

The law requires that all schools provide a meal for their children, those in Key Stage 1 being provided free. Currently there are two meal sittings in the Hall for our children. In addition the hall has facilities to prepare/heat the food brought in by caterers, and wash up afterwards, neither of which the school can provide on site. The meals, in mixed groups, provide important opportunities for socialisation as well as a hot meal. We could not operate school meals, and therefore not fulfil our legal obligation to do so, if we did not have the facility of the hall.

The hall is also used for PE/sports activities for the school, especially in inclement weather. PE is a core part of our curriculum and key to the well-being of our children. Similarly after school sports and activities frequently use hall space when they require hard flooring.

All school assemblies take place in the hall, typically taking place 3 or 4 times per week. In addition, drama productions use the hall stage. Fundraising activities organised by the Friends of Whimble school (FOWS) also use the site for events such as the Christmas Fair, Craft Fair, Quiz and Curry, some of which provide additional much needed revenue to the Hall.

Safeguarding is maintained for children through the halls' use of numbered key pads, and the various doorway/lock arrangements in place, in association with the linked path between the school and hall sites. When children walk to other sites in the village additional supervision is required for health and safety/safeguarding purposes and, particularly with younger children, the time taken to prepare for any such transfer is significant.

Education budgets have been under pressure for many years, and the limited school budget and funding options leave absolutely no capacity to buy the hall. The headteacher believes that there is no appetite or likely budget available from Devon County Council (DCC) to do so either. When DCC staff visited the MUGA site to consider building there, it was stated that granting planning permission for a brick building was very unlikely due to environmental reasons (including potential site flooding). Instead, compost toilets were installed and a covered shelter a couple of years ago to enable fuller use of the MUGA for forest school and sports activities.

The contract with DCC for payment of the use of the hall is a guaranteed income for the hall, which we understand is approximately a third of the halls' income. Additional spin off income from breakfast club, sports, fund raising and other activities accounts for an even greater proportion of hall funds. This contract is due for renewal in April 2020.

The school budget is provided on a 'per pupil' basis. If there were no hall available, the school would have to drastically reduce its student (and associated staff) numbers.

The school is an absolutely vital part of the village and community.

The Governors of Whimble school unanimously agree with the Headteacher in requesting that the hall remains at its current site and that major works are undertaken as soon as