

Community Facilities at PHC

Many of you will already be aware of the project looking to provide new community facilities for Preston.

Using the Neighbourhood Plan as the starting point, where many residents expressed the desire for a community shop and new village hall, the Working Group kicked off the project in early 2022.

Our follow up survey reinforced the findings of the Neighbourhood Plan, and work began to identify a suitable location that could accommodate the new facilities.

At the same time, the village began to grow in size and unfortunately, we had to bid farewell to PHC as a venue for many village events and activities, enjoyed by so many over the years. The swimming pool in the summer, the tennis court, the school hall for parties, functions and meetings have all gone, further reinforcing the need for new community facilities to support our growing village.

The already approved developments at Chiltern View and Sadler's Court, meant there were no available plots for new community facilities within the village boundary, options were limited to green field locations.

The results of the recent Parish Council survey regarding the Altham's Field has shown developing a green field location was not supported by the majority of those who responded, so we needed to find an alternative site.

Over recent months, plans to redevelop PHC into approx. 60 residential units have been developing, which combined with the other new houses, will result in Preston gaining around 100 new dwellings and approx. 250 more residents into our community over the next few years.

Given these changes, the Working Group have been collaborating with the new owners of PHC and NHDC, to identify possible sites within the grounds of PHC, that can once again be used by all villagers.

Following these discussions, we're very excited to share with you that a site has been made available to us for new community facilities.

The old tennis court site, opposite the recreation ground, has very generously been offered to us by the owners of PHC, who are also supporting proposals for an additional cricket pitch and changing facilities within the grounds.

Using the old tennis court makes use of a brown field, infill site and is supported by NHDC. Being within the grounds of a Grade II* Listed Building also mitigates the fear of further development, which would not be tolerated given the status of the building and landscape. Using this site also eliminates the need to develop a green field site.

With the development of PHC, considerable funds will be available for community projects on a scale that may not present themselves again. With the addition of grants specifically designed to support community facilities, we are confident all the funding will be available to enable us to build the new community hub.

We know that the ongoing viability of new facilities is a concern to some in the village. As mentioned previously, we're working closely with the Plunkett Foundation, a charitable organisation who supports over 400 successful community shops in the UK, to develop a robust business plan.

Early in the New Year, we plan to hold a public meeting to share the detailed financial plan, demonstrating viability, as well as gathering feedback on the location within PHC grounds.

We are looking forward to building a vibrant, inclusive hub for our community—one that accommodates the present and welcomes those who will join us in the years to come.

Please contact the Working Group if you have any questions or comments using the email below.

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