

## Village Public Toilet Facilities and Possible Community Hub

1. Following discussion at the BVT Property Group meeting in June 2020 I have been asked to draft a brief proposal about the feasibility of re-siting Benenden's public toilets in the Village Hall and to converting the existing toilet building into a community resource including, as a minimum, office accommodation for the Parish Council Clerk and the BVT Manager.
2. Background: It is generally felt that the current community office is too small for its purpose. There is insufficient storage space and no room for meetings. While it provides enough office space for one person, it is not a given that the BVT Manager and the Parish Council clerk will forever be the same. Furthermore there may in the future be a requirement for some office space for the Village Hall manager and caretaker.
3. The lack of storage space is currently an issue for keeping and possibly expanding a Benenden Village Archive.
4. The current toilet block is far larger than needed, is expensive to run and maintain, and in fairly urgent need of refurbishment.
5. There are toilets next to the changing rooms in the village hall which are currently accessed from the corridor which leads to the fire door adjacent to the public toilet block. It would seem feasible to turn these into a single unisex disabled WC facility and to create an external entrance to them from the upper carpark.
6. This would then free up the current toilet block which could be repurposed as some sort of community hub.
7. This would ideally include the potential for separate office space for the BVT Manager and for the Parish Council Clerk, a small committee meeting room and storage, possibly with display space, for the village archive.
8. Currently it is understood that the Parish Council owns the physical toilet block building (having acquired it some time ago from TWBC) while the BVT owns the land on which it is actually situated.
9. There are several questions that arise: a) would one unisex disabled WC be considered sufficient for the village? b) what would be the cost of the double conversion? c) who would pay for it? d) How would ongoing costs be met?
10. My proposal to take this forward is as follows: a) The Parish Council is asked for its views and for its approval for further investigation. b) the BVT commissions an architect to consider the scheme and, if deemed workable, to draw up plans. The BVT seeks indicative costings for the project. c) Once they are known the BVT and the PC enter joint discussions as to how the scheme might be financed and whether grants might be available.