ideally the new premises should also have some adjacent external garden or courtyard space which can be used for a summer cafe and to host outdoor village events, as the existing shop garden is proving increasingly popular.

Playing Fields

If development were to go ahead at Roughmoor Lane, the Robert Glanville Playing Field Trust would welcome the opportunity for a community facility to be located directly adjacent to the playing field. The playing field does not currently have any toilet or changing facilities, so we would like to put forward a case for developing shared facilities within the new community space that would be a general asset to the whole village.

We would like to see an accessible toilet with baby changing facilities and changing rooms that would be available to users of the playing field and remain open independently of other uses. This would open up opportunities for external sports teams to use the field or to establish regular sports coaching sessions, making the most of our existing facilities such as the multi-user surface and football pitch. Our preference is for this to be sited as close to the playing field as possible in order to maximise accessibility for all users of the site.

There is also a need for a larger and more accessible car park for shop, church and village hall to share. We would ask that this is also open to users of the playing field and feel that an improved parking area, as well as safer pedestrian access across the A371 and through any new development would maximise accessibility and be of huge benefit to the community.

Village Hall

Looking ahead, maybe 15 years, we need to think about the provision of a new Village Hall. The village will probably grow in population. There is currently no dedicated parking for the village hall which limits how people can access activities. Shared parking with Church, Shop, School, Pub and Playing Fields in a central location would be beneficial and a place to put EV charging points. Creating a larger facility with higher internal space would allow badminton and other activities. The provision of changing rooms would make the hall more attractive including for our theatrical productions from Westbury Footlights.

A new, well insulated building would be much more efficient. A small meeting room would be useful for gatherings of less than 15 people and require less heating.

Increased storage space would be essential. Theatre productions currently need more space and equipment for other activities (table tennis, badminton, teas etc) would need to have proper storage places.

The current Hall kitchen can cater for dinners of 90 or so and would need replicating or increasing in any new hall.

A new Village Hall, designed and purpose built for Westbury, can address the shortcomings of our current Hall (built in 1913) that has served us well for the last 100 years and provide an excellent facility to use for the next hundred.

Provision of a safe pedestrian crossing of the A371 is vital for whatever developments and changes there are to the village.

St. Lawrence's Church

The Church is an important focus for faith and history as well as providing a special place for all, both inside and outside our community. We envisage the church building which is Grade 2 listed remaining unchanged. We are seeking additional land for the graveyard to be extended and the use of a shared car park would be advantageous.

We are looking at reordering the inside of the building by removing fixed pews so that we have a multi-use space next to the existing kitchen. As we don't have a church hall this space could be used by the school and we are keen to encourage youth activities.

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