

Response from the Chair of the Memorial Hall Committee to questions about the car park resurfacing scheme

Questions asked:

1) An explanation of why the scope of the original works had been significantly reduced.

The Revised Drainage Scheme (attached) was one I inherited in both scope and drawings. I simply asked for a quotation for this work last year as it seemed to cover all the works we imagined we needed to do to bring the Hall drainage and car park surfacing up to an acceptable level. This quote came back as exceeding 120k which I have already passed on to the PC. I then conducted a deeper level investigation of the issues finding that there are several reasons why we no longer think this level of work would be necessary or appropriate:

- The design included a new network of drains beneath the carpark and abandons the previously blocked, Existing Drainage (also attached). This blockage was causing water from the drains above it to flow out of manholes and general surface areas causing potholes and generally damaging the asphalt. Now that the existing drainage has been cleared by Wags and team this has solved the problem and we can keep using it.
- The revised drainage scheme had extensive, 1m deep cut-off drains around the Hall (also highlighted on the drawing) to catch and reduce groundwater levels. These were thought to be necessary due to what we now believe to be a mistaken assumption that high levels of groundwater was causing the parquet flooring in the main hall to expand and become raised. This has been disproved by a number of factors:
- There has never been any known history of water ingress or flooding in the hall or any signs of rising damp
- The floor only lifts in August or September when the groundwater would naturally be at its lowest level.
- Advice from flooring companies is that the lifting was almost certainly due to high levels of heat and humidity at that time of year.
- In any event the Hall Committee have contracted to replace the floor in October with a floating system which will have a new damp proof membrane, expansion joints and will not be adhered to the concrete substrate.
- The revised resurfacing included removal of all the sub-base material (the thick layer of crushed rock beneath the asphalt surfacing). Latest quotations and advice from asphalt contractors have confirmed that this would only be necessary in the case where this is shown to be damaged by deformation (waves of asphalt). There is no evidence of this which is usually caused by a large proportion of HGVs (over 3.5 tonnes) using the carpark - this is not the case (there are only a few goods vehicles delivering to the shop travelling at very low speeds) and so we are no longer proposing to replace this layer.
- The revised drainage system also had a number of details including kerbs, edges and different surface finishes for different areas. In the last quotations these details have been removed reducing the scope and scale of the work.

2) A report from a hydrologist or engineer that the drainage problem has been resolved (which the Parish Council feels is necessary to consider releasing public funds).

The Community Right to Build Order is correct in stating that there is an existing channel flowing in a stream in the playground behind the Hall. This flows into a pond in the garden of the adjacent house. This pond discharges into a large diameter pipe which passes beneath the Hall to outfall into the surface water pipe in Freshford Lane. I inspected this system last year in the winter and it is flowing normally and hence would not be the likely cause of any damage to the car park.

In my profession I worked for many years with hydrologists and their standard method of reporting for this type of issue is to commission a number of boreholes and install continuous monitoring instruments measuring the water levels throughout a 1 year period. This would be prohibitively expensive and unnecessary for this scale of project. What could suffice would be a Chartered Civil Engineer's professional opinion. I was a Member of the Chartered Institution of Civil Engineers (UK and Hong Kong) for over 40 years and was heavily involved in large scale drainage schemes for the last 27 years.

Wags Fermin is a highly skilled and practical Mechanical Engineer with a similar number of years' experience. If it were deemed essential we could commission an independent study by an Engineer but this would add to the costs for all parties.

3) A third quote alongside the two you have already commissioned (again necessary in order to release public funds).

I have attached a third quotation.

Additional points

In terms of the Community Right to Build Order (CRtBO) which you advised could be relevant, we believe that the revised resurfacing is not a part of that project due to the significant changes to the scheme as stated above. We are simply repairing a damaged surface.

With regard to the request for any contribution from the PC towards this work, there is no formal written agreement that the PC will contribute to Hall car park repairs on a long term basis, but our previous Chairman advises that the PC has contributed for as long as she has been involved in the Hall - over 10 years. These contributions were based on the principle that the car park is open to the public to use, not just Hall hirers, so it makes sense for there to be a contribution to its maintenance from the Parish Council.