

Ashurst Parish Council – Ashurst Community Consultation – August '25. Proposed New Sports Building on the Recreation Ground.



Clerk to the Council: Oliver Last
e-mail: ashurstclerk@outlook.com

EXTRACT from the MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF ASHURST PARISH COUNCIL, HELD AT ASHURST VILLAGE HALL ON THURSDAY 8th January 2026 AT 7.30PM.

b) To receive an update on the rebuild/replacement of the John Eaton Hut.

The Council agreed that the community consultation, which included the distribution of a survey, public meetings, inclusion of the matter on all Council meeting agendas in recent years, and the provision of opportunities for residents to meet with councillors, had now been completed.

Preferences expressed in the results of the consultation were summarised as:

- The ‘spectator area’ - both inside and out - and the kitchen facility, as provided by the existing Cricket Pavilion, should remain in their current location.
- The current space of the Cricket Pavilion is also appreciated.
- Improvements to the sports provision should be kept simple.
- There were a number of requests for extra parking.

A general discussion ensued on how to accommodate these preferences and how to move this project forwards. The following points were covered:

- Our overriding constraint is the funding of the project.
- Potential fundraising options and the need to involve Ashurst Residents and the main stakeholders in this exercise.
- Consideration of a simplified, easy-to-maintain, sports building to replace the John Eaton Hut in its current location (as, given the existence of drainage limitations, the siting of toilets and showers needs to be within the current footprint of the Hut).
- We would keep the idea of an externally accessed toilet for public/school use.
- The feasibility of renovating the current Cricket Pavilion, rather than looking to replace it with a new building on that site, given the likely considerable cost differential, should be reconsidered.
- The need to obtain clarification from Planning regarding the possible provision of up to six parking spaces, noting that no tarmac or similar surfacing is proposed.
- Additional storage is required – for netting etc. currently stored in the Pavilion.
(The school storage building should remain as is, ideally in its current location, unless it proves necessary to move it.)

It was **resolved** that the Council acknowledged the completion of the community consultation. The consultation outcomes would be circulated by way of the forthcoming Newsletter, together with a request for anyone wishing to get involved in fundraising to make themselves known.

Continuing enquiries would be made regarding a modified design and costings for a simplified sports building to replace the John Eaton Hut, together with ball park figures for the anticipated cost of renovating the Cricket Pavilion.

Advice would also be sought from Horsham Planning, as well as from the Charity Trustees of the Recreation Ground, in relation to the proposed additional parking spaces. (It being noted that the Council does not wish to encroach on any green space in the Recreation Ground).

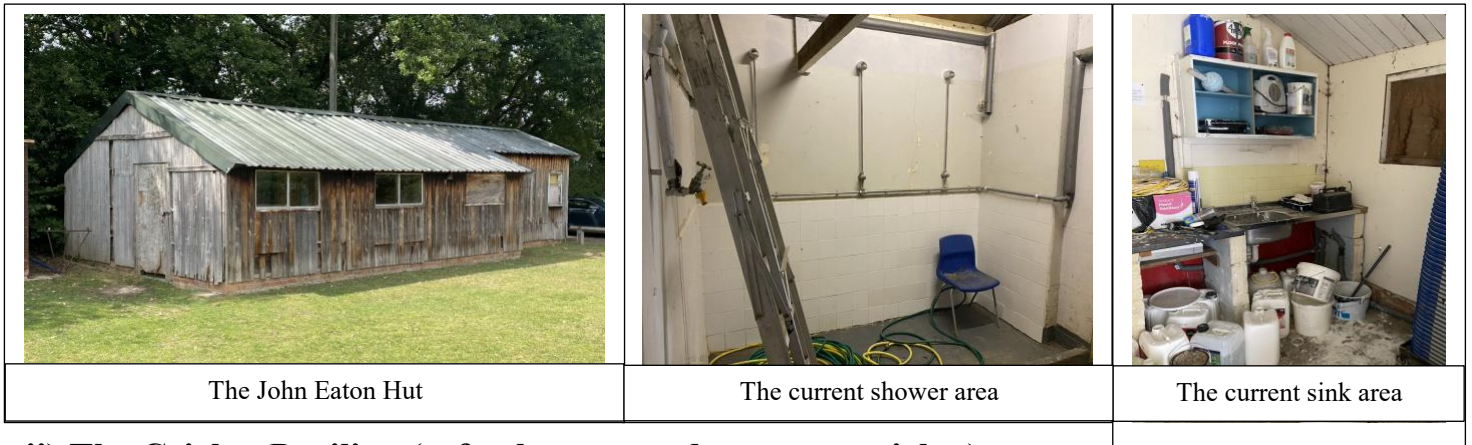
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As a follow up, to the presentation at the Annual Parish Meeting on 23rd July 2025, and as part of our public consultation, Ashurst Parish Council is now seeking your further comments on our proposed design for a new sports building, on the Recreation Ground.

As well as being frequented by walkers, with or without dogs, we currently have three main users of the Recreation Ground – namely Ashurst Cricket Club (summer months), Ashurst Football Club (predominately the winter months) and our local Ashurst School which, during term-time, uses the ground nearly every day. We currently have three separate buildings, supporting these regular users:

i) The John Eaton Hut (changing, showering and storage - cricket and football)

This building has two changing rooms, three open showers with a boiler, a large sink, an umpire’s room, a small room for storage, an internal toilet and an external toilet.



ii) The Cricket Pavilion (refreshments and storage - cricket)

The Pavilion contains a basic kitchen with a sink and an open counter for serving teas and refreshments and there is a small open ‘bar’ area. It is also used for the storage of tables, chairs and cricket equipment including equipment for maintenance of the pitch. At the front there is a hard standing open area used for outdoor seating. This area used to be covered by an awning but this disappeared a long time ago!

As well as being used by the Ashurst cricket team, the Pavilion is also used for occasional one-off sporting events - eg by the Steyning Ladies Cricket or for a Junior Cricket match. In addition, it is made available for various community and school events such as the Annual Dog show, the School Sports Day, the School Leavers’ Rounders and Tea, the biennial Rogation service and various Jubilee events.



iii) The small storage building (used by Ashurst school to store its sports equipment)

The current state of affairs

The existing John Eaton Hut and Cricket Pavilion, are both in a state of significant disrepair, having reached the end of their useful lives. These structures are deteriorating due to age, weather exposure, and limited maintenance viability.

Key issues include:

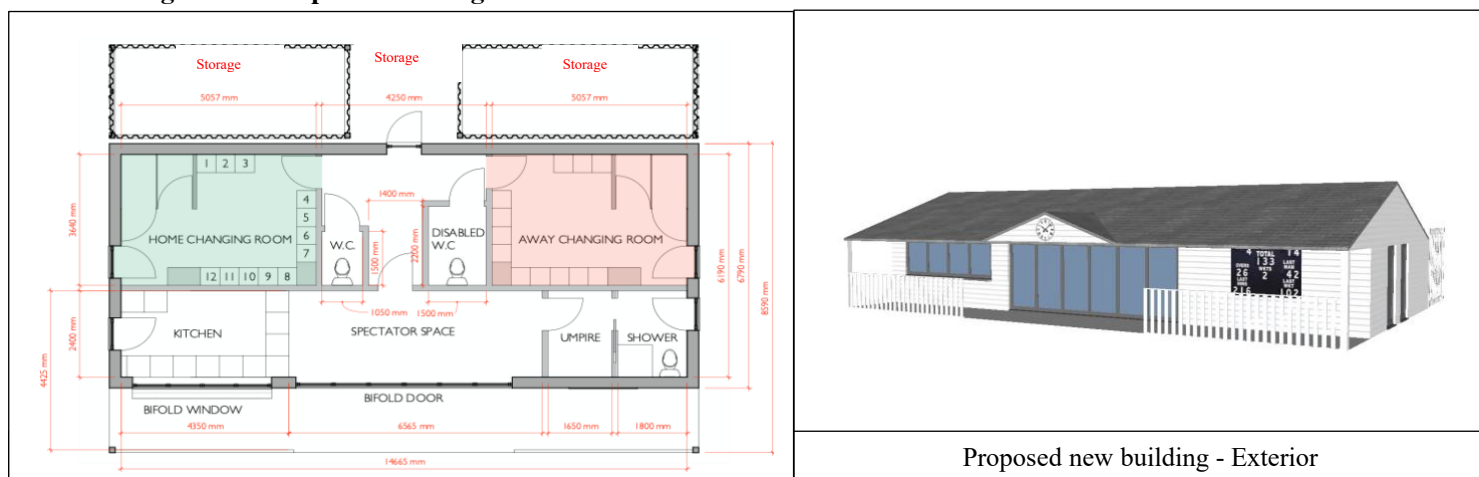
- i. The changing rooms and toilet block of the John Eaton Hut are in poor condition, with disused and unsanitary showers and failing infrastructure.
- ii. The Cricket Pavilion has structural damage, including external walls that are collapsing and vegetation growing through the building.
- iii. Much of the external woodwork of both buildings is rotten or falling apart.
- iv. These two buildings, both built before the turn of the century, were 'temporary' buildings and as such have inadequate footings.
- v. Repair costs would be high and unlikely to offer long-term value or sustainability.

It would appear that the most cost-effective solution is a modern, consolidated, attractive replacement building using durable materials. This is now urgently needed to ensure safety, functionality, ease of maintenance and value for all users of the Recreation Ground. This model will combine all the functions and facilities of the existing buildings, as well as take into account the community's and the school's requirements, and the need for adequate storage.

In order to realise this project, we will need to raise funds sufficient to cover 100% of the construction costs – through fund-raising, possible grants and the generosity of our residents. Once it is built, we do not anticipate any increase in our current maintenance costs.

As most of you will be aware, since our Annual Parish Meeting of 2023, when we first spoke of the need to replace the existing buildings, we have been working on possible suitable designs. If you want to follow the various steps of this process, these are recorded in the Council minutes and in the Newsletter updates from us. We have now come up with a draft design for the new sports building as illustrated below.

Draft design for new Sports Building



Proposed new building - Exterior

As you can see, the current draft design for the new sports building includes the following:

Home and Away changing rooms, an umpire's room, two toilets, one with external access, one disabled toilet, a kitchen/refreshment area with a serving hatch to the exterior, an internal community (spectator) space, an external covered community space. It will also include a ramp for access.

Wherever possible we will endeavour to use sustainable/low maintenance materials.

In addition there will be ample and separate storage, by way of storage containers, for the sports equipment of the three main users of the Recreation Ground – the cricketers, the footballers and the school.

We believe that a new sports building will help with the recruitment of players to join our existing cricket and football teams, as well as attract other sports clubs to come and use the improved facilities.

Before finalising the design of this replacement building, and as part of our consultation process, we want to receive your input. This will help ensure that we properly understand how our community uses the Recreation Ground and its buildings. To this end, we would be grateful if you could complete the attached questionnaire and return it to Oliver Last, our Ashurst Parish Clerk, at ashurstclerk@outlook.com The deadline for responses is **5pm on Monday 15th September**.

Once we have had time to consider the feedback from the questionnaire, we will be back in touch with you.

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Summary of Community feedback to the above questionnaire - Based on 22 Responses.

Note: We have highlighted the most frequent responses in each question for your ease of reference.

Q2	Please give us a rough idea of your age:		18 to 30	31 to 45	46 to 60	61 to 75	Over 75	Other	
		22 Resp	0	0	9	10	2	1	
Q3	How often do you use the Recreation Ground?		Weekly	Monthly	Occasionally	Never	Other		
		22 Resp	9	4	6	0	3		
Q4	What do you use the Recreation Ground for? Please tick all the boxes that are appropriate:		Walking /leisure	Cricket	Football	Use of Play equip	Socialising (school)	Attend Dog show	Other - School/ Events
	*Rounders -1, *Running -1	22 Resp (62 uses)	19	2	1	7	5	21	5
Q5a	How often do you use the cricket pavilion		Weekly	Monthly	Occasionally	Never	Other		
		22 Resp		1	18	2	1		
Q5b	How often do you use the John Eaton Hut		Weekly	Monthly	Occasionally	Never			
		22 Resp		1	5	15	1		
Q6	What do you use either building for. Please tick all the boxes that are appropriate		Cricket	Football	Dog Show	School events	Other - Variety		
		21 Resp (32 uses)	2	1	18	10	1		
Q7	We have outlined in page two above the various features we consider to be essential in the new building. If you feel there is anything else that should be included or considered, please specify below:								
	No comment - 11. Increased community and kitchen space needed - 8. No need for sports building -1 or showers - 2.								
Q8	The current buildings support Ashurst Cricket Club and Ashurst Football Club, and, if there is availability, can be used for other one-off sporting events. These tend, however, to be either cricket or football related. Are there any other specific sporting activities you think the Recreation Ground and the new building should support and encourage?								
	There was general enthusiasm for all sport to be encouraged. Several wanted stoolball and rounders to be played. Several suggested more cricket and football particularly for juniors and ladies. School sport was to be encouraged. A couple suggested basketball (with a hard area for this). Improved/more (wooden/modern) play equipment. Other ideas – Skateboard, running track, padel, tennis court. There were 7 no comments.								
Q9	Do you support the development of a new sports building?		Yes	No	Not sure	If not sure any comments			
			16	1	5	2 Yes, if larger community space.			
Q10	If you have other comments suggestions, please note these below.								
	Note - A number of varied comments and ideas were received, and there was considerable overlap with Q7.								
	Parking concerns raised -12. Concern new building will result in more cars -1.								
	Site of pavilion should be used - 8. More emphasis on the school and the community - 7.								
	Space outside and Awning should be kept - 4. Anything green/eco/low maintenance - 3. Rented out to villagers only - 3.								
	Keep school storage if possible - 3. Some storage needed - 1. Containers - 2. No containers -1.								
	More financial info needed - 3. Concerns re process and no active consultation prior to presentation of the draft design - 3.								
	Enthusiasm for the new building and for resulting enhancement of sport - 2.								
	Renovate Pavilion - 2. Approval of outside toilet for school/community - 2.								
	Concerns re ongoing maintenance and supervision of the buildings - 2. Current buildings neglected - 2.								