



Creating a business plan

This information sheet guides a village hall management committee through the process of producing a business plan. It provides the committee with an opportunity to examine itself, its working practices and what it is trying to achieve.

December 2010



Contents

Introduction.....	1
1. Why is a business plan needed?	1
2. Three steps to your business plan	2
3. Business plan template	3
4. Business plan content	5
4.1 Part 3 - Aims and objectives.....	5
4.2 Part 4 - Current status - where you are now	5
4.3 Part 5 - Community or 'market' need and the potential for demand.....	6
4.4 Part 7 - Financial section.....	8
4.5 Part 8 - Management and organisation.....	9
4.6 Part 9 - Marketing.....	9
4.7 Part 10 - Environmental impact.....	10
4.8 Part 11 - Monitoring and evaluation.....	10
4.9 Part 12 - Action plan.....	10
4.10 Part 13 - Summary section.....	10
5. Sources of further information and advice	11
Appendix A - What are the risks or issues involved in carrying out this project?.....	12
Appendix B - Assessing the risk posed by emergencies using a scoring technique	15
Appendix C - Project spend template	16
Appendix D - Sample village or community hall annual accounts	17

Introduction

What is the purpose of a business plan for a village or community hall, why create one?

Business plans in the truest sense are normally written to help an organisation to reach its goals, apply for a bank loan or attract investment. In other words for a loan of for example, £30k what will this enable my company to produce?

In the context of a village or community hall, a business plan gives a hall management committee the opportunity to examine itself, its working practices and what it is trying to achieve – an opportunity for introspection. It gives an overview of the charity and its assets, the hall, its aims, how it works, its financial background and status. It identifies community and market led need and gives consideration to how the charity can be more sustainable for the future.



Business Plan

Most village and community halls were set up as charities and over the years grants have been made available to help support them. However, the money that was once available for this has reduced in recent years and competition for funds has increased. Over time village and community halls have been encouraged to adopt a more 'social enterprise' or 'business minded' approach to the management of their charities and buildings and for this they will need a business plan.

This Information Sheet guides you through the process of producing a business plan. The business plan template with helpful explanatory notes provides a starting point. This is followed by detailed notes relating to all parts of the template and appendices.

1. Why is a business plan needed?

The trend for village and community hall management committee's to produce a business plan has developed for a number of reasons:

- It examines how the hall delivers services to the community for now and the future?
- It is a tool for new committee members/ volunteers, so that they can ascertain quickly what is trying to be achieved
- It serves as a recognition of an organisation demonstrating best practice or a sign of 'quality' or 'capacity' which may give partner organisations confidence in using the hall in delivery of services
- It also helps with the planning and management of a large project such as when a major building update is needed, a new building or extension
- It may be asked for when applying for funding instead of completing an application form
- Information in the business plan can be used as the basis for completing a variety of funding application forms so you don't have to re-invent the wheel for each application.

Some management committee members have experience of writing business plans through their professional lives, but it is important to understand that the format needs to reflect a project (such as building works) and the everyday workings of the hall. This is combined into one document, a kind of hybrid of project plan and business plan combined, reflecting all the different aspects.

There is no one set formula or definitive template to follow when writing a business plan, no two plans are ever the same. They can be big or small and formats vary. The length of them should reflect the level of what you are trying to achieve but there are common sections to all which you will need to consider. The template contained within this information sheet aims to show what parts could be

included, but acts as a 'one size fits all'. Some funding organisations will have their own business plan template that they will request you follow.

A business plan is a working document and using it in your regular meetings means you can check where you are against your targets so that you can monitor progress and adjust things as required. You will also know why some practices have worked and which have failed and why, leading to a greater understanding of what is required – saving you time and money.

Ideally writing a business plan should be a collective effort, shared by the whole committee but one person should be assigned to co-ordinate and literally write the plan, with perhaps the help of one or two others.

2. Three steps to your business plan

Step 1

- Decide who the lead person will be – this does not necessarily need to be a committee member but someone delegated for the task
- Decide on who will form a small working group – these should be committee members

Note: It is important to stress that whilst this may be undertaken by a small group of people from the committee or a volunteer you need to ensure that the whole committee understands and is happy with the business plan and it is therefore important to consult the committee during the writing and upon completion.

Step 2

Go through each part of the of the template, referring to Section 4 of this information sheet for additional guidance. Remember that not all parts of the business plan may be pertinent to your particular needs so there is no rule which says you must include all of them, but use the suggested parts as a general rule of what to include. Note that Part 1, the Executive or Management Summary should be left until the end.

Wherever possible always try to quantify what you are saying. Rather than say 'we would like to update our kitchen to meet present day standards', re-phrase as 'consultation with users and at events has shown that the kitchen is no longer fit for purpose.' Another tip to use, which adds a professional touch, is to try and give facts and figures wherever possible. Instead of stating 'we have a number of regular users' change to 'we currently have a 35% capacity clearly demonstrating the potential for the hall to expand its activities'

Step 3

When you think the business plan is more or less complete, give the 'draft' copy to every committee member well in advance of a meeting so that they can read it through and come prepared. Discuss the plan at a committee meeting, drawing out key points. Adjust the plan following on from this to include any points or concerns raised and then send the completed plan to everyone. At the next committee meeting you will need to vote on whether committee members are willing to adopt the plan in its completed form.

Finally, make sure the secretary has a separate copy of his or her own, to be included in the papers concerning the management of the charity or organisation.

3. Business plan template

There are further notes on each part at the end of the template

Headings	Explanatory notes (Further detail is provided in Section 4)
Part 1 Executive or Management Summary	This section should sum up all the key points in the business plan, and is likely to be the part that funders and other readers refer to first. This is an important part of the document - do this at the end
Part 2 Organisation and hall background	Include the following: • Name, address, when the hall was founded • The object(s) of the organisation as stated in your governing document. Check any deed/articles/rules/documents you may need to discuss this • Charity number and trustees • What it provides, for whom - products/services • Resources and how the charity works – land ownership/lease, staffing, volunteers, committee and meetings. • Any history/ restrictions on use • Context - Description of the immediate community you serve – size of population, particular features of the landscape, history anything that is unique, is it in an Area of Natural Beauty (AONB)? • What services are in the village or community already - if any • Whether any planning permissions are in place
Part 3 Objective/ Aim/ Mission See section 4.1	What you trying to do – a statement/paragraph which explains your projects objectives in outline. Try to involve all committee members in drawing this up to ensure that a collective agreement is made.
Part 4 Current status See section 4.2	State the current problems and issues and how these have been identified e.g. the hall is cold which has resulted in loss of a regular booking to the value of £x or feedback from consultation has shown that..... You should include an Options Analysis (see example in s.4.1) which is especially important if there are other similar providers nearby as it raises the question of whether a number of halls in one area is sustainable? Consider too, where changes to the current arrangements might increase use of the services you provide or require further improvements. You could consider doing a SWOT analysis (Strengths/ Weaknesses/ Opportunities/ Threats for the organisation) and include this.

Part 5
Community or
‘market’ need &
potential for demand

See section 4.3

This is the most important section and is the opportunity to make your case for investment. To do this successfully you must include and evidence your statements.

This part should demonstrate the need and potential demand for investment in the hall and its future development and business.

Part 6
The future

- Think in terms of timescales - this year, next year, 3-5 years
- Consideration of collaborative work – use a joined up approach; how can you work together to avoid duplication, make best use of resources
- What changes are planned? Check that these are based on the community/market need and set out a funding strategy. Include small changes which will make a difference as well as bigger, longer term ones e.g creating a better leaflet to show people what you provide now, and distributing it differently.
- What are the benefits or likely outcomes; use a ‘before’ and ‘after’ page – funders like to know what they will get for their money?
- It’s useful to consider the “do nothing” option – what will happen if you don’t bring in changes?

Part 7
Financial Section

See section 4.4

Include a spreadsheet or summary for the following:

- Current financial year end
- Budget for project
- Budget for hall once project completed
- Cashflow projections whilst works
- Summary of how finances managed including financial policy, problems and issues, tendering process
- Current income/ Potential income/ Sustainability

Appendix D gives guidance on how to calculate your basic costs

Part 8
Management
Organisation

See section 4.5

How you manage yourselves/management structure

- on a day to day basis
- long term

Part 9
Marketing

See section 4.6

How you plan to share your hall with others!

- Web –site
- Leaflet
- Tools to your disposal
- Communication
- Notice Board on the outside of the building
- New signs!

Part 10
Environmental Impact

See section 4.7

This part should outline how your hall contributes towards carbon reduction.

Part 11 Monitoring and Evaluation See section 4.8	How you will know how your project is going what it is achieving and when by. You and your organisation will have invested a great deal of time and energy into our project and it is important for you and your community to know what difference you have made.
Part 12 Action plan See section 4.9	The actions, improvements and projects to get you from where you are now to where you want to be. Include target timescales, likely costs and financial benefits and key leads for each.
Part 13 Summary See section 4.10	Include a finishing off statement to help conclude your arguments

4. Business plan content

This section concentrates on some parts of template to provide further guidance on what should form the content.

4.1 Part 3 - Aims and objectives

It is worth spending some time on the aims and objectives. You will need to refer to your governing documentation to find out whether you have the power to do what you want to do! It is important that all committee members are involved, so everyone is clear and willing to support the hall's long term aims.

Draw up a draft and then circulate to the committee, or you could dedicate a discussion on this at a committee meeting. Use a flip chart and ask members for statements which describe what they think the aim of the hall is, working each through until everyone is decided upon a definitive statement which accurately reflects the hall's aims.

4.2 Part 4 - Current status – where you are now

Increasingly funders want to see what they are getting for their money, especially where halls are competing with each other for the same funds, often when they are based within the same parish or community.

Options analysis

An options analysis would help to address this issue. In this context it is an examination of what is available regarding hall hire within your community as a whole. It should analyse various factors, consider size and situation of the other halls, what services they currently provide, condition of the halls, availability, access, pricing etc.

Example: Often the local school hall can be hired in addition to the village hall, but you will need to state the inaccessibility of the school (in terms of only available at night and at weekends, during school holidays) compared to the village hall.

SWOT analysis

A SWOT analysis could also be used to encourage focus on the problems and issues your project and hall is currently concerned with in a summary form.

Example:

S trengths • Rural location • Building full of character • Central location • Level grounds outside	W eaknesses • Parking limited • Cold and uncomfortable • Not compliant with current legislation • Does not meet current hirers needs
O pportunities • Funding available for building projects • Potential new users • Greater community involvement • Link with church for weddings	T hreats • Lack of ability to attract funding • Loss of current hall hire to other venues • School hall available for hire

4.3 Part 5 - Community or 'market' need and the potential for demand

This is vital to argue your case for investment. Take this opportunity to 'sell' your project, looking at the potential for income generation or how the hall services the needs of its community and beyond.

Traditionally village and community hall hire is taken up by playgroups, the local WI group, toddler groups, gardening clubs, the parish council for its meetings and other similar local organizations. Ad hoc hire is typically taken up by birthday parties and anniversary celebrations. Sometimes hall hire income meets expenditure but more often than not, the volunteers who already spend a great deal of time doing the day to day running of the building also have to run fund raising events so that there is no shortfall at the end of the financial year. Groups which once used the hall have often folded within the community. These provided not only income but representation on the hall management committee contributing to the management of the building. As groups disappear there is often a drive to update governing documents or trust deeds to reflect a modern composition of management committee. This is a golden opportunity for management committees to look at how they can attract new activities to fit the gaps in hire in order to be able to generate new income, become more sustainable and less grant dependent. The question then is how?

Summarise the current problems with the hall and state your present income and current users. Has the hall lost any bookings and if so why? You should ask these groups to put in writing why they discontinued using the hall, e.g. it was too cold for yoga class. Develop the argument further by calculating how much income you have lost as a result. You could put all of the lost income sources into a spreadsheet. Remember that funders fund activity not buildings! Don't forget to include also, the physical aspects of the building, if there is no disabled access or the hall has too many steps for easy and safe access. Include independent/ third party evidence such as an energy audit which shows that the hall is too cold and could reduce overheads by installing insulation.

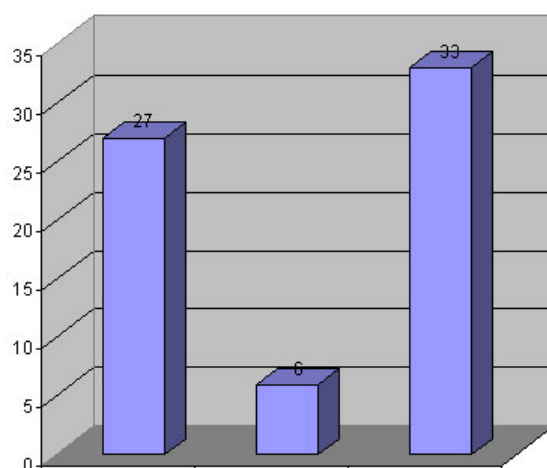
For this part of the business plan you should also put the hall into context, describing the area or 'market' that the hall serves, the population and trends/changes such as additional housing increasing the population since the hall was first built. Include changes in the demographic of the population and its impact. For example, large numbers of elderly people or the development of neighbouring communities. List too, current services provided in your community such as a shop, post office, broadband, availability of public transport as well as factors such as landscape.

This section should also define your 'market', the community around the hall and its needs that perhaps are not being presently met. You need to gather together all the information you can about the community within which the hall is based – how old are they? Do they have access to a car? How many single people live in the parish? How many businesses are run from home? Include the age and makeup and look at different statistics such as how many single people live with your community. This may result in 'reducing isolation' by creating a weekly 'singles club'! You are looking for ideas that will give you the potential for hall hire and income generation. To help with this, draw on and use (if appropriate) Local Evidence Needs Sources such as Neighbourhood Statistics www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk 0845 601 3034 or NOMIS Labour Market Statistics www.nomisweb.co.uk 0191 334 2680 or contact the Audit Commission Area Profiles office www.areaprofiles.audit-commission.gov.uk. These resources will give you a myriad of information about your community. (Don't forget to quantify/accredit the source). Most importantly this section can help demonstrate the need for the project by quantifying how isolated your community may be or demonstrating the lack of access to services.

This is also the part which will need to draw on any public consultation that has been undertaken within your parish, to help quantify likely demand. This obviously should link to Part 4 of the template.

If your research and statistical evidence shows that there are a higher than average number of people within your parish who are elderly, the hall could consider activities and partner organisations that could help address these needs, such as, fall prevention clinics, luncheon clubs. Look for evidence within community led plans to see whether the community has been consulted on this issue.

Community consultations such as a community led plan or market town health checks may help to back up your argument for need or give you new ideas on how local needs can be met or the likely demand. Include here too any hall surveys, user consultations or information about open days.



Example: A community had undertaken a community led plan that identified the need for activities for younger people to be provided for within their community. They worked with their local statutory authority (partner) to create a 'youth forum' which used the hall as a meeting place. Ideas for activities were aired and funding applications were made.

If no consultation has taken place, then it would be a good idea to do this, especially if the project is looking for larger rather than smaller amounts of funding. It is important to stress the need to have a 'bottom up' approach to your project, involving the community in plans for the hall's future will help lever the funding or investment that you will need. Most funders regard evidence of community consultation as essential. It is important to demonstrate that a 'bottom up approach' has been undertaken or 'user involvement' has been key to the findings outlined in the business plan.

You may have to undertake specific community consultations to help gather more evidence e.g. hall survey, questionnaire, public consultation meetings.

Example: One hall recently found out that a significant amount of businesses were run from homes within the parish, through a 'business survey' of its community. This demonstrated the potential for new business which could be attracted to the hall if investment could be sourced through grants. The hall could be extended to include a meeting space with broadband and WiFi connection which would then be used and rented on an ad hoc basis by local businesses.

Consult with your current users or their customers. Ask current and new hirers to provide letters of support for the project especially if they would benefit from investment in the building. Ask for this to be put in writing.

Example: “if the hall had a meeting room I would look to hire this space once a week for a keep fit class”. It is important that letters of support are gathered which do more than say “We would like to see the hall improved”, although these are valuable too. Convert this into numbers e.g. current income = £, potential income = £.

Remember that halls can offer the opportunity for individuals to generate an income albeit in a small way, contributing to the local economy by providing a platform for employment.

Emphasize:

- any current partnerships with outside organisations which are currently in place or could be in place if the investment was made
- evidence of gaps in provision,
- waiting lists,
- changes in services required by the community and beyond.

Example: Some halls work with their local health service to provide care for the elderly, or have adult education classes in the hall in partnership with a local further education college

Sometimes, just by a process of natural development, a hall can tend to be used by similar groups. The most common cause of this is by location. If a hall has good access to transport links it is more likely to be used by local organisations for business purposes. Halls with good facilities and enviable views in AONB tend to do very well hosting weddings.

Now that you have set the scene and described the ‘market’ in detail you should talk about the potential for increased use and income if the investment was made. Demonstrate clearly the potential for income generation.

Expand this part of the business plan too, by including other local strategies, partners’ plans, strategic fit and district, county or national community strategy plans. Demonstrate how you fit and contribute to the bigger scheme of things and your role in delivery of services locally. This also would help to strengthen the business sector for the local economy, a key policy of the council both locally and on a county level.

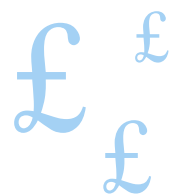
In conclusion, this part of the business plan will have outlined the current problems and issues of the hall and evidence gathered to support this as well as evidence which shows likely or potential demand for services both current and new.

Remember be factual and concise, talk about the activity first and the building second. Funders fund activity and not buildings.

4.4 Part 7 - Financial section

Use the knowledge of your treasurer to help with this section.

Successful financial management of a village or community hall is crucial to its long-term success so it is worth taking some time to work out some basic information on your halls’ finances. It is worth stating here a summary of the history of the finances of the hall and how sustainable it has been, perhaps mentioning facts and figures.



This section should include or make reference to the appendices that you will include at the end of the plan:

- Your most recent set of accounts
- Budget for project , if applicable, including marketing
- Cashflow for project if applicable
- Budget for hall once works have been completed, if applicable
- Financial Policy.

It is worth considering how this links to your need and demand section as it is important to show what difference investment will make, not only on the day to day operation of the hall but also to the initial project the business plan may be incorporating.

You may also wish to consider including calculation of core costs and hall hire charges and how the management committee manage its finances. See Appendix D on how these can be calculated. Full cost recovery is an important part of any project and you can find templates on how to calculate this on the Big Lottery Fund website www.biglotteryfund.org.uk or through your local Rural Community Action Network member.

ACRE's Village Hall Information Sheet, 41, Accounting and your village hall provides general information about managing the day to day finances of a village hall.

4.5 Part 8 - Management and organisation

This part of the business plan explains how the operation of the hall is managed both on a day to day basis and long term to include the project you have in mind.

It would be relevant in here to mention:

- Capacity of management committee relevant skills experience
- Include any paid staff and their roles
- Include volunteers and how they are used/ involved
- Include any quality standards gained such as Hallmark
- Any awards or achievements
- Any training and development you undertake e.g. attendance at hall network meetings run by your local Rural Community Action Network member
- Sample policies e.g. if project about reducing carbon footprint good idea to have an environmental policy and practice in place
- Where twinned with other halls to share experience good practice
- How you are 'accessible', inclusion on web-sites, whether you have a leaflet advertising your hall etc.



If you haven't consider doing so already it would be worth undertaking a project risk assessment for your project and this could be included here.

See Appendices A and B for a sample risk assessment and contact your local Rural Community Action Network member for advice on a sample environment policy.

4.6 Part 9 - Marketing

It is important to include details about marketing in your business plan. Many projects from the voluntary and statutory sector give the marketing of their project little or no consideration. In a business world, this is integral to a successful business plan so therefore it should not be overlooked. Halls should consider how they plan to launch their project when it is completed and look to use resources that may be free or supplied at a low cost at the very least. Halls should consider:

- Producing a leaflet/ flier giving photographs, prices contact details and location of the hall and distributing these on a regular basis
- Include the details of the hall and its activities onto a village or community web-site
- Regularly advertise or put articles in your local parish/ church newsletter
- Advertise in local papers
- Set up an e-mail network for events taking place in the hall
- Invest in a notice board which sits outside the hall listing all regular activities and contact details for each activity as well as the booking secretary contact details (with all of their permissions gained & made note of, to do this)

- Invest in good signage. Some halls are houses, churches or old schools converted and so are not obviously a village or community hall
- Investigate whether directional signs within your community could be put up to help people to locate the hall
- If some sort of community consultation has taken place and to be more pro-active, members of the management committee could also contact potential partners for hall hire opportunities to help deliver services that may have been identified through the consultation process.

The advantage to including this section is that it demonstrates to funders and others that the hall & project are aiming to be more inclusive in its approach, increasing the chances of its long term viability.

See **ACRE's Village Hall Information Sheet 19, Marketing your village hall** for more detailed guidance on marketing

4.7 Part 10 - Environmental impact

This is important to look at and include a statement summarizing how the hall helps reduce carbon footprint and the likely impact on the community. For instance by increasing the range of activities and services within the hall, it may reduce the need for community members to rely on cars to access the services they need locally.

In addition if your hall has invested in or if you are applying for funding to improve the energy efficiency of your building, in ways such as draught proofing and double glazing to the installation of ground source heat pumps this should also be stated here. Increasingly funders and other organisations are keen to see that all areas of community activity are embracing how they can help contribute towards the reduction of environmental impact.



See **ACRE's Village Hall Information Sheet 16, How 'green' is your village hall** for further ideas with regard to your hall and the environment.

4.8 Part 11 - Monitoring and Evaluation

Most funders, especially if your project needs larger rather than smaller amounts of funding, will require some sort of tracking to be done after the grant has been awarded in order to gauge how the project is going. In addition, it is always useful to be able to do this to measure whether the project is achieving what it set out to do. This could be a very simple task of surveying each user annually to find out whether the hall is still meeting the users' needs, or hosting an open day on the back of an AGM to ask your community whether the hall is fulfilling their needs in terms of services that are provided

4.9 Part 12 - Action Plan

This is key to showing how the findings of the business plan will be implemented. You could put this in the format of a table with actions in one column, who will act on, when actions will be done and an indicator column to show the outcome. This can then be used in committee meeting to monitor progress.

4.10 Part 13 - Summary section

This should take the form of a paragraph or two simply rounding off the business plan, commenting on key sections

5. Sources of further information and advice

ACRE and the Rural Community Action Network (RCAN) provides an information and advice service for village hall management committees through its network of village hall advisers. A link to the village hall advisers is available on the ACRE website: www.acre.org.uk.

ACRE produces a range of village hall publications and information sheets to support this service which are available from your local RCAN member.

ACRE publications that may be of interest to readers of this publication are listed below:

Village Hall Information Sheet 41, Accounting for village halls
Village Hall Information Sheet 4, Funding trusts for village halls and community centres
Village Hall Information Sheet 23, Steps to funding the fabric of community buildings
Village Hall Information Sheet 19, Marketing your village hall

Thanks to Barbara Pond, Gloucestershire Rural Community Council, for her input to this information sheet.

Appendix A - What are the risks or issues involved in carrying out this project?

Achieving your project involves planning, engagement and consultation to define need and demand, working with partners, gaining funding, monitoring and evaluation. It also needs to be sustainable at completion, or soon after. It is important to enter that process with an understanding of the potential risks and issues involved but a realisation that these can be avoided/minimised with careful planning and good communication.

Use the table below to help you undertake your own project risk. This is just a sample and the headings that are contained in here may not be pertinent to your hall and project, but are stated here just to give you an idea of what a project risk assessment should contain. The 'section is left blank for you to complete as you go along

Risk / Issue	Actions to reduce risk	Score High/Medium/ Low Risk
Management committee is very small and/or loses members during process	• Open invitation to join • Champions within the steering group to 'sell' idea to key groups. Do not start without them. • Approach key groups in the parish to ask for one representative from each to help with project until its completion • Welcome and co-opt new members during the process. If necessary consider delaying start of project	
Personality conflicts (including historic conflicts)	• Efficient chairing of committee meetings • Careful division of tasks • Open, precise and unbiased records of meetings • Avoidance of 'off the record' meetings and discussions • Be aware that this may become an issue	
Lack of continuity because AGM and composition of management committee changes	• Induction/mentoring of new members- including a look at the roles, responsibilities and interests	
Lack of skills or capacity within the management committee	• Clarify which skills are needed • Involve other people with a mix of skills • Recognise level of effort needed to complete specific tasks and allocate to number of people. • Conduct a community skills audit • Co-opt new members with appropriate skills • Buy in skills	
People do not come forward to help at various stages	• Be precise in each request – e.g. find out about lease details • Ask people in person with a specific, time limited request as well as a general invitation to all • 'Bring a friend' for all involved • Make use of existing networks (including email) • Start with enough partners to cope with tasks and dropout • Understand (and accept?) that the lower the number of people, the more work will have to be done by each individual • Concentrate on the positive rather than dwelling on the negative (but be realistic)	

Insufficient initial funds to realise the project	• Fund raising • Use of precept • Consider deferring until funds are identified (but bear in mind that opportunities for funding may be lost if you defer)	
Lack of structure to the work of the steering group	• Strong planning at onset • Set clear but realistic time limited goals at the beginning of the process – for the entire process	
Lack of organisational structure	• Use existing group as constituted – but check aims concur • Set up as constituted body	
Money for plan / project is unaccounted for	• Identify accountable body • Decide at onset how funds will be managed • Set a clear budget and report against it at relevant meetings • 2/3 signatories for cheques	
Run out of funds	• Clear systems in place for monitoring expenditure • Appointment of person to specifically undertake accounts for project period • Financial policy drawn up • Budgets and cashflow drawn up in advance • Proper tendering procedure and policy in place if applicable • Regular updates of finances	
Low response rate to consultation / lack of interest	• Check evidence of need/demand. Is the project really viable? • Use a variety of consultation techniques • Engage people before beginning on the consultation • Publicise • Approach groups – get buy in of group leaders • Show you are listening • Ask questions to get responses (are you asking the right question?) • Follow dos and don'ts checklist for questionnaires (including methods of delivery) • Deal with cynicism by addressing in survey introduction • Provide one-to-one help to complete – personal approach • Use incentives • Brand/logo the project so that it is easy to see snippets of news relating to the plan (competition to come up with a logo)	
Responses to questions on questionnaire are not useful / valid	• Clear aim to every question • Follow 'dos and don'ts' checklist for questionnaires • Use other communities' projects as experience • Limit free text answers • Use independent GRCC data analyst to check questionnaire well before going to print	

Results of consultation (including questionnaire responses) are misinterpreted	• Be aware of potential pitfalls in any survey analysis • Keep careful records • Ensure that a sub group analyses need and demand rather than just one person – be realistic about workload and “bounce” ideas • Report back results and interpretation to steering group	
People do not turn up for public meetings or consultation events	• Go to places where people /groups will be rather than expecting them to come to you • Use the pub /popular meeting places • Arrange more informal meetings e.g. at schools and pubs • Ask enthusiastic people to encourage others • Publicise in a lively way • Include people in the process so that they have a sense of ownership in what is being done • Make events fun • Careful timing of events • Link meeting to another event • Incentives – food / free raffle / prizes	
Can't find the statistics	• Contact parish clerk/VH Adviser for help • Interest local IT person/teacher who is happy to do specific job	
Need and demand are not 'as expected' by the steering group	• Accept that results reflect the feeling of those who responded • Bring in GRCC or a recommended chair from another project to give a positive steer or boost • Revise project profile	
Project profile is unclear	• Use profile template • Incorporate results of consultation, statistics and pictorial/ written evidence for need and demand • Compare to project plan/task manager • Independent person reads final version and comments	

Appendix B - Assessing the risk posed by emergencies using a scoring technique (Developed from information provided by Cotswold District Council)

Although the process of scoring risks is still subjective, some communities find this technique helpful. However, it is important to look at the results and consider whether they are sensible and match your gut feeling.

- Consider emergencies in your community in the past and what might happen in the future
- Think about types of emergency in terms of high, medium or low risk based on extent (how widespread might this be in terms of areas affected) and impact (loss of life, injury, damage to property)
- Allocate a score for each aspect (3 = high, 2 = medium and 1 = low).
- Multiply the extent score times the impact score for each emergency and this gives a score (so an event that has a high extent and high impact scores $3 \times 3 = 9$ while an event with low likelihood but medium impact scores $1 \times 2 = 2$)

Risk Assessment Table

Type of Emergency	Extent score	Extent notes	Impact score	Impact notes	Total

A way to involve more people in using this scoring technique is to paste up A4 sheets each titled with a different type of emergency. Give each person blue (extent) and red (impact) sticky dots and ask them to allocate up to 3 of each colour to each emergency. This information can then be collated. The information can be summarised as follows:

Impact extent	High	Medium	Low
High			
Medium			
Low			

Appendix B

PROJECT SPEND TEMPLATE WITH SAMPLE FIGURES																							
TOTAL PROJECT SPEND		£4,100																					
PROJECT STAGE	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC											
Contingency	£200																						
Preliminaries e.g. site clearance	£200																						
Groundworks	£500																						
Foundations & ground floor	£500																						
Incoming services	£250																						
Service installations		£100																					
Surface water drainage		£50																					
Portal frame			£500																				
Exterior walls				£250																			
Interior walls					£100																		
Windows					£100																		
Roof					£500																		
Exterior doors						£100																	
Interior doors						£100																	
Floor finishes							£100																
Wall finishes							£50																
Fitting out								£250															
External works e.g. landscaping									£100														
Parking area									£100														
Bin store/recycling point									£50														
TOTAL PROJECT SPEND BY MONTH	£1,650	£150	£500	£250	£700	£200	£150	£250	£250	£0	£0	£0	£0										

Appendix D - Sample village or community hall annual accounts

INCOME

Hall Hire	£3,558.57
Fundraising Events	£1,504.88
Catering/Bar	£452.16
Interest from savings & investments	£33.14
Donations	£50.00
Grants	£1,000.00
TOTAL INCOME	£6,598.75

EXPENDITURE

Electricity	£767.14
Heating	£800.00
Wages e.g. Cleaner	£1,504.91
Water Rates	£146.93
Cleaning Supplies	£55.00
Premises License	£286.00
PRS/PPL	£69.55
Insurance	£871.10
Maintenance (repairs & renewals)	£1,000.00
Fire Services	£220.00
Marketing	£100.00
Expenses - Treasurer	£14.79
Expenses - Secretary	£5.93
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£5,841.35

PROFIT/LOSS	£757.40
--------------------	----------------

How to calculate your basic costs

If your hall was to be hired out for 52 weeks per year, for 100% of the available time, the cost would simply be calculated by dividing the total expenditure (above) by 52 weeks, then dividing by 105 hours per week (i.e. 9am to midnight, 7 days per week. You don't have to use these exact figures, but these are here for guidance, you know best when your hall is available for).

£5841.35 / 52 weeks = £112.33 per week
£112.33 / 105 hours = **£1.07 per hour**

However this is unrealistic, as halls are not hired out 100% of the time, so you should base the calculation on your own usage, e.g. by looking at regular hall hire over the previous financial year. Two examples are provided below. Regular hirer's tend to use a hall following the school term i.e. for 39 weeks a year. The following calculations do not account for the occasional hire, but you could take the average occasional hire to help with your calculations

Example 1	Example 2
Hall hired for 39 weeks at 31.5 hours per week n.b. 31.5 hours is equivalent to 30% of a 105 hour week Or 15 regular hirer's x 2 hours each £5841.35 / 39 weeks = £149.78 per week £149.78 / 31.5 hours = £4.75 per hour	Hall hired for 39 weeks at 10.5 hours per week n.b. 10.5 hours is equivalent to 10% of a 105 hour week Or 5 regular hirer's x 2 hours each £5841.35 / 39 weeks = £149.78 per week £149.78 / 10.5 hours = £14.26 per hour

ACRE and the Rural Community Action Network (RCAN) together deliver a local advisory service tailored to the needs of rural community buildings throughout England. This service aims to ensure that hall trustees have access to accurate information about regulatory requirements, training and one-to-one advice and support with business planning. All RCAN advisers are networked by ACRE, undertake an OCN accredited course and are provided with resources to support their work. The national Hallmark quality standards programme encourages hall trustees to adopt best practice through a peer visitor programme. However, demand from halls for support often exceeds supply and demonstrates the need for a proactive, local service that can support all halls to achieve their aspirations and potential.

About ACRE

Action with Communities in Rural England is the national umbrella body of the Rural Community Action Network (RCAN), which operates at national, regional and local level in support of rural communities across the country. We aim to promote a healthy, vibrant and sustainable rural community sector that is well connected to policy and decision-makers who play a part in delivering this aim. ACRE is nationally recognised for its expertise in ensuring rural community-led solutions are central to public policy debate.

Rural Community Action Network (RCAN)

The Rural Community Action Network (RCAN) covers the whole of rural England through the work of 37 local member organisations, eight regional bodies and ACRE. Network members are county-based, independent, local development agencies that, for decades, have been delivering support on the ground to enable rural communities to improve quality of life for all. They act as a strategic voice for rural communities, allowing grassroots issues to be championed and solutions worked out in partnership between statutory, voluntary and private sector providers. Their strength lies in their ability to work within communities in an inclusive and holistic way, helping local people to develop local solutions and identify unmet needs through a unique approach to community-led planning. Alongside this, network members provide a trusted local support network for rural community groups, including dedicated expertise in arenas such as transport, housing, the management of community-owned facilities, social enterprise and rural services.

ACRE is pleased to have worked in partnership with AON Limited on this information sheet.

This Village Hall Information Sheet is one in a series available from ACRE's Village Hall Information Service. A full list of ACRE Information Sheets and other publications can be found at www.acre.org.uk



Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE)
Somerford Court, Somerford Road, Cirencester,
Gloucestershire GL7 1TW
(tel) +44 (0)1285 653477
acre@acre.org.uk www.acre.org.uk

Company Limited by Guarantee 3336101 Registered Charity No. 1061568

© ACRE

