

QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

Merger

Why are there two charities, when did they both start and what do they do?

Mendlesham Community Centre Charity was formed in May 1952 to provide village hall facilities for meetings, lectures, classes and other forms of recreation and leisure time, to improve conditions of life for the inhabitants of Mendlesham.

Mendlesham Memorial Playing fields Charity was formed August 1960 to provide a playing field for the inhabitants of the parish of Mendlesham following the purchase of 3.225 acres of land by Mendlesham Parish Council, on behalf of the Mendlesham War Memorial Fund in May 1959. The intention being that the playing field would service as a Parish Memorial, rather than a traditional physical monument, to those lost during both World Wars. A set of locally made wrought iron entrance gates that are still in place, were also installed.

Mendlesham Playing fields were then extended in the 1980's when the present School and Community Centre were built and again in 2012 when Mendlesham Parish Council also purchased more land to extend the playing fields April 2012.

Why are you proposing to merge the two charities?

Both charities are Mendlesham charities and complement each other. They both have something the other needs, and we've been advised that merging them will make it easier to fulfil the aims of both, in that a new community building can be positioned where we feel it would be most suitable and showcase the playing fields as a central part of the community facilities. Both charities have the same trustee, Mendlesham Parish Council, so merging them will also give efficiencies and savings in running them both now and in the future.

Which charity has the most to gain out of the merger?

No charity is set to gain or lose more than the other. The real winner here will be the parish of Mendlesham.

The Memorial Playing Field is a memorial to those who lost their lives in the First and Second World Wars. It would therefore be unthinkable to lose that meaning should the charities be merged. What will the new name be, and will it reflect the name of each of the charities coming together?

We are aware of the history of the charities involved, especially the Memorial Playing fields Charity. We would like the new building to not only become the central hub for parish events and activities but also become part of the memorial for those from Mendlesham Parish who have given the ultimate sacrifice. We hope that you, the parishioners, will want to be involved in the process of naming the new building.

QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

Sale

Why have you sold the community centre?

We have not sold the community centre as yet. After a consultation, in a public meeting in 2021 it was agreed in principle to sell the community centre, with the sole aim of building a new community building for the Parish of Mendlesham, one that reflects the times we live in and will see us right for the future. Please see our aspiration in the document titled "A New Community Building For Mendlesham"

Why are you only having a consultation now and not 2 years ago when this was first kicked off?

There was a public consultation two years ago but because of Covid restrictions this had to be held electronically.

The Community Centre Charity has been meeting regularly since then and it is only now that we are ready to seek permission from the Charity Commission for both proposals which requires the further consultations to be held.

How do you know you haven't sold it off too cheap? Suffolk County Council seem to have everything, and we have nothing at the moment.

We haven't sold it yet. The price was agreed based on a professional valuation commissioned by the charity. This valuation reflected:

- The size of the building.
- The location of the building.
- That it adjoins a school.
- The amount of renovation work required for the building to be brought up to standards expected and required by today's users.
- Finally the list of potential buyers, taking into the above was very limited.

The charity is currently collecting rent from Suffolk County Council whilst they are using Small Hall/SEND Unit building before the sale is completed.

Where is the New hall proposed to be built?

Underutilised space between the existing playing field and the Wheeled Sports Area.

QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

Sale

Does the sale price cover the cost of a new build and if not, where is this additional money going to come from?

No. There is however the possibility of funding from the following:

- Mendlesham Parish Council CIL money from the building of new houses in the village.
- CIL money from the District Council.
- Mendlesham Parish Council has a good record of applying for grant funding from other sources.
- A Mendlesham Parish Council Public Works Board loan - for example this was used when new street lighting was required in the parish.
- Fundraising within the parish.

Do you have planning permission for a new building?

No, that comes at a later stage.

Will there be more car parking?

We will continue to retain ownership of the existing car parking areas and the availability of adequate car parking will no doubt, be a condition of the planning application.

Will the Parish be involved in the New hall planning and design?

Our Architect will come up with a design, which we will use to consult further with the parish. We will actively seek and welcome your views which will be recorded and become part of the consultation.

When is the sale going to happen?

We believe that when the Charity Commission has provided their permissions, we should be able to achieve the sale by the end of this year.

Why is this taking so long?

The process is a lot more complicated and time consuming than selling a house. This is because charities and other professional entities are involved in this process. As a result it has involved seeking complex legal permissions and this has not been straightforward. Unfortunately there are no short cuts if we wish to have an outcome that meets the legal requirements of all the stakeholders involved.