

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Many people from outside the area come to Hazelwood to walk the various footpaths that traverse the area and offer panoramic views of the marvellous, surrounding countryside. Any stranger to the area need not want for information, for close to the village crossroads stands a telephone kiosk (purchased for 'a song' from British Telecom) and now converted by local residents into an Information Centre.

The previously mentioned footpaths, so beloved of walkers, give access to certain well-known landmarks and features. One path runs directly between playing areas of the prestigious Chevin Golf Club to the South of the village. Along the same footpath can be seen the remains of "the Butts" a WW1 practice shooting range.

In terms of physical recreation, the parish boasts several activities. The foremost is, surely, the Hazelwood Crown Green Bowls Club. Built and created by local inhabitants, it is enthusiastically supported locally, as well as attracting players from well outside the parish.

Adjoining the Bowls Club, a children's playground with swings caters for the needs of the younger members of the family. Older children, and indeed, all age groups are encouraged to engage in more strenuous activity on the adjoining tennis court.

For those wanting, simply, to enjoy playing football or cricket, the playing field covering some two acres, adjoins the above.

Certain other facilities are provided by local tradespeople. Where else can you purchase hardwood cut to a specific size; camp overnight; hire a horse and the next morning purchasing cheese, vegetables and honey on your way back?

St John's Church, Hazelwood

St John's Church, Hazelwood is situated at the main crossroads in Hazelwood and is an important part of village life. Built in 1846, it was almost totally destroyed by fire in 1902, started by sparks from the original coal fired heaters. The church was rebuilt within a year and gas was eventually installed in 1925; electricity in 1947. The two bells were rehung in 1987. As well as sounding every hour, they are used on Sundays before the service. The east window is modern and was designed by Karl Edwards and paid for by public subscription. In 2008, the west end pews were removed to create an open space for meetings and a small kitchen area for refreshments was installed.

The Church Annual Village Fete is an important event in the local calendar and the church itself is used for events other than services, such as Art Exhibitions, Choir Recitals. It is also a popular venue for Weddings and Baptisms. It is hoped that the church will soon be open on a daily basis for any interested visitors.

The Memorial Hall

The Memorial Hall was built of local stone, carted to the site voluntarily by local farmers and opened by the Venerable Deacon Noakes in 1923. It was erected in memory of the 25 men who died in the First World War and in thanks for those who returned safely. It is used for all

kinds of village events to the present day.

The hall hosts many different exercise classes; carpet bowls, Scottish dancing, weavers and spinners. Diverse one-off functions such as wedding receptions/children's parties are also held. The church also has many functions in the hall - Harvest Suppers, P.C.C. meetings, various fund raising events and the annual Church Fete.

The upkeep of the hall is the responsibility of the Parish Council and improvements have been made over recent years, from the refurbishment of the indoor toilets, a new kitchen and new windows. More recently' alterations to improve the internal space have been undertaken. Also the car park has been resurfaced. Currently the Parish Council is considering extensions to the Hall, subject to funding and planning permitting.

Despite the seeming full-time usage, many parishioners consider the Hall to be underused and requests are made for more social engagements such as coffee mornings, whist drives/film nights/musical events.

Issues raised within the community

Road safety; A number of residents raised concerns about the state of certain roads and the fact that ditch and verge maintenance were sorely lacking. Particular concern was expressed that the National Speed Limit is applied to every road in the parish while road widths and blind corners have been disregarded utterly. It was pointed out that in certain sections, a speed limit of ca. 20 mph would be sensible. Again, it was emphasised that hikers, dog walkers and pedal-cyclists were constantly being put at risk by certain motorised road users "legally" travelling at or near to the National Speed Limit.

Local planning; Many voices were raised concerning local planning issues with a strong call for an increased voice over such matters as design, material and general appearance of any new building. The concerns stemmed from a wish to see any future development in sympathy with both its surroundings and the general character of the village.

Examples of sympathetic conversion/new build that would be found acceptable are shown in the photographs below.

Accommodation; It was recognised that if the village were to attract younger people or retain an elderly population then a degree of affordable housing/elderly persons accommodation would be acceptable, subject to the provisos mentioned.

Play area; Finally, came a plea for more children's playground equipment on the sports field and more seating areas, both on the sports field and elsewhere.