The Hall Land & Playing Field

Aspirational Development Plan

revision 12.1.24

Background:

There are separate Charitable Trusts responsible for the Hall and Playing Field. It is not proposed that this change, however together the land provides a community facility which needs to be maintained and could be enhanced to gain wider use including for community events such as the Flower Show and Country Fair. This Plan is intended to be aspirational and capable of being changed as the needs and wishes of the community determine from time to time. It is intended that any work that is carried out will have regard to this Plan and be sympathetic. Any significant works will require separate funding. Neither the Hall nor the Playing Field currently have surplus funds for this endeavour.

Aims:

To provide a single community facility which provides a safe wildlife friendly sustainable environment for a wide range of leisure and recreational activities whilst enhancing the facility currently available at the Hall and in the Playing Field.

The Plan:

1. **Boundaries**

1.1. To restore the Playing Field highway hedge; coppice existing hedgerow plants, remove elder, remove kissing gate and plant to the gaps using mixed variety Warwickshire appropriate hedgerow species similar to those planted in front of the Hall. Replace the timber five bar gate with new, similar to existing. Construct a timber picket fence behind the restored hedge for security and safety purposes. Complete.

1.2. To the Hall highway boundary install a pedestrian gate and/or entrance feature to the existing pedestrian access.

1.3. To the rear boundary of the Playing Field, replace the existing timber fence. Some of the brambles are to be cleared but this boundary is to be maintained as a wildlife sanctuary with minor enhancement.

1.4. To the rear boundary of the Hall plant a new hedge, intended to form a wind break, using mixed variety Warwickshire appropriate hedgerow species with specimen tress (see section 2). Existing access to the field behind is to be maintained with right of way.

1.5. To the existing division boundary between the Playing Field and Hall remove the existing timber fence. Cut out brambles and make access points through the boundary for access and to open up the two land parcels so that operationally and appearance wise are as one. New shrub, hedgerow and specimen tree planting is envisaged.

2. Trees

2.1. Ash Die Back caused by the Hymenoscyphus fraxineus fungus will need to be monitored. An annual tree health survey is to be conducted.

2.2. New tree planting is proposed, subject to assessment of soil and ground conditions, with specimen trees from the following list preferred:

- Dogwood, Birch, Hawthorn, Hazel, Rowan, Sweet Chestnut, Holly, Crab Apple, Common Lime and Silver Birch, Spindle, Oak, Goat Willow (to attract moths), Field Maple, Common Cherry and Bird Cherry

2.3. A small woodland is intended to be created to the rear of the Hall and Playing Field land, including a mixture of the specimen trees referred to above. Access must be maintained to the field gate in the south east corner. The area of woodland to be planted must have regard to the other uses of the land as a sports field and for the Cherington & Stourton Show to ensure that there is sufficient space for both.

2.4. Further tree planting is intended to the boundaries including for replacement of Ash trees if necessary.

2.5. Other anything dead the existing trees to the division fence between the Hall and Playing Field are to be retained. Some limited felling of small Elder trees may be carried out on the site. Elsewhere dead or dying trees are to be felled only for safety reasons. Some dead trees should be retained as wildlife habitat.

3. Car Parking and Hard Landscaping

3.1. Car parking at the Hall is limited with overspill parking on the grass behind the Hall or on the highway if conditions as wet. It is proposed to extend the permanent car parking area to the rear of the Hall using a system of plastic grids through which the grass with grow.

3.2. Extend the existing tarmac path from the front of the Hall into the Playing Field.

4. Water/Drainage

4.1. Parts of both the Hall land and the Playing Field lie wet during the winter a scheme of drainage is to be considered.

4.2. A small pond may be considered provided that this is fenced in for safety purposes.

4.3. A mains water supply pipe should be laid to a convenient location with stop tap (and winter isolator) to service watering of new plants and trees, for pond filling, camping and dog drinking.

5. Wild Flower Meadow

5.1. A small wildflower meadow is to be created adjacent to the front boundary of the Hall. This is a prominent area visible to Hall users and the maintenance of this area will be particularly important.

6. Patio

6.1. An extension of the patio area to the rear of the Hall is proposed, to be finished to existing levels, in concrete paving to match the existing. This will entail the removal of a significant quantity of soil, estimated in the region of 65 cubic metres, together with the construction of a retaining

wall or bank (requiring a higher volume of soil removal) to which safety barriers will likely be required at the top to prevent falling including from vehicles. A bund could be created elsewhere which might assist with sound dampening for village residents from events ongoing at the Hall. It is acknowledged that this part of the project would be particularly expensive.

7. Play Equipment/Sports Pitches

7.1. The existing play equipment is currently serviceable but requiring minor maintenance. It is considered preferable to create a fenced and gated area for young children enclosing a selection of suitable equipment when next refurbishment is due.

7.2. Outside of this area a play area for older children and adults is to be considered for larger play and sports equipment.

7.3. A small bicycle track is envisaged possibly finished with a self-binding limestone dust surface suitable for bicycles and other ride-ons.

7.4. Whilst it is not envisaged that there is currently a need for a full-sized football or cricket pitch. The land to the rear of the Playing Field is intended to be suitable for 5-aside football, netball or other smaller scale sports. There are currently ruts, cracks and uneven ground which should be repaired to prevent injury.

7.5. There has been a suggestion that a Padel Tennis court might be constructed somewhere on the site. There is deemed to be insufficient current interest in this proposal and therefore has not been included under this aspirational plan.

Implementation

8. Phasing

8.1. It is intended that the Plan be implemented in phases:

- Phase 1: Work on the division fence and restoration of the Playing Field front boundary fence. Repair to the sports field.
- Phase 2: Tree planting and creation of woodland and habitat areas. Laying of a mains water supply to stand pipe.
- Phase 3: Extension of Hall Car Parking area
- Phase 4: Drainage
- Phase 5: Replacement of Playground equipment and fencing
- Phase 6: Creation of a Cycle track
- Phase 7: Enlargement of patio area behind the Hall.

9. Planning Permission

9.1. The land lies within the Cotswold National Landscape Area but not within the Cherington and Stourton Conservation Area.

9.2. The land behind the Village Hall is still designated as being of Agricultural Use. A 'change of use' application to community use is proposed. Planning permission will be required for the extension of the Hall Car Parking areas and patio.

9.3. Permission under Hedgerow Regulations may be required for alterations to part of the division fence between the Hall land and Playing Field, although some areas of 'hedge' consist of brambles only. The Hedgerow Regulations generally apply to agricultural land and therefore sensibly included within a Change of Use application as above.

9.4. Permission for tree felling may be required however this will not be necessary for dead dying or dangerous trees.

Update: Planning Consent has been obtained for 'Change of use of land to community use, additional car parking to the rear of the Village Hall, including landscaping works and associated development.'
Ref: 23/03033/FUL

10. Maintenance & Funding

10.1. Any implementation of this plan must have regard to the maintenance implications including annual cost.

10.2. Neither the Hall Trust nor the Playing Field Trust have surplus funds for significant investment in the major works intended under this plan. It is possible that external sources of grant funding may be available, and some voluntary work is anticipated, however a fund-raising programme will be required in order to implement some of the more major parts of this plan.

11. Use

11.1. It is not the intention of this Plan to be prescriptive as to the uses to which the Hall land and Playing Field are put, rather that there will be a facility suitable for a number of uses and that any changes including landscaping do not restrict the potential uses to which the site may be put. Some potential uses include:

- Football – 5 aside only, a full-size sports pitch is not intended.
- Archery
- Netball/Basketball
- Cycling
- Car Boot sales
- Pop up Camping
- Cherington & Stourton Show
- Walking including for dogs, other than on land used regularly by children and assuming dog mess is cleared may be considered.

11.2. The relatively flat area adjacent and to the Hall on the west side has water attenuation drainage beneath and therefore excavation of this area is not planned, it does provide an area capable of siting a marquee however and for this reason landscaping on this area should be resisted.

11.3. It is to be hoped that with improvements to facilities comes an increase in use. There will be spaces to play for children and young people and other more tranquil spots. Strategically placed benches for those enjoying or supervising in these areas should be provided.

12. Consultation

12.1. This plan has been completed following invitations sent to each household to consider the contents of the draft plan and to make comment on it, at two events held at the Hall held on 10th December 2022 and 21st November 2023.

12.2. The planting, landscaping and environmental enhancement schemes included in the plan have been created following consultation with the village Gardening and Wildlife Groups.

13. Review

13.1. This plan is to be reviewed from time to time in order that it remains relevant to the needs of the residents of the three villages.

14. Approval

14.1. This Plan is approved by the Trustees of the Cherington, Stourton and Sutton-under-Brailes Village Hall.

14.2. This Plan is approved by the Trustees of the Cherington and Stourton Playing Field.