

Levens Community Project

New Village Hall and Affordable Homes

Community Information Update

Levens Parish Council

June 2026



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



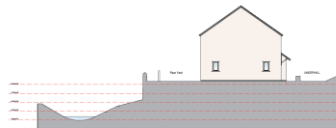
REAR ELEVATION



GROUND FLOOR PLAN



FRONT ROAD ELEVATION



SIDE ELEVATION SITE SECTION

DATE: 15/06/2026	SCALE: 1:50	PROJECT: LEVENS COMMUNITY PROJECT
DRAWN BY: J. SMITH	CHECKED BY: M. JONES	APPROVED BY: P. CLARK
REVISIONS:		
1. Initial design	15/06/2026	J. SMITH
2. Revised design	16/06/2026	M. JONES
3. Final design	17/06/2026	P. CLARK

What were the initial strategic objectives for the Parish Council regarding a new Village Hall and affordable homes?

For over 40 years, the Parish Council has been cognisant that the existing village hall was inadequate for a growing local community. Additionally, with increasing property prices, local young and older families would be driven out of the locality, creating the risk that without social cohesion Levens, like many Lakeland villages, could become a commuter belt with no active community. Local consultation in the lead up to the publication of the Parish Plan in 2008 confirmed that parishioners shared these concerns. To address these core issues, a project concept led by the Parish Council pioneered the concept of building a new village hall whilst also building affordable homes for local people. The concept was initially developed in the late 90's.

The Parish Council conceived and proposed a scheme based on land owned by it whereby the provision of a new Village Hall and affordable homes might be achieved.

In 2016 and following the submission of a Masterplan, South Lakeland District Council (now Westmorland and Furness Council) gave planning consents to build a new Village Hall and create 7 affordable homes. To enable this, it granted planning permission for 14 homes to be built on the former Sizergh Quarry site and planning consent on the sale of 6 plots on land owned by the Parish Council on Church Road, Levens and Cotes, Cinderbarrow.

What are the Key Objectives?

The key objectives are to:

- Sell parcels of land that it owns with planning consent at market value for self-build housing to raise funds to fund the Village Hall and affordable housing.
- Obtain grants to supplement funding of affordable homes
- Build a new Village Hall on the site formerly known as Beathwaite Quarry
- Build 7 affordable homes - 4 on the site known as Underhill and 3 on the old Village Hall (formerly the Institute) site once the new village hall has been built and commissioned.

Why Are We Progressing a New Village Hall?

Our current village hall has served the community well for many years. However, it is increasingly clear that the building no longer fully meets the needs of our village.

Key issues include:

- Limitations in space and layout
- Accessibility challenges
- Ageing facilities
- Increasing maintenance and running costs
- Energy inefficiency

A new hall would provide a modern, accessible and flexible facility capable of serving the community for many years to come.

Who are the Key stakeholders

Levens Parish Council which acts on recommendations from the Project Advisory Group (PAG) which is made up of parishioners with professional expertise in building and project management

Levens Charity

Levens Village Hall CIO which is represented on PAG

Local residents and community groups

Westmorland and Furness District Council - funding provided for infrastructure and development funding for affordable homes

What Will the New Hall Be Used For?

The hall will be designed as a community hub and may be used for:

- Local clubs and societies
- Exercise and wellbeing classes
- Children and youth activities
- Community meetings and consultations
- Social gatherings and events
- Private hire by residents

The aim is to provide a welcoming space that supports a wide range of activities and brings people together.

What Stage Is the Project At?

The Parish Council has sold all but one parcel of land (June 2026) with money banked.

Upon receipt of proceeds, based on original approved plans, building tenders were obtained for the building of a new village hall and building of 4 affordable homes. These tenders came in significantly higher than the project funding available.

Updated quotations and design reviews are currently underway to ensure the project remains financially responsible in the light of recent increases in construction costs.

Funding and Project Update

The Parish Council agreed that the main funding for the new hall would come from the sale of land owned by the parish. The land sales have now been virtually completed. However, construction could not begin until the full proceeds from the sale had been received.

Construction costs across the UK have increased significantly due to global economic factors including the COVID-19 pandemic, supply chain disruption, rising energy prices, the war in Ukraine and current global instability. The Parish Council is therefore reviewing the design to ensure the project remains affordable while maintaining the key community benefits.

Project Timeline

Initial community need identified → Funding strategy agreed → Initial designs prepared → Land sale process → Land sale completed → National construction cost increases → Design review underway → Revised proposal and next steps.

Why Didn't the Project Start Earlier?

The Parish Council agreed that the project should only proceed once the funding from the land sale had been fully secured.

The process of selling land and completing the necessary legal requirements can take time. During this period economic conditions changed significantly, resulting in increased construction costs. Reviewing the design now ensures the project is delivered responsibly.

What Happens if Costs Still Exceed the Budget?

If costs remain higher than expected, the Parish Council may consider:

- Refining the design further
- Seeking additional grant funding
- Phasing certain elements so they can be added later

Any significant financial decisions will be discussed openly and communicated clearly to residents.

How Will the New Hall Benefit the Whole Community?

The proposed hall will provide:

- A central meeting place for local clubs and organizations
- Space for health and wellbeing activities
- Facilities for children and young people
- A venue for community events and celebrations
- A location for parish meetings and consultations

The aim is to strengthen community life and provide a long-term asset for the village.

How Will the Hall Be Financially Sustainable?

Measures being considered include:

- Energy-efficient design to reduce running costs
- Flexible spaces that can be hired for different activities
- Community and private hire income
- Careful management and maintenance planning

How Will New Affordable Housing Benefit the Whole Community?

The proposed affordable housing will provide up to seven homes for local people wishing to stay in the village or downsize to smaller accommodation. These properties will be owned by Levens Charity and be available for rent. Thus, they will remain a social asset for all time and will help to maintain the social cohesion of the whole Parish

Transparency and Value for Money

The Parish Council is committed to openness and good governance.

This includes:

- Open council meetings with published minutes
- Professional advice from architects and advisers
- Competitive quotations and procurement procedures
- Careful financial oversight
- Regular communication with residents

Final Note

The Parish Council appreciates the continued interest and support of residents. Updates will continue to be shared as the project develops. Further Q&As will be added to this as questions arise.