



Fulking Village Hall & Chapel

2025 - 2028 Business Plan

Fulking Village Hall
Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)
Registered Charity 1198993

Forward

Fulking Village Hall and chapel have been at the heart of our community for one hundred years.

Whilst our Downland villagers have lost so many of our facilities over time, the Hall and chapel have been a constant within our community.

They have been vital places for our community to come together to meet, to learn, to celebrate, to laugh and to have fun.

We now have a once in a lifetime opportunity to purchase both buildings, so that we do not lose them forever.

If we are successful in acquiring them, as a community, we will all own them, so that we safeguard them for the future.

In recent months we have been carefully listening to what local people think about the buildings and gathering ideas about how they could be improved and what they would like to see. This engagement has been invaluable in shaping this Plan.

We recognise that we do not yet have all the answers, however this Business Plan sets out our direction of travel about what we want to achieve and what we think we need to do.

We hope you will support us in helping us to realise this community vision.

**The Trustees
Fulking Village Hall CIO**

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V3	Peter Boarder & Ben Murray amendments including Exec summary and financial information – 28.03.2025

Executive Summary

Mission

To create a thriving and sustainable multi-purpose community hub, that is owned and run by our community, for our community.

Vision

Through sympathetic restoration and modernisation, we will breathe new life into the village hall & chapel to create an attractive, more accessible space that reduces its environmental footprint and provides a range of activities that enrich the lives of our community.

The former chapel will be transformed into a buzzing arts café for our community and visitors to the South Downs. This will provide funds so the hall can be financially sustainable whilst it runs a diverse range of activities and manages other community initiatives.

Objectives

- Raise £85,000 to acquire Fulking Village Hall and Chapel by 31st December 2025 to safeguard their long-term future as community assets.
- Refurbish, modernise and enhance facilities at the hall for all users in 2028.
- Provide a rich mix of activities and uses within the hall to meet the diverse needs of our community, increasing utilisation by 200% by Dec 2028.
- Transform the chapel into an arts café that will be leased or run as a trading subsidiary.
- Significantly reduce the environmental footprint of the hall and chapel, achieving an EPC rating of B following refurbishment.
- Provide a surplus each year to create a sinking fund for the hall and for local community projects.

Foundations

Our Business Plan has been informed by:

- A building survey which showed both the hall and chapel were structurally satisfactory but in need of significant repairs to the building envelope and services.
- An analysis of other local village halls and of local café operators which helped support the viability and financial sustainability of our vision.

- Advice from local café operators on setting up and running a café who believe it will be a commercial success due to demand from local residents and visitors to the South Downs.
- Invaluable engagement and consultation with local people including a survey and open day where 88.1% supported a multi-purpose community hub with a strong emphasis on social spaces, cultural programming, and a community café.

Key Milestones

- Acquisition: 31st December 2025
- Essential maintenance & refurbishment planning: Spring-Summer 2026
- Planning permission granted: Autumn 2026
- Fundraising applications & tender packages completed: Winter 2027
- Building works completed and grand opening: Autumn 2028

Financials

To ensure long-term financial stability for the hall and chapel we will have multiple income streams, drive cost efficiencies including sustainable measures, utilise grant funding and introduce commercial opportunities.

- Revenue
 - Income Projections: £10,112 (2025) rising to £16,616 (2029)
 - Surplus: £4,314 (2025) rising to £8,349 (2029). This will be used to create a sinking fund for maintenance, capital improvements and for local community initiatives.
- Capital
 - Acquisition Funding Requirement: £85,000 (Acquisition).
 - Refurbishment costs to be determined by scope of works and to be funded by external grants.

Conclusion

Fulking village hall and chapel are poised to begin an exciting new chapter with a clear vision, solid foundations and active local backing which will deliver a thriving and sustainable multi-purpose community hub for our community. We have had excellent engagement and support from our local community to date, and hope our comprehensive business plan will give people and businesses confidence to support us in creating an exciting new chapter in the village of Fulking.

1.0 Introduction

This Business Plan for Fulking Village Hall and chapel sets out our business strategy and key goals to get from where we are now to where we want to be in the future.

The Business Plan initially covers the period from 2025 – 2028. During this time, it will be important that we will regularly review and update the Business Plan to ensure it aligns with our goals and to adapt to changing circumstances.

In preparing the Business Plan we have been informed by:

- The findings of a **building survey** of both the village hall and chapel.
- A **market analysis** of other local village halls and of local café operators within two miles of Fulking.
- Good example **case studies** of village halls and community venues elsewhere.
- **Advice** from local caterers about the feasibility of setting up a café.
- Invaluable **engagement and consultation** with local people.

1.1 Engagement and consultation

In developing this Business Plan we wanted to clearly understand what local people, who live in Fulking and the immediate surrounding Downland villages, think about and want from the hall and chapel.

We wanted to know:

- how much the community value the hall and chapel and what they mean to them.
- how much they currently use the facilities and what activities they would like to see in the future.
- what they think about the condition of the buildings and what they would like to see improved.
- how they think it should be run and operated in the future, including how it can be made to be financially viable; and
- what, if any, other uses they would support for the hall and chapel.

To do this, we sought local people's views in two main ways.

A Survey

We undertook a survey from 29 December 2024 to 31 January 2025 which was available both online and in hard copy.

The survey was promoted to residents on local social media including a new dedicated Facebook Page; on a What's App community group; through correspondence sent by partner organisations such as the Parish Council; and on posters around Fulking Village.

A total of eighty-four responses were received, of which 60 were from Fulking residents. There are a total of three hundred residents in Fulking and as such this represents a recognised good response rate of 20% of the total population.

Open Day

An Open Day was held on Saturday 11th January at the hall, between 11:00am to 3:00pm and was organised as a "Planning for Real" type event. The CIO trustees were facilitators, helping local people to discuss and record their thoughts about the hall and its activities on post its attached to flip chart paper.

The questions were grouped into three main themes:

- **Where are we now?**
 - What do you like about the hall?
 - What are the biggest challenges and issues with the hall?
- **Where do we want to be?**
 - What would an ideal hall look like for our community?
 - What new activities, events and services would you like to see?
- **How do we get there?**
 - What are the most important steps we need to get there?
 - How can the community be involved in making things happen?



The Open day was very well attended by 41 local people, eight of whom were CIO trustees who acted as facilitators.

Key findings

The survey and the open day have helped us to capture our local community's priorities, concerns, and aspirations for the hall and chapel's future development, sustainability, and role in our village life. Annex 2 provides a full analysis of both the survey and open day however the key findings can be summarised below.

Strong Demand for a Multi-Purpose Community Hub

- 88.1% of respondents support the hall becoming a more active community hub, with a strong emphasis on social spaces, cultural programming, and a community café.
- People want the hall to be a space for regular engagement, not just occasional events.

Infrastructure & Facility Improvements are Critical

- 56.6% of respondents prioritised immediate facility upgrades, particularly heating, insulation, and accessibility improvements.
- 47.4% identified accessibility as a major barrier, requiring step-free entry, modernised toilets, and better mobility access.

Financial Sustainability & Income Generation

- 68.4% support diversifying income streams beyond hall hire.
- Proposed revenue-generating initiatives include:
 - A community café or shop
 - Increased hall hire & pricing adjustments
 - Grant funding for infrastructure & sustainability projects
 - Partnerships with local businesses & visitor services

Increased Community Engagement & Volunteer Support

- 42.1% of respondents do not know how to book the hall, highlighting a need for better communication and visibility of how to do this.
- 72.4% expressed willingness to volunteer, which is very positive, but which would require structured coordination and role clarity.

Regional Partnerships & Inter-Village Collaboration

- 88.2% support cross-village partnerships, recognising that collaboration with Poynings, Edburton, and the South Downs National Park could provide:
 - Shared programming & resource pooling
 - Visitor engagement & tourism opportunities
 - Joint funding & grant applications

Where are we now?

2.0 About Fulking

2.1 Fulking Village

Fulking is a small picturesque village in West Sussex, located in the South Downs National Park.

The village has a rich history dating back to the Domesday Book and was established as a spring-line settlement, nestled under the lee of the South Downs and close to the famous natural landmark of Devil's Dyke.

Surrounded by scenic countryside, with rolling hills and attractive countryside, the village occupies an enviable location within the National Park, which makes it a very popular spot for wildlife enthusiasts and for a range of outdoor pursuits, from paragliding, walking, hiking, cycling as well as holidaymakers.

Lying adjacent to the Hamlet of Edburton and the village of Poynings, Fulking occupies a relatively remote rural location approximately seven kilometers from the towns of Hurstpierpoint, Henfield and Upper Beeding and thirteen kilometers from the city of Brighton.

The focal point of the village is The Street, along which are most of the Fulking's homes, as well as the Shepherd and Dog Public House, Fulking Village Hall and the former chapel.

The buildings in The Street are a mixture of architectural styles which predate the twentieth century, with a significant number being of seventeenth century origin. The attractive buildings, their close, intimate layout, the use of downland building materials and the backdrop of the Downs, all combine to form an attractive character and appearance, which is recognised in its designation of a conservation area.

Leading off from the Street and outside the conservation area, are the village's two other important roads that form part of the village. Clappers Lane, a long and narrow country road and the Stammers Hill perched above The Street, overlooking the Downs.

2.2 Local Amenities

Rural communities like the Downland villages of Fulking and Poynings, historically enjoyed a range of local amenities, that brought people together and provided vital services.

However like many other parts of the country our Downland villages have, over the last 20 – 30 years, seen a loss of these valuable local amenities, which has left them bereft of some of the assets that can help to contribute to the development of vibrant and active communities.

The loss of these amenities can be attributed to a range of factors.

The lack of affordable homes in rural areas has meant that people on lower incomes, including younger people, can no longer afford to live in the communities where they grew up, which in turn has led to changes in their demographic profile and the demand for amenities.

Consumer behaviours have changed, with the increase in supermarkets and out of town centres and the rise of internet shopping, resulting in the closure of local village shops and post offices.

Local authority services have changed, in light of demographic changes and the need to evolve and change service delivery, which has resulted in the closure of local village schools and the loss of rural bus services.

In Fulking and in the neighbouring Poynings and Edburton, there has been a loss of a local primary school, nurseries, pubs, village shops, the post office, as well as of rural bus services.

This loss of amenities can be particularly difficult for our communities, who can lose access to important key services that they have used and to the places where they had social connections.

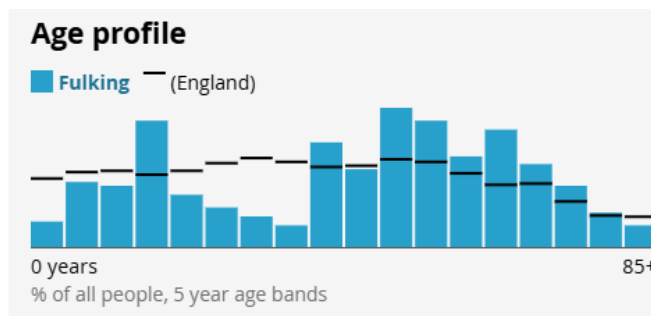
This loss of places where people can come together can have a consequential effect on people's experience of loneliness.

In 2023/2024, the ONS Public opinions and social trends report found that a significant portion of the British population, around 27% of adults, reported feeling lonely often, always, or some of the time. Specifically, 7% felt lonely often or always, and 20% felt lonely some of the time.

2.3 Fulking Villagers

Fulking has a relatively small population of only 300 people.

Residents in the village tend to be older and there are far less children and young adults than the English average.

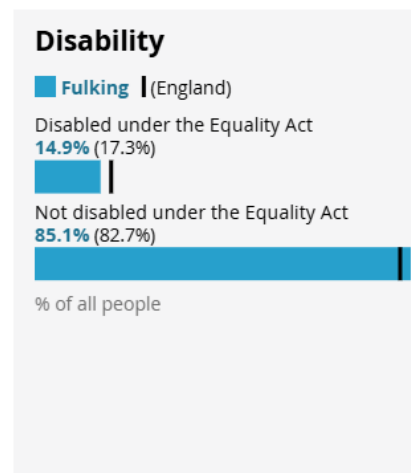
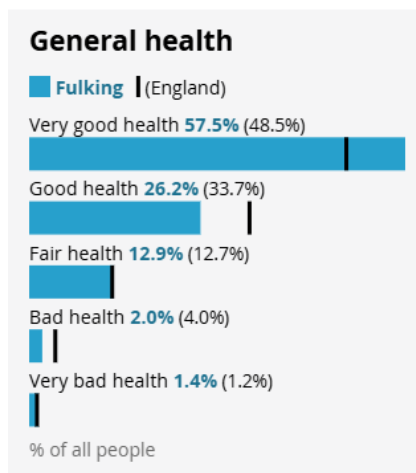


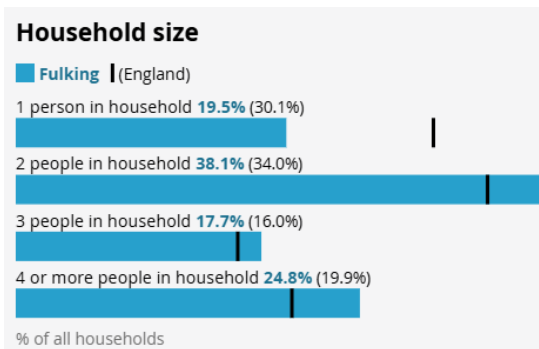
The village has a higher proportion of people in every age group above 40 years, than the English average, with the only exception being those aged 85 plus years.

There is a lower proportion of young and middle aged adults living in the village than the English average, which may reflect the lack of affordable homes that there are and the type of homes that are available, which tend to be larger houses.

There are also far less children and teenagers in the village and in particular infants from 0-4 years compared to the English average. The only exception being that there is a much higher proportion of older teenagers (aged 14-19 years) than the English average.

Well over half of Fulking residents enjoy very good health, which is higher than the English average and levels of disability are less than the English average

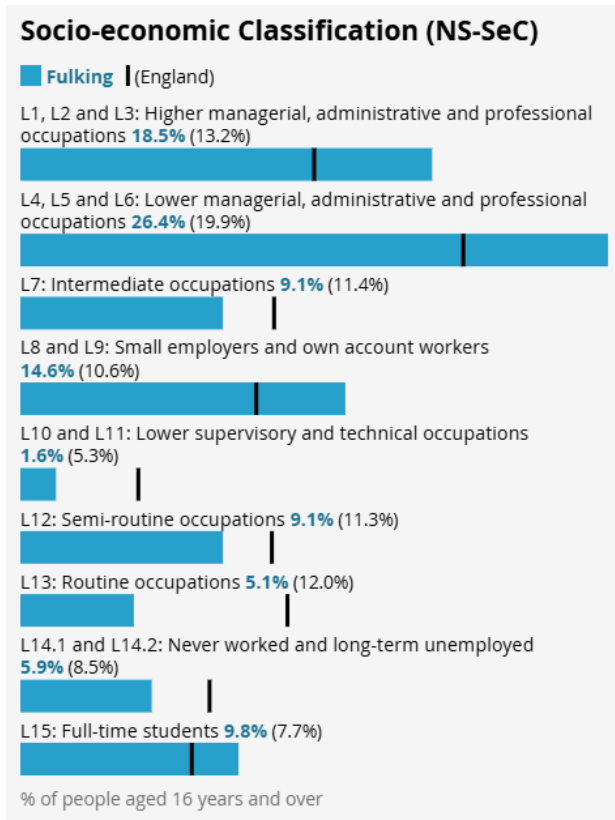
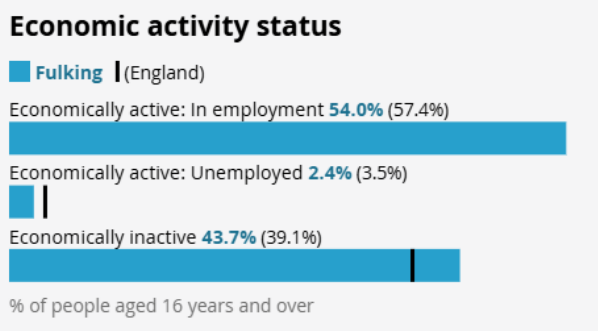




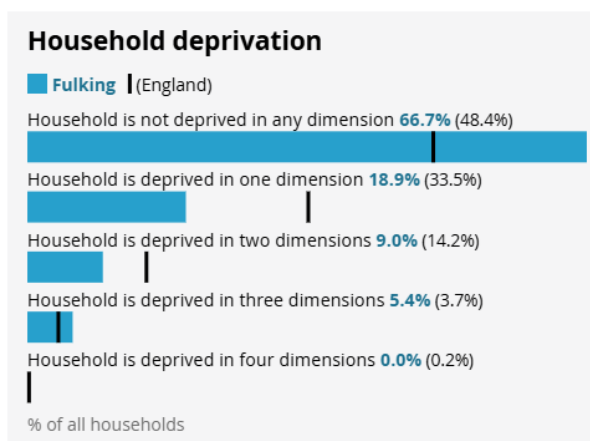
Fulking households tend to be larger, than the English average, which is likely to reflect that people are in relationships and are living with families.

In contrast the village has a much lower proportion of households with only one person than the English average.

Fulking residents are less economically active than the English average, which may reflect the larger number of people in the village who are retired.



For those who are economically active, there is a much higher proportion of Fulking residents who have either higher managerial or lower managerial occupations; are small employers or full time students, than the English average.



Levels of household deprivation in Fulking are lower than the English average.

Two thirds of households in Fulking are not deprived in any of the four dimensions (employment, education, health and disability and overcrowding) compared to just under half of households in England.

However, within communities there are often pockets of deprivation and

Fulking does have a higher proportion of people who are deprived in three of the four dimensions, which is higher than the English average.

2.4 What people told us

Our community

The survey showed a strong representation from Fulking, which comprised over two-thirds of respondents (68.4%). This suggests that the village hall has particular significance for Fulking residents, though there was notable engagement from neighbouring Poynings as well (17.1%).

Nearly two-thirds of respondents (64.5%) have lived in their village for over 10 years, which indicates a stable, well-established community.

While the majority of people said that they had lived in the village for over 10 years, there is evidence of new people coming to live within the community, with approximately 35% of residents having moved to the area within the last 10 years, and 10.5% arriving within the last two years.

Well used community facilities

The survey found that the local community regularly use a mix of local venues for social, religious, and recreational purposes.

People told us that they particularly use local village pubs, which demonstrates the importance they play in being key social anchors for our community. The most popular of all local venues was The Shepherd & Dog Pub in Fulking used by 80.3% of people and the Royal Oak Pub in Poynings (61.8%).

Fulking Village Hall was the second most-used local venue (68.4% of respondents) which demonstrates its vital role in the lives of many people within our community.

The high use of Fulking Village Hall compares to only 19.7% of our community who said that they used Poynings Village Hall. However this lower level of use is likely to reflect that the hall is currently in a process of transition, following the recent closure of the nursery that was based there.

The survey also showed that places of worship continue to play an important role in the lives of some members of our community, with circa 20% of people visiting local churches in Edburton and Poynings.

Overwhelming Community Concern

The vast majority (98.7%) of the community expressed concern about the loss or potential loss of community facilities, with more than three-quarters being extremely concerned.

This concern indicates the strong awareness that there is of the vulnerability of local facilities and the high value that is placed on existing community assets.

The high proportion of 'extremely concerned' responses (76.3%) suggests an acute awareness of the importance of community facilities; potential personal experience with previous losses of local amenities; and strong emotional investment in maintaining community infrastructure.

3.0 Fulking Village Hall and Chapel

3.1 A brief history

Fulking Village Hall and the neighbouring chapel have been at the heart of the community for over 100 years.

This long history has meant that each have played a very valuable part in the lives of the community.

In 1888 Mr John Blacker of Brighton agreed to sell land in Fulking to the local Rector, Reverend Francis Gell of Edburton, for the purposes of providing a building to be used as a reading room and for other parochial activities.

The reading room was built in circa 1890 and “The Overseers of Fulking” (the forerunners of today’s parish Council) had their first meeting there in 1894

As the demand for meetings and for entertainment within the village increased, a decision was made to construct a Parish Hall. In 1925 the Parochial Church Council of Edburton (PCC) paid a local builder – H Young & Son, based at Knole House in Fulking to construct the hall.

When the hall was completed, the former reading room was converted into a chapel of ease - the Chapel of the Good Shepherd. The Chapel became a busy and important focal point for the village, being used up until the early 2000s for christenings, weddings, bible and confirmation classes and Holy Communion.

The hall became a vital place for village meetings and for entertainment. During World War II the Hall also performed a role for the local Home Guard for parades.

As the use of the Hall increased after the War funds were raised in 1948 for an extension to provide a kitchen and stage and for facilities for putting on plays and concerts as well as parties. The works were completed in 1949 for a price of £180.

The hall continued to be used for a variety of purposes including weddings, film shows, concerts and plays by the legendary Fulking Players. However by 1955 the number of social activities started to gradually decline, most likely linked to the arrival of television.

While the number of activities reduced the Hall continued to be used for regular meetings, children’s parties, jumble sales and even as an occasional surgery.

From the 1980s to the early 2000s the Hall was mainly used by the Good Start Nursery play group.

In 2008 the Church claimed adverse possession of the site and made a formal application to the Land Registry to register the land. On 17 November 2008 the Land Registry granted title to “The Chichester Diocesan Fund and Board of Finance” and the Church were confirmed as the legal owner of the site.

In 2011 the PCC considered the option of selling the site, however following a public meeting, it was agreed that the hall would not be sold, if the village took over the responsibility for its maintenance and running. In 2012 residents set up the “Village Hall Action Group” (VHAG) to run the hall, on a peppercorn rent.

In parallel, following the deconsecration of the chapel the PCC set up a book nook for the sale of used books.

The hall has continued to be run and used by villagers since VHAG took over its running.

In 2020 Fulking Parish Council (FPC) applied to Mid Sussex District Council to register the hall as an “Asset of Community Value” to provide some legal protection should the hall ever be sold.

The Hall was listed as an Asset of Community Value on 26th November 2020 and the scheduled date for its removal from the register is 25th November 2025.

Fulking Village Hall Incorporated Organisation was set up in 2022 with the intention to purchase the site and to hold in perpetuity for villagers.

Terms were agreed in late 2024 for the CIO to purchase the site from the PPC.

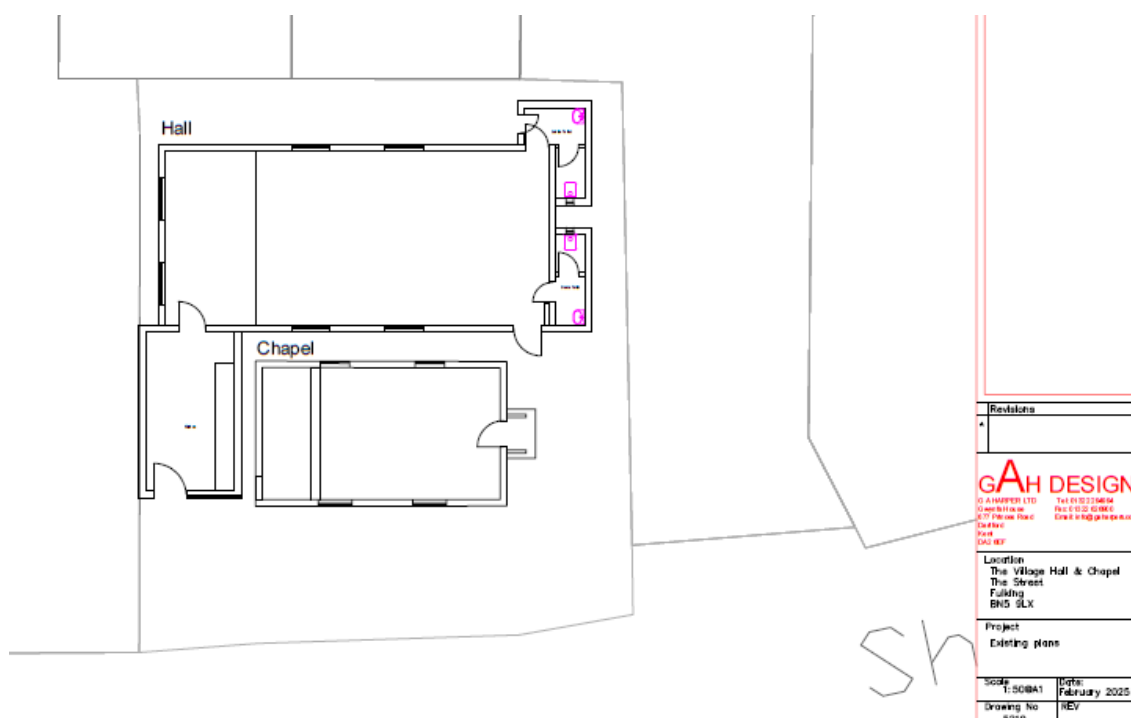
3.2 The Site

Introduction

The hall and chapel stand in the centre of the village of Fulking on the northern side of The Street. Due to the attractiveness and unspoilt nature of the Downland Village, both the hall and chapel are located within the Fulking Conservation area, however they are not listed buildings.

The total site comprises two main buildings which lie adjacent to one another and a small area of external space.

Due to the topography the site which lies approximately one metre above the carriageway, access to the buildings and the external space is via two sets of steps. One set of steps are used as the main means of access for the chapel and the hall and the other is principally for access to the hall’s kitchen.



The Chapel

The Chapel is a single brick building, with a slate tiled roof. The Chapel is circa 7.6m x 4.2m and has one form of entrance on its eastern side. The hall is an attractive building inside with a high vaulted wooden ceiling, a small elevated wooden platform, formerly used for parochial purposes .

The Hall

The Hall is a of timber construction, clad with corrugated iron sheeting on its sides and roof.

The Hall comprises:

- The main hall measures circa 11m x 4.5 m. The main hall is attractive with timber walls and a high valuted timber ceiling;
- Male and Female toilets are provided off of the main hall; and
- A kitchen measuring circa 4.5m x 2.8m sqm is located off the stage area via a series of steps.

Outside Space

Directly fronting The Street on its the southern part of the site is a small area of external space laid almost entirely to lawn with a small picket fence, seating and a notice board.

The hall does not have any dedicated car parking and there is a severe lack of parking on the highway due to the layout of the roads.

3.3 Building Survey

In 2025 a Building survey was undertaken of both the chapel and the hall.

The survey founds that while the property is structurally satisfactory it is in need of significant repairs to the building envelope and services.

The survey identified a number of elements that need attention, which are considered to be serious and/or need to be repaired, replaced or investigated urgently.

A full list is contained in annex 1 however some of the main elements include:

- Repairs to tiled roof of chapel
- Immediate repair or replacement of the hall entrance timber framed canopy
- Replacement of timber barge boards and fascias
- Some repointing
- Localised replacement of lower sections of chapel walls where they are disintegrating
- Repair of rainwater fittings that are not serviceable and which are causing water damage to the building envelope.
- Removal of vegetation that is impeding and damaging the system.

Since April 2023, commercial properties must have a minimum EPC rating of **E** to be legally let. In 2013 the hall received an EPC assessment of D.

The government has announced ambitious future targets, with the EPC requirements set to become progressively stricter in the coming years:

- By **2027**, commercial buildings will need a minimum EPC rating of **C**.
- By **2030**, this is expected to rise further to a minimum of **B**.

This will require substantial upgrades to the properties to meet these new standards.

3.4 What people told us

Respondents were asked to prioritise potential improvements to the hall and chapel. Improvements that were prioritised, as being either essential or very important were:

Environmental and Comfort enhancements

Of all the potential improvements, respondents said that enhancements to the heating system (56.6%) and insulating the building (53.9%) were their highest priorities. However they also recognised that the addition of solar panels was also important (40.8%).

These priorities may reflect the benefits people perceive could be derived from sustainability measures, that would help to improve the thermal insulation of the building and make the buildings more comfortable to use, while reducing costs of running and the carbon footprint

Accessibility and Core Facilities

Respondents prioritised some essential functional improvements as high priorities. The highest priority was accessibility improvements (47.4%), toilet facilities (38.2%) and kitchen facilities (32.9). Other improvements which were prioritised less were storage (26.3%) and decoration (26.3%).

Other improvements

Some respondents emphasised the need for technology infrastructure, such as the installation of WiFi and Audio-visual equipment.

3.5 Current Use

The Chapel

Currently the former Chapel is used by the PCC, for the storage and sale of used books. Books are stored at the Chapel and then distributed at local venues to raise proceeds for the PCC.

Once a month, on a Sunday, between 11am and 4pm the Chapel, known as the “Book Nook” is opened to the general public for the browsing and purchase of books that are available at very affordable prices.

Outside of this use, the chapel is unused, other than for the dry storage of the books, and as such it is significantly underutilised.

The Hall

The Village Hall is currently used for a number of activities. The primary activities are as a polling station; for the holding of official meetings; for village social gatherings; and for informal meetings, classes and groups.

Table 1 below shows the current principal uses of the Hall.

Table 1: Principal Uses: Fulking Village Hall			
	Hirer / event	Regularity	Time
Official Purposes	Fulking Parish Council	Once every 6 weeks	
	Polling Station		All day
Meetings	Fulking Village Hall CIO	Once a month	1 hr
	Social Committee	Ad hoc	1 hr
Village Social Gatherings	Call my Bluff	Once a year	
	Christmas Party	Once a year	
Groups/classes	Baby and Toddler Group	Weekly: Wednesdays School terms only	1.5 hrs
	Quotations Group	Weekly: Monday	2 hrs
	Art and Craft Group	Fortnightly: Thursdays	2 hrs
	Yoga	Weekly: Mondays April to October	1 hr
	Table tennis	Monthly: Fridays	2 hrs
	Board Games	Monthly: Sundays	1.5hrs
Other	Ultra Marathon	Once a year	1 day

	Village Fete teas	Once a year	
	Plant sale	Once a year	
	Children's / family parties	Ad hoc	

While the above shows that the Hall does hold a number of activities the current utilisation of the hall is low.

3.6 What people told us

Frequency of Visit

The survey found that the hall does have regular activity which has varied usage patterns.

More than one quarter of respondents (27.6%) are regular users of the hall (visiting weekly or monthly); 38.2% are occasional users (visiting every few months); and 34.2% are infrequent or non-users (annually or never).

The survey showed there is a strong base of regular users, which reflects the vital role that the hall provides for the community. One quarter of those surveyed use the hall either weekly or monthly, which represents the core user group. Weekly visitors (making up 15.8% of people) are a significant committed group and the monthly visitors (11.8%) indicates how regular programming attracts consistent attendance.

The high proportion of occasional users (visiting every few months) indicates the broad community reach of the hall and there is a potential for these to be converted to more frequent users to grow the regular user base.

Only 15.8% of people said that they never used the hall, and there is a real opportunity to engage these non-users.

Reason for visit

The reasons for people visiting the hall and the chapel were varied.

The most popular reason for visiting was to attend community events and social activities representing 71.9% of people, which include for example the annual Call My Bluff and the Christmas Party.

The second most popular reason for visiting was for civic activities including Voting (68.8%) and Parish Council meetings (35.9%) which shows the important role the hall has in supporting local democracy.

45.5% of people visited the Book Nook reflecting the importance to some people of this facility. Over one third of respondents also visited for regular group activities, including organised meetings (34.4%) and organised groups, such as yoga, crafts, toddlers etc (32.8%).

Barriers to Village Hall usage

The main barrier identified by people related to programming with 29% of responses saying that there were no activities of interest to them, which suggests a mismatch between current offerings and community interests

The second biggest barrier was the use of other facilities, which might indicate competition from alternative venues and may reflect the comparative advantages of other facilities.

22.6% of people cited practical constraints in terms of a lack of time, which may be a common barrier for working people and may indicate a need for more flexible timing.

Similarly 22.6% of people cited the lack of information which suggests marketing/communication gaps and uncertainty about the available activities.

Potential Uses

Respondents were asked their views about what other potential uses could be introduced into the hall and/or chapel.

The strongest support was for Arts & Cultural Activities. 59.2% of respondents said that they would use the hall for art and cultural activities, 28.9% maybe and only 11.5% saying that would not.

The next most popular use was for a community café. 51.3% of respondents said that they would use a café; 36.8% maybe and 11.8% saying they would not.

The use for South Downs Visitor Facilities was also strong. 50% of respondent supported this; 38.2% maybe and 11.8% saying they would not.

Finally the use as a community Shop was supported by 46.1%; 40.8% maybe and 13.2% saying that they would not.

The results of the survey show that there was strong overall interest in the introduction of new uses into the hall and or chapel.

All the proposed facilities showed an 85% plus potential usage, with arts/cultural activities generating the highest definite interest. There were a significant number of ‘maybe’ responses which indicates that there could be further potential, which might for example be dependent on the type of offer, price point etc.

The survey however clearly shows that people recognise the potential to derive commercial viability through a number of income streams, including tourist-oriented services.

3.7 Current communications

The primary means of communication mechanisms to promote the activities that are run and how to hire the facilities are outlined below:

Table 2: Existing communication means	
Parish Council meetings and Elections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By letter • By email • On noticeboard • Fulking.net
Clubs/groups/events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WhatsApp group – a local community group for people living in Fulking, Poynings and Edburton • Pigeon Post - a local newsletter delivered by hand once a quarter • Notices – primarily in the Hall • Facebook – a dedicated Facebook page for the Hall has recently been set up.

While the existing channels promote activities at the hall it is recognised that there are limitations:

- There is no dedicated online web page(s) for the hall to provide basic information about where it is; what facilities it provides; what activities take

place; or how to hire the space. This lack of information hinders the take up of activities as well as the hiring of the hall.

- The local Whatsapp group is useful as an instant means by which activities and events can be promoted, however its reach is limited to the number of people who use the app and messages can be lost amongst the 'chatter' of the group.
- The posting of the hard copy pigeon post newsletter to all Fulking households is useful however space to promote activities is limited and it is only distributed once a quarter.

3.8 What people told us

While the majority of respondents (57.9%) said that they knew how to hire the hall 42.1% of respondents didn't know how to.

There were therefore a significant number of local people who lacked the knowledge of how to hire the hall, which represents a further potential barrier to increased usage.

This also represents a large minority who are unable to access the facility for private use, which limits community engagement opportunities and which will affect the hall's income generating potential. This suggests therefore that we need to improve communication channels.

3.9 Current Financial Position

At present the Village Hall Action Group manage the day to day running of Fulking Village Hall and the PCC retain responsibility for the Chapel, with each party covering their respective costs.

Costs

The Village Hall Action Group are responsible for all costs associated with the hall's day to day running as well as for its maintenance, upkeep and improvements.

Under present arrangements the PCC charge VHAG for:

- Rent
- Utilities – water and electricity
- Building Insurance

- Council tax
- Servicing of fire extinguishers

VHAG are responsible for the direct payment of the other costs, which principally include:

- Public liability insurance – an annual charge, the cost of which is shared with the Social Committee.
- Maintenance – ad hoc maintenance costs.

Presently the largest cost of the hall is in relation to utilities, particularly energy. Due to recent World events, like Ukraine, the costs of electricity have increased substantially and at present represent circa 50% of total costs.

Income

Currently the primary sources of income to cover the day to day running costs of Fulking Village Hall are derived from four main sources:

Voluntary Donations

The primary source of income is voluntary contributions from local residents who live in Fulking. Currently there are 18 individual donors who make monthly standing order donations. All of the donors are above 50 years old and the majority are of pensionable age.

Hall hire

The second primary source of income is from hall hire. The hire can be split into two main types. The first is Class/Group hire. The hall is hired by local people who run classes and groups, such as the Toddler, yoga, craft and quotations groups, which make up the majority of the income from the hall hire. The second is organisational hire. This hire includes the hire of the hall for Parish Council meetings, as an electoral station and more recently by UK Ultra marathton.

Cash fund raisers

The third main source of income is from cash fund raisers. In recent years this has been derived from a variety of sources such from events and from the selling of Fulking merchandise.

Donations from SOCCOM

The Fulking Village Social Committee have provided generous adhoc donations to the running of the hall from income that it has derived from running events.

A breakdown of income and expenditure for Fulking Village Hall is outlined overleaf:

3.10 Current Management

Under an agreement with the PCC, VHAG are responsible for the overall management and maintenance of the Hall. The main activities VHAG perform include:

- Management – hiring and use of the hall and managing bookings and scheduling events;
- Maintenance - Ensuring the hall is maintained and in good condition and planning and overseeing necessary repairs and improvements.
- Financial - Managing the hall's finances, including income and expenditure; and seeking funding and grants to support the hall's operations and improvements.
- Other responsibilities: Representing the village hall and its users to the Parish Council and other stakeholders; promoting the hall and its activities; cleaning and gardening and ensuring the hall is safe and complies with relevant health and safety regulations.

VHAG comprises a group of highly committed volunteers, who working with the PCC, spend considerable time in managing the day to day operations of the hall and chapel.

Since taking over the day to day operation of the hall, VHAG Have been successful in securing grant funding to improve and maintain the hall, including undertaking roof repiars, installing double glazing and heaters.

The last three years of both VHAG and the Village's Social Committee are shown overleaf.

Table 3: Annual Accounts

FULKING SOCIAL FUNDS ANNUAL ACCOUNTS TO 31/12/24

ACCOUNT BALANCES		FUND ALLOCATIONS	
		VHAG	SOCCOM
BARCLAYS savings a/c	£12,709.43		
BARCLAYS current	£518.06		
petty cash	£720.20		
TOTAL	£13,947.69	£3,559.36	£10,388.33
DEBTS	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
NET TOTAL	£13,947.69	£3,559.36	£10,388.33
2023 balances	£12,940.64	£2,990.18	£9,950.46

FUND INCOME AND EXPENDITURE BY CALENDAR YEAR

VHAG

VHAG expenditure	2022	2023	2024
hall rent	£270.00		£360.00
PCC service charges	£1,284.47	£2,073.15	£3,722.94
maintenance	£1,772.45	£10.40	£32.40
liability insurance	£328.87	£355.32	£185.50
TOTAL	£3,655.79	£2,438.87	£4,300.84
VHAG income	2022	2023	2024
donations	£906.00	£2,016.00	£2,354.00
cash from hall users		£422.00	£719.67
cash fund raisers	£200.00	£380.60	£225.35
hall hire	£100.00	£385.00	£540.00
donations from SOCCOM			£1,031.00
TOTAL	£1,206.00	£3,203.60	£4,870.02
VHAG net cash flow	-£2,449.79	£764.73	£569.18

NOTES

current monthly donations £228.00 (from 18 donors)

SOCCOM

SOCCOM expenditure	2022	2023	2024
insurance	£207.56	£200.48	£185.50
event expenses		£388.25	£669.07
merchandise costs			£937.79
pigeon post		£115.50	£135.77
misc	£24.00	£57.60	
donations to VHAG			£1,031.00
TOTAL	£231.56	£761.83	£2,959.13
SOCCOM income	2022	2023	2024
interest on savings			£109.43
merchandise sales			£1,179.00
event proceeds	£1,550.00	£1,556.70	£1,988.17
cash fund raisers	£57.00	£168.10	£88.40
equipment hire			£32.00
TOTAL	£1,607.00	£1,724.80	£3,397.00
SOCCOM net cash flow	£1,375.44	£962.97	£437.87

MERCHANDISE NOTES

	T-Towel	Mug	Tote	
stock remaining	19	16	3	
sale price	£13.00	£12.00	£15.00	TOTAL STOCK
stock value	£247.00	£192.00	£45.00	£484.00

3.11 What people told us

People were asked for their views about how the hall can be made financially viable.

Usage based solutions

There was a strong preference for increasing usage of the hall to generate activity-based income from hire, with 68.4% agreeing with this idea and only 3.9% disagreeing.

However, while there was strong support for deriving more activity based income, our community were less supportive of increasing the cost of hire, with only 50% agreeing and 10.5% disagreeing. This may reflect that respondents felt that prices were already competitive.

Environmental Investment Support

There was also strong support for sustainability improvements such as the installation of photovoltaics and of insulation with 59.2% agreeing and only 5.3% disagreeing with this idea. The community recognised that such improvement could help bring about the potential for energy cost reductions and long-term cost savings.

Local taxation

Over one half of our community (55.3%) supported an increase in the Parish Precept, with 14.5% disagreeing. 30.2% said that they did not know which may reflect that people may have a level of uncertainty as to how much this might cost or could reflect current cost of living pressures.

Commercial Leasing

The idea of leasing the former chapel was supported by 51.3% of people, however it had the highest level of uncertainty. This higher level of uncertainty could reflect that people had insufficient information to consider whether commercial decisions about leasing the property was realistic.

4.0 Market Analysis

4.1 Community Halls

Small Dole Village Hall

Henfield Road, Small Dole, BN5 9XE

The hall is located within Small Dole village, on the busy A2037 Henfield Road.

The hall was founded in 1911 and since 1977 has been managed by a charitable trust to whom it is leased from the owners of the Mackley Industrial Estate on a peppercorn rent.



The accommodations comprises:

- A hall (9.1m x 4.8m)
- An equipped kitchen (3.4 x 3.6m) with microwave, fridge, electric hob and oven
- An annexe for the storage of tables and chairs
- Car parking for circa 12 cars



The accommodation is well presented, with good decoration and is very tidy because of the good level of storage that is available.



The hall has three different hire rates:

- Category A: Small Dole Village Groups and Residents: £9 per hr
- Category B: Outside groups and residents: £12 per hr
- Category C: All Commercial users: £15 per hr

The hall's calendar shows a good level of utilisation.

The Charity Commission's Register of Charities shows that in three of the last five years, expenditure has exceeded income for the hall.

Income / Expenditure	2019	2020	2021	2022	2024
Total gross income	£4.56	£2.06K	£1.93K	£5.74K	£5.89K
Total expenditure	£2.95K	£2.79K	£3.85K	£3.83K	£7.95K
	£1.64K	- £0.73	- £1.92K	£ 1.91	- £2.06

Bramber and Beeding Village Hall

High St, Upper Beeding, Steyning BN44 3WN

The hall is situated in the village of Upper Beeding and the adjacent village of Bramber and was built in 1930 and is held under a Trust Deed as a public charitable trust.

The accomodations comprises:

- A hall (15.23m x 7.85m) with a stage (2.4m x 5.1m) – 150 people capacity
- Large meeting room (7.5m x 7.2m) – 50 people capacity
- Small meeting room (6.2m x 6.2m) – 25 people
- Main equipped kitchen
- Small kitchen
- Storage
- Male, female and disabled toilets
- Hard and soft landscaped area.



The hall hire rates are:

- Entire village hall hire - £430 per day
- Main Hall - Regular hirers and local residents bookings - £15 per hr

- Main Hall – One off and non residents bookings - £25 per hr
- Large Meeting Room – Regular hirers and local residents bookings - £10 per hr
- Large Meeting Room – One off and non residents bookings - £20 per hr
- Small Meeting Room - Regular hirers and local residents bookings - £8 per hr
- Small Meeting Room - One off and non residents bookings - £18 per hr



The Charity Commission’s Register of Charities shows that in the last five years, income has exceeded expenditure for the hall.

Income / Expenditure	2020	2021	/2022	2023	2024
Total gross income	£33.65K	£23.02K	£27.44K	£33.54K	£31.06K
Total expenditure	£30.19K	£19.08	£13.99K	£33.30K	£26.11K
	£3.46K	£3.94K	£13.45K	£0.24K	£4.95

Poynings Village Hall

The Street, Poynings, BN45 7AQ

The hall is located within Poynings, which is Fulking’s closest neighbouring village.



The accomodation comprises:

- A hall
- An equipped kitchen
- A large area of soft and hard landscaping

Until recently the hall was used almost solely as a nursery. However, the management are now looking at how they will use the hall for a range of community activities.

The Charity Commission’s Register of Charities shows that in three of the last five years, expenditure has exceeded income for the hall.

Income / Expenditure	2019	2020	2021	2022	2024
Total gross income	£7.77k	£6.58k	£7.66k	£7.59k	£5.94K
Total expenditure	£7.32k	£9.37k	£7.30k	£10.03k	£10.74K
	£0.45K	- £2.79	£0.36	- £ 2.44	- £4.8

4.2 Market Analysis: Cafes

Wildflower Café

Saddlescombe Rd, Brighton BN45 7DE

Wildflower is an independent café located in an old cattle yard at Saddlescombe Farm, on the South Downs Way.

The café operates from a caravan adjacent to an old barn and enjoys a unique and historic setting, owned by the National Trust site, close to Devil’s Dyke. The café provides seating in the open, with no overhead cover for those visiting.



Being located directly on the South Downs Way, Wildflower is very popular with walkers and dog walkers, who are their primary customers. It is wheelchair friendly but there is no dedicated parking.

The café has two different seasonal opening times.

In the Spring/Summer period (1 March to 31st October), it is open Tuesdays to Sundays from 9:30am to 4pm. In the Autumn/Winter period the café opens from 1 November to 28th February on Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 9:30am to 4pm.

The café offers a wider range of homemade vegetarian, vegan and gluten-free dishes prepared on site, as well as a range of coffee, tea and a choice of homemade cakes and savoury dishes.

Wildflower uses locally produced coffee from Roasted in Henfield.

Rushfields Café

Rushfields Plant Centre, Henfield Road, Poynings, West Sussex, BN45 7AY

Rushfields Cafe is located in the Rushfields plant centre, located outside Poynings village on the A281. The primary means of access to the café is by car.

The café is open year-round and is popular with those who visit the garden centre and the farm shop.



The café is licensed and operates Tuesday to Sunday from 9am to 4:30pm, serving breakfast from 9am to 11.30am, lunch from 12pm to 3pm and afternoon tea from 2pm to 4.30pm.

Breakfast includes pastries, compote, bacon bap, vegetarian, or full English. Rushfields uses quality, local ingredients including locally produced Trading Post Coffee. It also has vegetarian, vegan and gluten free options, both on its regular menu and on its daily specials.

Attached to a garden centre, appealing primarily to gardeners and plant buyers, who are their primary customers.

The café is part dog friendly.

Fuel Coffee House

Unit 15, Golding Barn Industrial Estate, Henfield Road, Small Dole, BN5 9XH

A coffee house and burger bar, which has strong branding, and an identified market targeted at people with automotives including motorbikes and cars.



The café is not licensed and is open Wednesday to Saturday from 9am – 4pm.

The café is well known for burgers, milkshakes, cakes, deserts and coffee.
The café is dog friendly.

Springs Fish Shop and Café

The Springs, Edburton Road, Edburton, BN5 9LN

Springs opened in 2025 and is a family run business selling fresh & frozen fish, with an accompanying café to the rear of the property.

The café is open seven days a week from 9am - 3pm and sells coffee, breakfasts, cakes and sandwiches and there are a limited number of covers internally and a few tables and chairs outside.



5.0 SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The hall has been a valued community venue for 100 years and has hosted a diverse range of activities. • The hall continues to be an important place for social events, clubs and activities and civic functions. • There is a local consensus that the hall should be safeguarded for the future. • The hall has been managed and run by dedicated volunteers since 2012. • A dedicated charity has been set up to acquire, run and improve the hall and has trustees with a diverse range of skills and experience. • There is a willingness amongst other villagers to volunteer. • The hall occupies a central position within a picturesque village in the South Downs National Park. • The National Park is a very popular destination for walkers and cyclists and short vacations. • There are an abundance of local food and drink suppliers within the rural area. • There is an active community of local artists. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to the building for people with disabilities is poor. • The form of construction of the hall means it is highly energy inefficient. • The facilities in the building including the toilets and kitchen are in need of updating. • The building lacks facilities for the storage of equipment. • There is asbestos in the building that needs to be managed/removed. • There is no dedicated-on site car parking and parking on the highway is extremely limited. • There are no paid staff and the operation is reliant on the goodwill of volunteers. • There is no sustainable income stream, and the hall is dependent on voluntary donations to cover day to day costs. • The building currently has a low level of utilisation. • There are an increasing number of homes in the village that are available for Airbnb accommodation. • The village has a relatively small population of circa 300 people. • some villagers are very apathetic about the hall and/or do not support the activities that take place.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The hall does not currently promote its activities as well as it could do. • Limited online information about how to hire the hall. • Policies and procedures to meet statutory requirements need to be reviewed to ensure compliance.
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Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing demand for unique, sustainable, and locally-driven visitor experiences. • Growing market for sustainable tourism and local artisanal products. • Potential to capitalise on visitors to cater for visitors to the South Downs including walkers, cyclists and those staying locally. • Partnerships with other organisations like the South Downs National Park Authority to promote the venue. • Potential to address rural isolation by providing a central hub for local communities by increasing the use of the building for somewhere people to meet. • Improvements to the buildings fabric to reduce its carbon footprint of the building. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower level of voluntary contributions to fund ongoing running costs of the hall • Any major or expensive repairs that need to be undertaken to the premises. • Non-compliance with statutory legislation. • Economic downturns affecting consumer spending on leisure activities.

Where do we want to be?

6.0 Our Vision & Objectives

Mission

To create a thriving and sustainable multi-purpose community hub, that is owned and run by our community, for our community.

Vision

Through sympathetic restoration and modernisation, we will breathe new life into the village hall & chapel to create an attractive, more accessible space that reduces its environmental footprint and provides a range of activities that enrich the lives of our community.

The former chapel will be transformed into a buzzing arts café for our community and visitors to the South Downs. This will provide funds so the hall can be financially sustainable whilst it runs a diverse range of activities and manages other community initiatives

Objectives

To deliver our Vision our principal objectives and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are:

- **To acquire Fulking Village Hall and Chapel to safeguard their long-term future as community assets.**

KPI: Raise £85,000 and acquire the site by December 2025.

- **To undertake a comprehensive and phased refurbishment to modernise and enhance facilities at the hall for all users.**

KPI: Refurbishment completed in 2028 to enhance users' perceptions of the facilities.

- **To provide a rich mix of activities and uses within the hall to meet the diverse needs of our community.**

KPI: Increase the utilisation of the hall by 200% by Dec 2028 from a January 2025 baseline.

- **To transform the former Chapel through comprehensive refurbishment into an arts café that will be either leased or run as a trading subsidiary.**

KPI: Set up and open the café in 2028

- **To significantly reduce the environmental footprint of the hall and chapel.**

KPI: Achieve an EPC rating of B following refurbishment.

- **To provide long-term financial stability for the hall and to develop a fund for investing in our community.**

KPI: Provide a surplus each year that will create a sinking fund for the hall and to finance local community projects.

7.0 The Village Hall

Introduction

We want to breathe new life into our Village Hall, through comprehensive refurbishment, so that we can provide the facilities and activities that local people need, so that it better meets the needs of our community.

7.1 Activities

A key objective is to provide a rich mix of activities and uses within the hall to meet the needs of more people within our community.

It will therefore be essential moving forward that we increase and diversify the range of activities that we offer, so that the Hall becomes a vibrant hub that caters to a wider variety of interests and help to foster an even greater sense of community.

Regular Social Events

Local people told us that the Hall comes alive when it hosts social events such as Call My Bluff or the Christmas Party. As such we will create a calendar of regular weekly, monthly and annual social events that help to bring people together.

As a direct response to local people's ideas, we have reintroduced our popular Seedling Sunday and we are organising a monthly Sunday Brunch to bring villagers together.

We will continue to listen and to explore other ideas local people have suggested.

Promote Community Services

We will actively explore opportunities for the hall to be used as a base for local services, wherever possible.

By hosting health clinics, charity drop-ins, or providing a meeting point for local support groups, the hall can provide much-needed services for our community.

Strengthen Local Culture

A strong sense of local pride can be cultivated by hosting events that showcase the community's heritage.

We will explore and look to introduce activities such as local history exhibitions, craft fairs, performances by local musicians and theatre groups, and film nights.

Variety of Classes and Workshops

Recently we have launched a new board games evening, that people wanted to see.

We will look to attract different age groups and interests, by considering a range of classes and workshops.

To do this we will tailor activities to the needs of our community, whether it is exercise classes for older adults, storytelling for children or computer games nights for young people.

8.0 The Chapel Arts Café

8.1 Introduction

The Chapel Arts Café will help generate income for the running and upkeep of the village hall and to fund other important community activities.

It will be an arts café, located in the former chapel, and will be a valuable new amenity within the village for local residents.

The Chapel Arts Café will be a social place where local people can come together to grab a cup of coffee or tea and a light snack, while meeting friends and family.

The Chapel Arts Café will capitalise on its unique location within the South Downs National Park, providing a welcoming stop for visitors and a place where they may purchase a small memento of their visit, such as a locally produced card, gift, or piece of art.

8.2 Layout

Housed in the fully refurbished former Chapel, The Chapel Arts Café will be a fully refurbished venue, with its striking vaulted ceiling and south facing windows, will offer a beautiful, light, and airy space, with a warm and welcoming atmosphere.

The interior will provide a simple and modern, yet intimate atmosphere, designed to be sympathetic to the building's history.





The interior will provide circa twenty covers, with a mix of small sets of tables and chairs, bench seating and stools.

Seating will also be available in a landscaped southern facing garden at the front of the Chapel fronting The Street and overlooking the Downs.

The main focal point will be a large counter for a barista coffee machine and the display of light snacks, behind which will be the space for food and drink preparation and clean, including refrigeration, storage, sinks and work top.

Toilet facilities will be available for use by customers, within the hall.

8.3 Food and Drink Offer

The focus will on providing high quality barista coffee, teas, and a selection of cold drinks.

Barista coffee will include all the popular drinks including cappuccino, latte, flat white, Americano and Espresso and will have decaffeinated options.

There will be a variety of teas, including black teas like English Breakfast, Assam, and Earl Grey; Green teas including Matcha; and herbal teas like peppermint, chamomile etc. There will be decaf options.

Cold drinks will mainly concentrate on fresh and health options including freshly squeezed juices.

There will also be a quite simple selection of sweet and savoury snacks, which will be prepared off site by local suppliers. The majority of these will be either vegetarian or vegan.

8.4 Art

The coffee shop will support local artists and will double as a small art gallery, showcasing the talent of local South Downs artists.

From stained glass to sculpture, photography, and paintings, the art will celebrate the beauty and unique character of the region.

Art will be carefully curated, along with a selection of cards and small gifts.

The art and the gifts will be available for purchase, allowing people to take a piece of the South Downs home with them.

To support local artists the coffee shop will take a very modest 20% of any sale proceedings, compared to some other local venues that can take circa 40%.



8.5 Sustainability

The coffee shop will look to reduce its environmental impact in changes to the building fabric as well as in terms of its practices.

- **Sustainable Sourcing** – it will:
 - source locally and prioritize coffee beans, milk, and other ingredients from local suppliers to reduce transportation emissions.

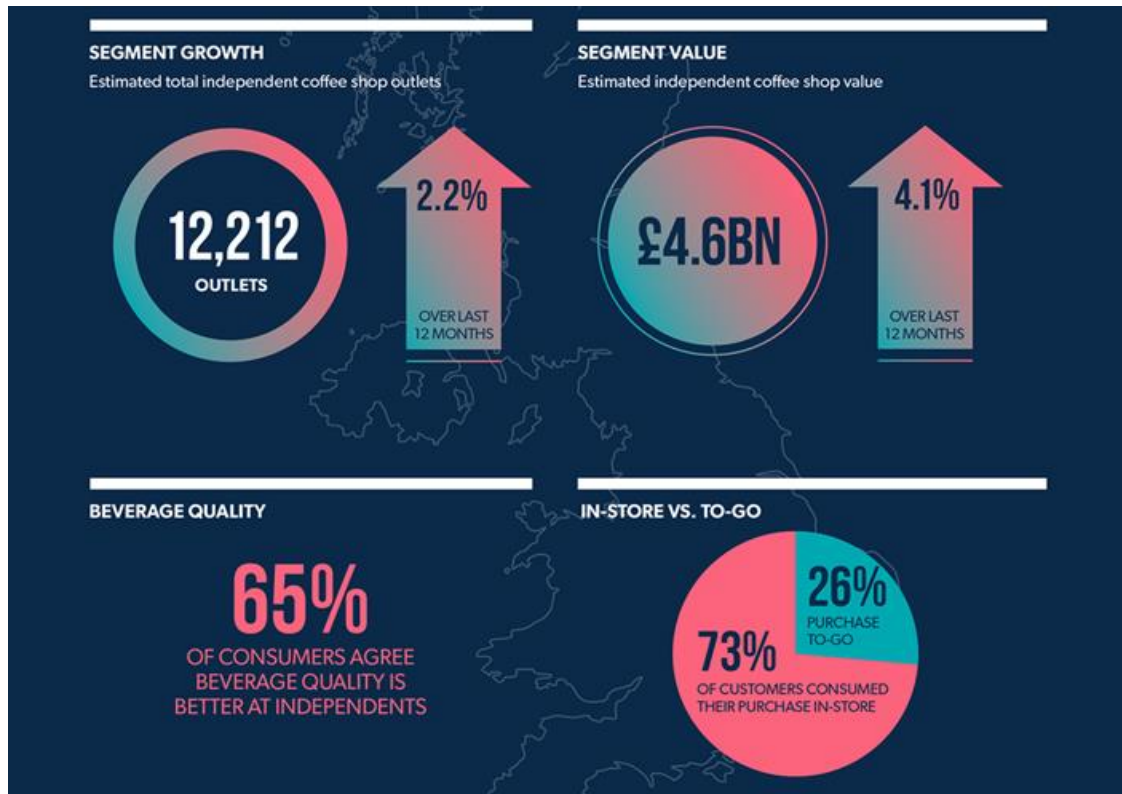
- choose sustainable certifications and opt for coffee beans with certifications like Fairtrade or Rainforest Alliance, which ensure ethical and environmentally responsible farming practices.
- keep meat products to a minimum for meat production has a higher footprint and provide more vegetarian and vegan options.
- **Waste Reduction** – it will:
 - Implement a composting program for food scraps and coffee grounds, potentially partnering with local gardens or farms.
 - Regularly check stock, downsize menus, and offer doggy bags to minimize food waste.
 - Eliminate plastic straws, stirrers, and single-use cups by offering reusable alternatives or charging for disposable options.
 - Ensure proper recycling and reuse of materials, such as paper and cardboard, and consider upcycling furniture and decor.
- **Energy Efficiency** – it will:
 - Use LED bulbs to use less energy.
 - Invest in energy-efficient espresso machines, refrigerators, and other equipment.
 - Consider switching to a renewable energy provider to power your coffee shop.
 - Turn off lights and equipment when not in use and ensure proper insulation in the building.
- **Promote Reusable Practices** – it will:
 - Offer discounts for customers who bring their own reusable cups.
 - Offer free water bottle refills.
 - Provide reusable cutlery and straws.
 - Be a dedicated Refill venue – a global network of places to reduce, reduce and refill available through a free downloaded app.



8.6 Customers

World Coffee Portal's The Independents Report UK 2024 shows that the UK has a thriving independent coffee market valued at circa £4.6bn in 2024 & forecast to grow to £5.6bn by 2029.

Quality, personalised service, authenticity and localness are key drivers of customer retention for independents.



The core target audience will be visitors to the South Downs and local residents.

The South Downs National Park is the most populous National Park and by far the most popular, with an estimated 39 million visitors each year.

The café will seek to maximise on the opportunity it has to tap into this visitor market, with the clear benefit that it has as an attractive village location and its close proximity to Devil's Dyke

There are many different types of visitors to the Southdowns National Park. A 2021 survey of the Southdowns National Park showed that 26% were overnight visitors - 4% staying within the National Park and 22% staying outside. Of the 74% of the non overnight visitors 45% were local residents and 28% were day visitors.

The types of visitors include:

- Walkers – people taking a walk for leisure, either alone, with dogs or with family and friends.
- Ramblers and trekkers – who will be passing through.
- Mountain bikers.
- Road bikers – people using a variety of loops within the South Downs area.
- Holidayers – who may be staying locally in Airbnb and guest house accommodation.

9.0 Refurbishment of the Village Hall and Chapel

9.1 Introduction

To realise our vision for the hall and the Chapel, we recognise that it is essential that we undertake a comprehensive refurbishment, making improvements to both the internal and exterior of the buildings.

9.2 External

Insulation

Insulation is crucial for energy efficiency, comfort, and cost savings by acting as a barrier to heat flow, preventing heat loss in winter and heat gain in summer, and reducing the need for excessive heating and cooling.

Insulating the buildings will be a top priority for us. Careful consideration will need to be given to the best way to insulate the building, to balance value for money, environmental impact, and aesthetics.

PV panels

The installation of photovoltaic (PV) panels with a battery storage will also be a high priority for us.

PV panels with battery storage will help us to generate renewable clean energy during the day and to store this for use at night and during periods of low sunlight, reducing our reliance on the grid.

This will have the benefit of not only reducing our carbon footprint but also help us to substantially lower our electricity bills and potentially earn money by selling electricity back to the grid.

As the buildings are in a conservation area we will need to carefully consider their location, so that they are sympathetic.

Accessibility

It is likely that it will not be possible to make the hall and café fully DDA compliant, however we are committed to enhancing accessibility where we are able, for example by providing better stepped access, handrails, introduction of hearing loops etc.

9.2 Interior

Heating

Adequate and efficient heating is vital is vital for comfort, health, and functionality, ensuring a pleasant environment for staff, volunteers, and users, especially during winter, and combating dampness and condensation.

Currently there is no heating in the chapel and heating in the hall is not very efficient. We will look to provide new electrical heating systems within both buildings.

Storage

Storage is vital for maintaining order, organizing equipment and furniture, and ensuring safe and efficient use of the space, especially for events and activities.

We will seek to improve storage facilities for the hall and the chapel.

Toilets

Good quality toilets are necessary. We will look to improve the quality of the provision which will be used for both the hall and the café.

Kitchen facilities

It will be essential that we look to provide a small kitchen facility within the chapel for the café, which will need to include adequate hot and cold water supply and drainage, which currently does not exist.

We would also like to improve kitchen facilities within the hall however this will be less of priority for us.

10.0 Financial Viability

10.1 Introduction

Ensuring long-term financial stability for the hall and to fund good causes within our community is an important priority. We must generate sufficient income to cover the day-to-day running costs, including essential and planned maintenance, as well as making enhancements to the asset.

The principles of how we will achieve financial stability are to:

- **Provide long-term financial planning** for sustainable operation.
- **Have multiple income streams** to reduce our reliance on voluntary contributions as our primary source of income.
- **Drive cost efficiency** through smarter financial management in our procurement of goods and services, including tariffs.
- **Make best use of external grant funding** wherever possible for both capital and revenue projects.
- **Optimise resources to reduce waste and expenses** and reduce costs by making sustainability improvements to the building that cut utility use.
- **Bring forward commercial opportunities** like a café in the former chapel.
- **Develop a sinking fund** to ensure we have funding for day-to-day maintenance and improvements.

10.2 Reducing Costs

Procurement of Goods and Services

We will drive value for money in our procurement by adopting best practice. This will include the competitive tendering of any goods and services with an anticipated value of over £10,000.

We will also explore and seek to use Framework Agreements in the procurement of goods and services where it would be efficient and cost effective to do so.

We will compare the market and seek to achieve the best value in utility costs and in the insurance market, particularly in relation to our electricity tariff and broadband provision.

Reducing costs through sustainability measures

The immediate priority on the acquisition of the hall will be to secure a new electricity tariff with the aim of securing a minimum 10% reduction in costs.

In the medium term, as part of major improvements to the building(s) we will be seeking to substantially reduce energy consumption, through the installation of insulation to the roof and walls of the building; a new and more efficient heating system; the installation of PV panels; and further double glazing.

Dependencies for achieving this reduction will include:

- The availability of cheaper tariffs
- The securing of funding to make improvements
- Planning permission being secured for any changes to the elevations of the building(s).

10.2 Increasing Income

Hall Hire

While the second main source of current income is through the hire of the hall we recognise that our ability to generate all of the money needed for its day to day operation is limited, due to our village's relatively small local population and the lack of car parking facilities that can deter many hirers.

Nonetheless hire is still an important source of income. We will therefore continue to review hire rates to ensure that they are comparable to other local venues, while ensuring that they continue to be subsidised for Fulking residents and organisations.

A primary focus however we will be to increase the amount of hire of the hall for children's parties, one off events etc.

Precept

The largest form of current income is derived from voluntary contributions. As the village hall is a community asset, we believe that there is fair that instead of only a few people contributing to running the hall, that a fairer way of achieving this is that a modest amount of money is raised from the Parish Council precept.

We will therefore make a business case to the Parish Council for a modest precept increase which would help to contribute towards some of the core funding of the hall.

Commercial Activities

We will introduce commercial activities, particularly from the use of the chapel as a proposed arts café. This will be achieved in either one of two ways, dependent on future research. Either leasing the chapel for use of the chapel by an independent operator; or the setting up and running of the arts café by the Charity.

11.0 Communications

11.1 Hall Communications

We will improve our marketing of the hall as a place to hire and of its activities by:

- Developing our online presence by providing dedicated web pages to provide information about where the hall is, what facilities it has, hire rates; and activities. It is intended that this will be hosted on Fulking.net.
- Google Maps – ensure that the venue is on Google Maps
- Notices – provide information locally on dedicated noticeboards etc.
- Facebook Page – in addition to our dedicated Fulking Village Hall page, we can also raise awareness of our activities via the groups of Fulking Villagers, and Poynings Community. We also have good support from local businesses already who can broadcast our events, including The Shepherd & Dog.
- Email distribution lists – We will wherever possible use existing distribution lists. There are in excess of 1,000 local residents that can be reached through the following; Fulking Parish Council, Poynings Parish Council, Local Church emails etc

- Local press - there are a number of publications dedicated to our villages, such as PigeonPost which feature our activities. We also plan other press coverage for example in BN5 magazine.

11.2 Chapel Arts Café Communications

We will:

- Make best use of and ensure that the café is promoted on apps like Strava, Alltrails etc
- Link up with associated web sites particularly tourism sites
- Make information available at local guest houses, airbnbs etc.
- Make best use of social media like Instagram
- Provide information to local cycle, hiker and other groups.
- Provide onsite signage of the café.

How do we get there?

12.0 Governance and Management

12.1 Introduction

The Business Plan will be delivered by the Fulking Village Hall Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), Charity Number: 1198993.

The CIO's stated objective is:

"To establish and run a village hall and to promote for the benefit of the inhabitants of the Parish of Fulking without distinction of sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, nationality, race or political, religious or other opinions the provision of facilities for recreation or other leisure time occupation of individuals who have need of such facilities by reason of their youth, age, infirmity or disablement, financial hardship or social and economic circumstances or for the public at large in the interests of social welfare and with the object of improving the conditions of life of the said inhabitants."

12.2 Trustees

The CIO has a committed set of committed trustees with a wide range of skills and experience.

Nick Stace OBE (Co-Chair)

Nick is Head of Social Purpose and Sustainable Finance for Barclays UK and Chair of the Prison Reform Trust. Nick was formerly Chair of the Conduit Club; CEO of the Prince's Trust; Director of Strategic Communication at No 10; and deputy CEO and CEO of consumer organisations including Which?



Nick has lived with his family in Fulking for 35 years.

Jen Green (Co-Chair)

Jen is a writer and artist. Jen has been co-chair of the Village Hall Action Group (VHAG) since 2012 and is editor of a local newsletter called the Pigeon Post and previously served on the Parish Council for six years.



Jen has lived in Fulking for 32 years.

Benjamin Murray (Secretary)

Benjamin is Chief Marketing Officer of Immersive, a technology firm. Ben was formerly Vice President EMEA Alliances and Marketing for Globant Salesforce Studio.

Ben has lived in Fulking for two years.



Roger Loveless (Treasurer)

Roger is a retired engineer and has been treasurer of the village's Social Committee and the Village Hall Action Group for two years.

Roger has lived in Fulking with his family for 31 years



Peter Boarder (Trustee)

Peter is a Head of Service at a local authority and has experience of delivering large capital projects and fundraising. He also has a background in community development trusts.

Peter has lived in Fulking for two years.



Sally Brownie (Trustee)

Sally is Chairperson of Fulking Social Committee and is an artist and musician. Sally is currently an administrator and was formerly employed by British Airways.

Sally has lived in Fulking for 5 years.



Mark Hind (Trustee)

Mark is retired from a sales and marketing career. He has been a councillor of Fulking Parish Council for over 10 years, before coming Chairman in 2021.

Mark has lived in Fulking for 32 years.



Tim Jagger (Trustee)

Tim is a retired chartered accountant. Tim's family have used the Hall for over 24 years and his son attended the Good Start Nursery School there.

Tim has lived in Poynings for 26 years.



Patricia Robinson (Trustee)

Tricia is an NHS Health visitor. She has been co-chair of VHAG since 2012 and runs a variety of activities at the hall, including yoga and toddler and craft groups.

Tricia has lived in Fulking for 35 years.



Michael Trist (Trustee)

Michael is a recently retired science teacher and keen to preserve and develop the community structures in the village.

Michael has lived in Fulking for 32 years.



13.0 Capital Funding

13.1 Acquisition

The CIO will seek funding to acquire the site through:

- Event fundraising – running of a range of community activities
- Resident donations
- Local business sponsorship
- External grant funding where possible.

13.2 Capital Improvements

The CIO will seek funding to undertake capital improvements through:

- Event fundraising
- External grants including:
 - Community Infrastructure Levy
 - National Lottery – Reaching Communities Fund and Awards for All
 - Bernard Sunley Foundation
 - Biffa Award
 - The Wolfson Foundation
 - National Lottery Community Fund
 - FCC Communities Foundation

14.0 Revenue Funding

Table 4: Income and Costs						
	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
INCOME						
Voluntary Donations	£2,354	£2,354	£2,354	£2,119	£1,907	£1,716
Donations from hall users	£720	£850	£1,000	£1,000		£1,200
Cash fund raisers	£346	£500	£600	£600	£300	£600
Hall hire (Parish Councils, elections)	£540	£370	£525	£400	£400	£525
Interest on savings	£109	£600	£75	£75	£75	£75
Merchandise	£1,179	£438				
Event proceeds	£1,988	£5,000	£5,000	£5,000	£3,000	£5,000
Precept			£2,500	£2,500	£2,500	£2,500
Café lease						£5,000
Total income	£7,236	£10,112	£12,054	£11,694	£8,182	£16,616
COSTS						
Rent	£360	£360	£360	£0	£0	£0
Electricity	£2,673	£1,809	£2,400	£1,236	£800	£618
Water	£0	£148	£530	£288	£297	£306
Building insurance	£824	£924	£1,932	£1,050	£1,082	£1,114
Council tax	£165	£169	£368	£186	£192	£198
Fire extinguisher service	£61	£61	£126	£65	£67	£69
Public Liability	£371	£381	£0	£0	£0	£0
5 Yearly electrical inspection			£450			
PAT testing		£55	£60	£65	£70	£75
EPC		£100				£120
Broadband						£640
Accounts			£750	£773	£796	£820
Essential maintenance	£32		£1,500			
Event costs	£669	£1,650	£1,650	£1,650	£990	£1,650
Capital incentive						£2,500
Merchandise costs	£938					
Pigeon post	£136	£140	£144	£148	£153	£157
Total costs	£6,229	£5,797	£10,270	£5,462	£4,446	£8,267
Operational surplus	£1,007	£4,314	£1,784	£6,232	£3,736	£8,349
Capital improvements				£3,000	£2,000	£4,000
Maintenance sinking fund				£1,500	£1,500	£2,000
Community projects						£2,000

Notes on Income

Voluntary Donations: Assumes 10% reduction in voluntary donations from 2027

Donations from Hall users: Assumes reduction in 2028 when planned refurbishment works are underway

Cash fund raisers: Assumes reduction in 2028 when planned refurbishment works are underway

Interest: Assumes 2% interest on £80K for 6 months

Event proceeds: Assumes Fund Raising Target of £5,000 per annum except 2028 when planned refurbishment works are underway. Events held in alternative venue like Northfield.

Merchandise: Assumes sale of all remaining stock in 2025.

Precept: Assumes Parish Council agree to an increase in the precept, beginning in 2026.

Café: Assumes lease of Chapel to third part @ £5K per annum.

Notes on Costs

Rent: No further rent payable to PCC following acquisition. However payment in arrears to PCC in 2026 for 2025 rent.

Electricity: Payment in arrears to PCC for 2025 electricity costs in 2026. Fixed tariff until end of 2026. Energy improvements reduce electricity costs by estimated 50% from 2029.

Water: Payment in arrears in 2026 for 2025 water costs to PCC.

Building Insurance: Payment in arrears in 2026 for 2025 insurance costs to PCC.

New CIO insurance to include combined Building and Public liability so slight uplift so slight uplift in cost.

Council Tax: Assumes 3% increase per year which is maximum amount before a referendum

Public Liability: As above

Broadband costs based on 2025 quote by Switchaid. £32.95 per month plus Vat and allow 3% increase per year plus router.

EPC: An Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) typically costs between £60 and £120. Renewed certificate now required and then after works.

Annex 1: Building Survey

Elements that require urgent attention	
These elements have defects that are serious and/or need to be repaired, replaced, or investigated urgently. Failure to do so could risk serious safety issues or severe long-term damage to your property.	
D2 Roof	Slipped and missing tiles to Chapel, though no signs of water penetration. Repairs needed to tiled roof
	No urgent repairs are required at this stage. However, these tiles are often dislodged by high winds and for safety they should be periodically checked and re-fixed, as found necessary
	The hall entrance has a timber framed canopy which is loose and requires immediate repair or replacement
	All timber barge boards and fascia's are decayed and will require replacement.
D4 Main Walls	Pointing to chapel walls has weathered
	Crackings to facings of hall caused by thermal and shrinkage movement, which is typical but not serious.
	Ground levels around the property are high in areas but no signs of damp internally
	Timber strut to the kichen extension has decayed at ground level. Replace timber strut
E3 Walls and partions	The internal walls and partions are constructed of studwork with boarded finishes. The lower sections of the chapel walls are disintegrating and require localised replacement. In the hall toilets there is evidence of damp at low level, but this is most likely caused by cleaning floors and hand washing.

E7 Woodwork	The property is fitted with painted solid doors. The stairs, skirting boards, door linings and other areas of joinery are mainly constructed of timber. Some of the doors are binding and in need of some general easing and adjustment to close properly.
D3 Rainwater pipes and gutters	The stormwater from the roofs discharge into a mixture of metal and plastic Rainwater fittings. The fittings are not serviceable and there is evidence of leaks and water damage to the building envelope. Vegetation is also impeding and damaging the system and needs to be removed.
D5 Windows	Timber windows require adjustment and lubrication

Elements that require attention but are not serious or urgent.

These elements have defects that need repairing or replacing but are not considered to be either serious or urgent. These elements must also be maintained in the normal way.

D6 Outside Doors	The timber doors are stiff and would benefit from adjustment and Lubrication along with a service and replacement of the ironmongery. The access door from the ladies toilet requires replacement	
F6 Drainage	There are inspection chambers visible within the plot. The covers were lifted to enable a visual inspection. The drainage channels were found to be reasonably clear with no serious blockages. Condition Rating 1. Nevertheless, there was some buildup of debris and, whilst not serious, the drains should be flushed through	

