

# ST MARY'S GRASSENDALE CHURCH HALL

## CONSULTATION 2021

### INTRODUCTION

The church hall committee carried out a consultation exercise in July 2021 to determine the thoughts of the church congregation and local community on the current arrangements for the organisation and use of the hall. This exercise forms part of an ongoing review of the building to put in place a clear strategy for its future maintenance and development. The strategy involves a new set of terms of reference for the hall team, a prioritised maintenance programme, revised communication arrangements and preparatory work to allow for quick applications for future grant funding needed to complete urgent refurbishments to the building.

The questionnaire presented nine questions for people who either use or are familiar with the hall as well as an opportunity for individual responses.

### QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Responses to the nine questions are presented below:

**SA** -STRONGLY AGREE, **A** - AGREE, **D** - DISAGREE, **SD** - STRONGLY DISAGREE

QUESTIONS	SA	A	D	SD
Do we have good facilities at the church hall?	27	36	9	0
Is it a safe and secure environment?	25	37	9	1
Is the accessibility of the Hall suitable?	25	36	10	1
Do you feel the costs are fair and competitive?	26	44	4	0
Do we meet the needs of the community?	14	46	9	0
Are there enough opportunities for the community to be involved?	16	38	13	0
Are you aware of all the activities currently held in our hall?	12	36	22	1
Do we communicate effectively with you?	12	45	12	1
Do we take our safeguarding & risk assessment responsibilities seriously?	40	27	3	1

### NUMERICAL RESPONSES

In general terms, the numerical responses indicate a high to fairly high level of satisfaction with issues raised by the questionnaire. This view is strengthened by the large number of responses received. Given this, the following overall judgement is given:

'A good picture with some strong features, in particular the high value for money of the charges and the strong approach to safeguarding and risk assessment. Some further work should be done on strengthening communication of the activities in the hall as well as the overall approach to communicating with the church congregation and local communities.'

It was heartening that, despite the fabric of the building needing considerable investment, issues around safety, security and accessibility were not raised as serious concerns by the majority of respondents. Concerns around the fabric of the building were raised by many respondents which will be highlighted in the next section of the report.

## **INDIVIDUAL RESPONSES**

We received many comments noting the need for a building renovation programme, which is a central aim of the ongoing work of the hall committee. The importance of heating in the winter months was mentioned and is due to be addressed in the near future which will remove a major cost.

Other specific issues regarding the building fabric were raised by a minority of respondents, in particular improved toilet, washing facilities, the kitchen facilities as well as external security. It was notable, however, that many respondents did feel that the current building did NOT detract from the overall quality of the current activities. Some respondents did state that an improved fabric would increase potential use of the building by the local community and, conversely, that without some refurbishment there was a danger of a decline in future use. Several responses noted that the hall was an integral part of community activities.

The highest number of negative responses related to the awareness of current activities in the hall, with a slightly smaller number of negative responses around community involvement and how effective communication is. Several specific comments were made around these issues including a broader range of advertising within the community, more use of social media to communicate events, up-to-date notices/display boards, use of a website, more information disseminated to potential new users.

The pricing structure was generally seen as at least fair and in some responses regarded as cheap in comparison with other outlets. Some responses argued that prices could be a little higher in light of the cost implications of the pandemic and ongoing inflation.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

In the light of comments received, it is felt that the following actions should be considered.

1. A review into all aspects of communication with regard to the use of the hall by current and potentially new users, including use of website and Facebook.
2. A prioritised refurbishment plan for the hall with appropriate quotes for the work.
3. Urgent, preparatory work for grant applications to fund refurbishments.
4. Consider more ways of engaging the local community to use the facilities of the hall. Links to point 3.

## **CONCLUSION**

A total of 74 responses were received, which is a significantly high return and gives greater validity to the views expressed. These have been analysed in detail leading to this report and will now be considered in detail by the hall committee. The questionnaire has shown that a high level of commitment to the hall and general satisfaction with the activities within it exists. There are also some clear messages regarding improvements that will require urgent attention over the coming

weeks and months. As further work is done in planning for the future, we will continue to engage with you.

**Thank you for your participation and continued support.**