

DOWNTON PARISH COUNCIL

**MEMORIAL HALL EXTENSION
AND PROPOSED LOAN**

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

3rd – 4th MARCH 2017

Introduction

- At the Public Consultation held in 2013 there was strong community support for an extension to the Memorial Hall to provide sufficient pre-school places for the children of our parish and also to create more extensive community facilities.
- The recently approved Downton Neighbourhood Plan also received strong support from residents for providing sufficient pre-school places for all those who need them and also for creating additional meeting room space.

Introduction

- In response the Parish Council has prepared detailed costed plans, obtained planning permission and secured most of the funding required.
- To avoid future inflationary costs this building work needs to start as soon as possible. However, some of our secured funding cannot be accessed until 2018/19.
- This means that a short term bridging loan is needed as well as a longer term loan.

Introduction

The aim of this Public Consultation is to:

- show you the details of the proposed scheme;
- seek your views; and
- obtain your support for the proposed loans.

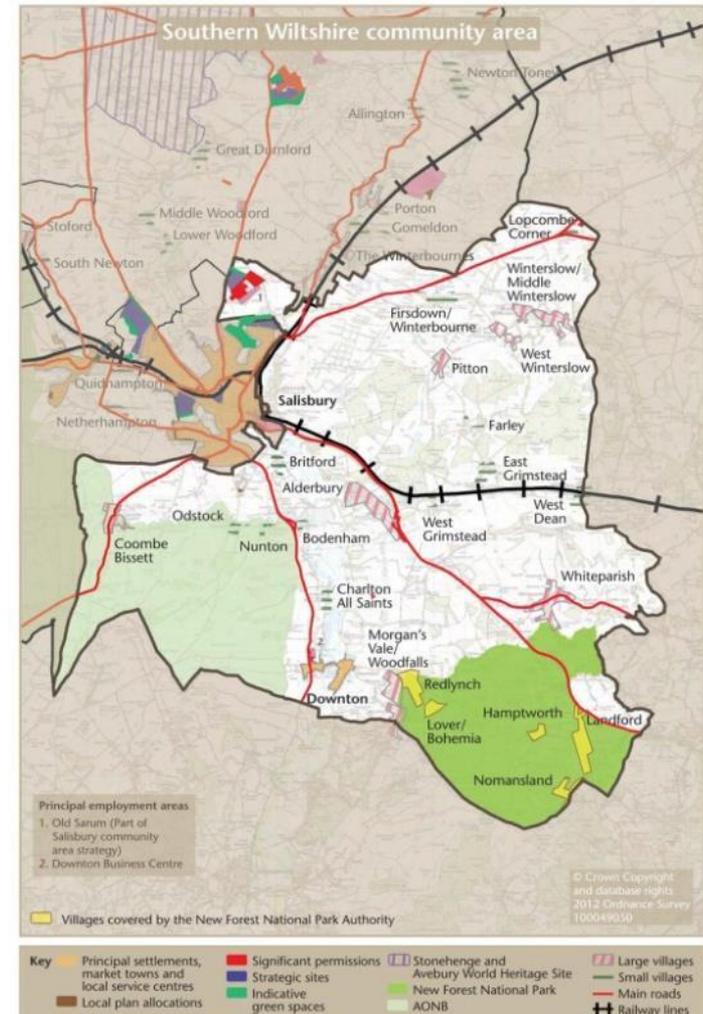
Background

- The following panels provide a brief overview and reminder of the key points presented at the Public Consultation in 2013 and the subsequent Public Exhibition in 2014

What We Said In 2013/14:

South Wiltshire Core Strategy

- Wiltshire Council's plan covers the period from **2006 to 2026**
- At least **615** new homes are to be built in the Southern Wiltshire Community Area
- **190** of the new homes are to be in **Downton**



What We Said In 2013/14: Challenges

- Downton Primary School
 - Additional children from the new homes
 - Not enough room on the school's current site for the additional classrooms and recreational space required
 - Priority for places at the school based on the distance of home from school so, for example, children from the top end of the village may not have places at Downton Primary School

What We Said In 2013/14: Challenges

- Downton Community Pre-School
 - Current location in the Downton Band Hall is not working:
 - Not enough space inside the hall
 - Not enough recreational space outside the hall
 - Time wasted on set up and clear away every day (to enable the band to use the hall in the evenings)
 - Compromises having to be made by both the band and the pre-school; neither has ideal use of the space
 - Not enough room to take additional children from the new homes

What We Said In 2013/14: Solution

- Build additional classrooms on the school's current site
- Expand the school's play grounds by sectioning-off and leasing an adjacent strip of the Memorial Gardens
- At the rear of the Memorial Hall build a purpose designed, two storey extension for:
 - Downton Community Pre-School (Ground Floor)
 - Community Meeting Room (1st Floor), equipped with WiFi, laptop projector, etc., which may be hired for meetings, training courses, etc..

What We Said In 2013/14: Benefits

The community gains the following benefits:

- Community cohesion maintained across the enlarged village 
- All children of primary school age living in Downton parish able to attend Downton Primary School. 
- A multi-use community facility that accommodates the Downton Community Pre-School 

... in exchange for:

- accepting the new housing developments and
- foregoing the use of about 12% of the Memorial Gardens

What We Said In 2013/14:

Memorial Hall Extension Costs & Funding

- Estimated cost: £600,000
- The Parish Council and Primary School are in discussions with Wiltshire Council and Charles Church to agree the funding for the proposed solution.

Project Update

- The following panels summarise the changes since the Public Consultation in 2013 and the subsequent Public Exhibition in 2014

Project Update - Primary School

- Detailed plans produced by the school's architect and submitted to Wiltshire Council for Planning Approval in December 2014
- Following extensive representations, plans altered and approved in October 2015
- Lease, for the strip of land in the Memorial Gardens, finalised and signed in December 2016
- Construction work started in February 2017

Project Update – Memorial Hall

- Architect for the project appointed in February 2015
- Architectural plans produced and then submitted to Wiltshire Council for Planning Approval in July 2015
- Following consultation feedback, plans altered and finally approved in April 2016.

Project Update – Memorial Hall

- Detailed drawings produced, based on professional advice provided by our appointed structural engineer, quantity surveyor and mechanical & electrical engineer.
- Planning approval conditions addressed.
- Sources and availability of funds established.
- Total project costs and funding requirements reassessed.

Benefits

- On the ground floor:
 - A long term home for the Community Pre-School in the centre of Downton.
 - Increased capacity to accommodate the pre-school children of our growing community.
 - Dedicated facilities specifically designed for the needs of pre-school children.

Benefits

- On the first floor:
 - A multi-use community facility in the centre of Downton
 - Rooms equipped with WiFi, laptop projector, etc. suitable for a variety of purposes e.g.
 - Meetings (clubs, local organisations, etc.)
 - Adult education classes
 - Training courses
 - Events

Costs

- Our original concept drawings in 2013 indicated an estimated build cost in the region of £600,000.
- However, having now produced detailed drawings, based on professional advice provided by our architect, structural engineer and the mechanical & electrical engineers, our quantity surveyor has indicated an increased build cost.

Costs

- The primary reasons for the change in costings are:
 - The original estimate was based on a concept design rather than a fully worked up scheme
 - Inflation of building industry costs since 2013
 - The detailed design had to overcome certain technical challenges e.g.
 - addressing the flood defence requirement of the Environment Agency;
 - connecting the extension to the existing building structure
 - The addition of an appropriate contingency sum to allow for any unexpected costs during the build stage

Funding

- Substantial funding in the region of £600,000 has already been secured from Charles Church and Wiltshire Council - this will cover most of the expected costs for the extension.
- Additional funding has also been obtained from various other sources.
- However, we anticipate that the funding secured to date will not be sufficient to complete the project.
- To avoid future inflationary costs this building work needs to start as soon as possible. However, some of our secured funding cannot be accessed until 2018/19.
- This means that a short term bridging loan is needed as well as a longer term loan.

Loans

- Loans to public bodies, such as Parish Councils, are readily available at preferential rates.
- The Parish Council proposes to apply for:
 - A long term loan of up to £300,000, over a 25 year term, at a rate of interest of 2% to 3% p.a.
 - A short term loan of up to £250,000, over a 3 year term, at a rate of interest of 2% to 3%
- We hope to drawdown less than these maximum amounts but have made allowance for any unexpected costs that may yet arise.

Cost of Loan

- To repay these loans the parish element of Council Tax would need to increase from April 2018 by just over £1 per month for an average household.
- To put this increase in context, our parish has a much lower Parish Council tax than all other parishes of a similar size and responsibility in Wiltshire.
- This is despite the fact that Downton has in recent times taken on several services, such as management of the bus shelters and the public toilets, which would otherwise have been discontinued by Wiltshire Council.

Consequences of not taking out loans

- There will not be sufficient pre-school places for the children of our parish
- The parish will have to give up the substantial sums of money already promised (in excess of £600,000)
- This once in a generation opportunity to create quality, long term accommodation for our current and future pre-school children will be lost.
- The extra meeting rooms will also be lost.
- The benefits that were expected, in exchange for giving up the land in the Memorial Gardens, will not be realised
- Future funding will be required to repair the existing flat roof extension to the Memorial Hall.

Conclusion

- The Parish Council considers that the proposed loans are the best and only way to significantly improve our community's pre-school and meeting room accommodation for many years to come.
- For this reason we are very keen to seek your views and obtain your support.
- Please take the time to complete a questionnaire.

Thank you