

Area: Central South

Households participated	11
Households declined participation	7
(Total households approached)	(18)
Adults in participating households	22
Children living in participating households	7
Visiting children to same households	16
Willing trustees	3.5
Willing managers/organisers	5 (3 playspace only)
Helpers (willing to lend a hand but not organise)	8 (3 playspace only)

- (1) Children taken as those of an age likely to use a play facility. Visiting children it should be noted vary from once or twice weekly to once or twice per year in terms of frequency
- (2) Trustee/manager numbers take into account some degrees of uncertainty
- (3) Willing helpers/managers of a village facility not solely a hall, some only a playspace.

1. There is a clear need and desire for an enclosed play space of some description within the village to allow children, both resident and visiting, to have a safe place in which to play.

My Recommendations:

I therefore recommend the following actions to be considered by the Parish Council:

(The following recommendations assume that the PC isn't able/willing to expand their responsibilities to undertake the community developments listed).

1. The PC should contact those willing to be community trustees and arrange a meeting to discuss the possibility of forming a Hedley Community Trust tasked with organising regular community events and making use of any equipment already owned by the community (the marquee etc.). In addition to this I believe it would be in the interest of the village to look into the purchase/acquirement of a field or space where events can take place/in which the marquee can be erected if needed.

This space could work hand in hand with the development of a green play-space/facility and act as a first step towards further developments regarding a hall depending on interest/uptake.

2. Contact those willing to be 'play-space' trustees/management and arrange a meeting to discuss the possible planning and development of such a provision.
3. Contact those willing to be trustees of a hall and organise a meeting to discuss the possible planning/develop a solid business plan addressing all of the outlined concerns relating to a hall.
4. See if all groups could work together with regard to my first recommendation.

Properties approached and interviewed by me:

Of the 18 properties I approached within my allocated area, 3 politely declined, 4 did not respond (2 of these properties are currently unoccupied but are occasionally tended to) and 11 chose to participate.

The nature of receptiveness to the study by residents interviewed:

During my visits to these 11 properties I was received positively and with reassuring enthusiasm. The key points raised by these residents were:

- *All felt there was a need for more community spirit in the village, agreeing that there had been a noticeable decline.*
- *All expressed a real concern over the current safety of children at play in the village, as there is no allocated space, forcing those who do play out to use the small, unsuitable green areas, driveways and most worryingly the road. They all believed the village would make good use of a dedicated play space of sorts.*

Discussions on hall - for and against:

- *3 in favour of a hall*
- *2 against*
- *8 neutral*

The majority of residents I interviewed did not specify a hall as a provision they wanted outright or felt Hedley needed. I have described them as neutral (above) because they did later go on to say that if a hall development did take place that they felt it would be necessary for the whole village to get behind it to make sure it remained viable. With this in mind they indicated they might participate in or organise events, regular or one off to do so. All in this neutral group had the concerns as outlined below.

- *Location*
- *Traffic – already a problem in the village on occasion*
- *Parking - already a problem in the village on occasion*
- *Noise – From events such as weddings and parties – cut off times would have to be considered but would this effect viability?*
- *Security & anti-social behaviour*
- *Viability – Would it get enough use? – Other local facilities are struggling with this, why would it be different here? ‘What is the Unique Selling Point?’*
- *On-going maintenance and running costs*
- *Trustee/management recruitment and renewal*

The 3 households that were in favor of a hall development believe that the village needs this provision in order to rebuild Hedley's community spirit, as it would offer a place for frequent community activities and interactions to take place. Some residents made reference to the Riding Mill and Newton developments to support viability. They felt that there wasn't currently suitable or sufficient provision within the village that allowed them to meet or get to know other villagers on a regular basis and that they had moved to Hedley hoping to do so.

All in favour or neutral on the subject of a hall expected or considered it essential to have the following facilities within a hall development

- Kitchen facilities (basic at a minimum)
- Toilets
- Parking
- Play space/area
- 3 mentioned alcohol licensing

Those against the development of a hall shared the concerns of those whom were neutral and did not believe it viable to take further. They also expressed that they would have no interest in using the facility and that it would have a negative impact on the currently peaceful environment within the village.

Discussions on play facility - for and against:

- *All interviewees were in favour of a play space of sorts*
- *2 had some minor concerns over safety and maintenance of any apparatus*

All 11 households that I interviewed expressed a perceived need for a 'play space' for children both resident and visiting. All made a point that there isn't currently anywhere suitable for children to play and expressed deep concern regarding the safety of the children forced to play on the small, unsuitable patches of green space available, on driveways and roads. They all acknowledged that the children residing in and visiting the village should have somewhere safe to play.

2 residents did express some concern over the safety issues surrounding a playground with regard to play equipment and its maintenance but were clear in their desire for a 'dedicated space within the village for the children to play' i.e. a field/enclosed grassed area where they could kick a ball, play chase, ride their bikes, build dens Etc.

2 residents believe that this space should be incorporated into the development of a hall.

All had family or friends that would make good use of such a space.

Other potential development suggestions:

- *Bus route or car share scheme*
- Interactive website
- Mini library/book swap facility (see reference images)
- Community woodland/green space
- Community run events possibly making use of the marquee already owned by the village
- Bringing back the village memorial

My overview related to the households I've visited:

There is obviously unquestionable interest in rebuilding community spirit within the village. During my visits, residents fondly recalled frequent past community events. The understanding is that these have fizzled out when people have moved on from the village and 'no one has picked up the torch'. It was acknowledged that there are the occasional community events held by both The Leek Club and The Feathers (which many continue to enjoy) but it was felt the responsibility of community spirit shouldn't always have to fall on their shoulders.

The majority of those interviewed by me expressed concerns that there were many issues to overcome to ensure the development of a hall is and will remain, viable (as listed above).

It has been made clear from the residents I've visited that there is a definite want and need for a designated village play space. The perceived manifestation of such a space ranges from an enclosed field, woodland or green area to a natural play space similar to the new development at Whittonstall Primary (see reference images).

My personal conclusions based on the findings above:

2. There is a clear desire, among the residents I have interviewed, for the rekindling of a Hedley community spirit achievable through more frequent opportunities to meet up and interact without solely relying on the organisation/facilities of the Leek Club or The Feathers.

From the response in my allocated area I couldn't say a hall had sufficient backing at present but if those willing to be trustees were able to get together and develop a solid business plan addressing all of the outlined concerns listed above relating to a hall, the development may gain the support needed but would require further feedback from the village once this has been done.