

Proposal for a New Car Park at Shalford Village Hall

Enhancing Accessibility and Parking Facilities

Update post Public Meeting (Friday 8th August 2025 19:30) [Shown in Yellow]

Introduction

The Shalford Village Hall is a cornerstone of community activities in Shalford, hosting events ranging from social gatherings to village fetes. However, the current lack of adequate parking facilities often hampers accessibility and convenience for residents and visitors alike. This document outlines a proposal for improving the existing car park at Shalford Village Hall, including technical details, community engagement, and financial considerations.

The Plan for the Car Park

Requirements

The existing car park needs to be expanded and the current grassed parking needs improving. The centre path must be kept as this is owned by the council and is used for accessibility. The old obsolete toilet block requires removal, the UK Power Network pole cannot be removed or relocated. Surface drainage needs improving and the appearance needs to be in keeping with the village ambience. Budget is limited and we will need the support of local businesses and community members to help deliver this. The project will need to be considerate to both the neighbours and the local village shop as well as those that hire the hall.

Location and Map

The proposed car park will be situated on the south side of the village hall, the existing car park outline will not be changed, changes will make better use of the existing space. Note should be made of the housing facing the car park and work needs to be communicated to these particular residents. This was discussed at the meeting and it was agreed that hedging for the new surfacing would be made and that the opening hours of the car park would be 07:00 to 19:00. It was also noted that the term “road planning” was not fully understood and example car parks needed to be identified.

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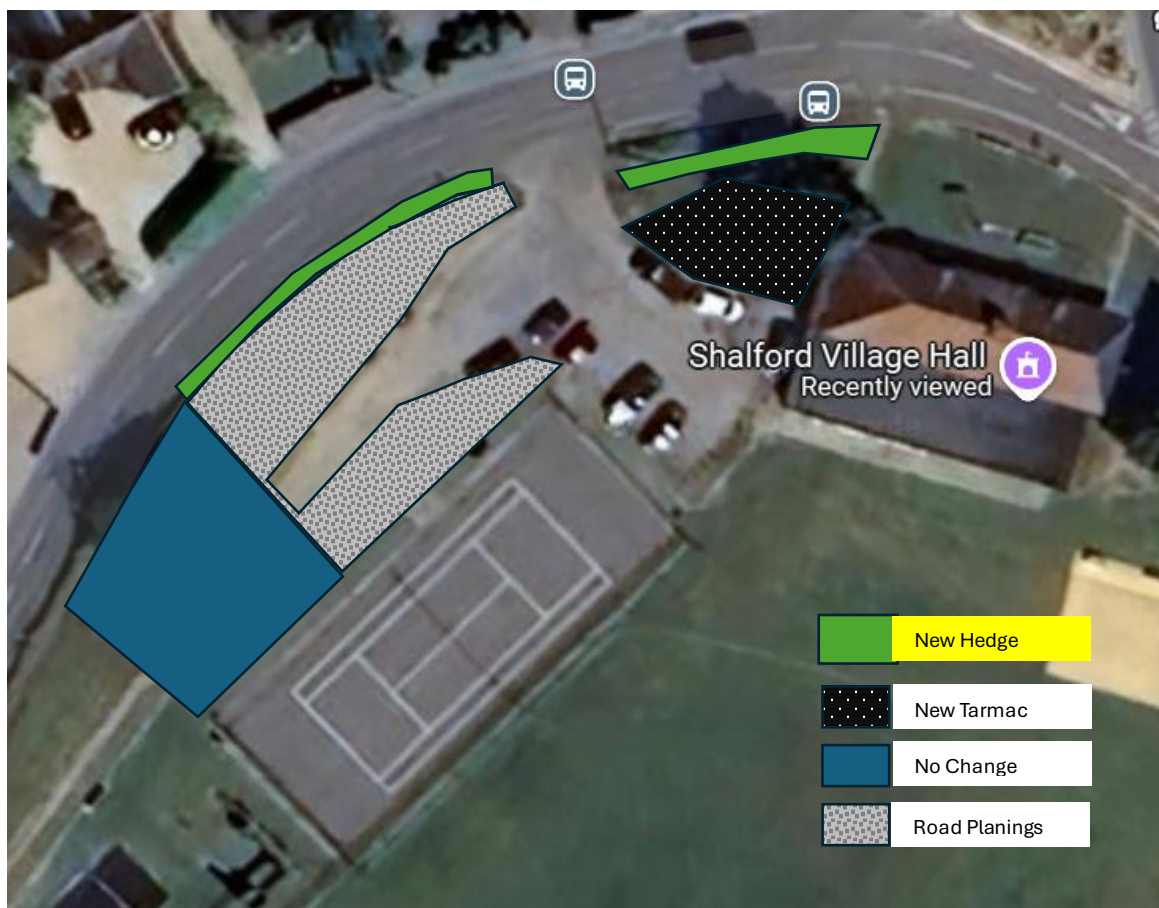
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Current situation:



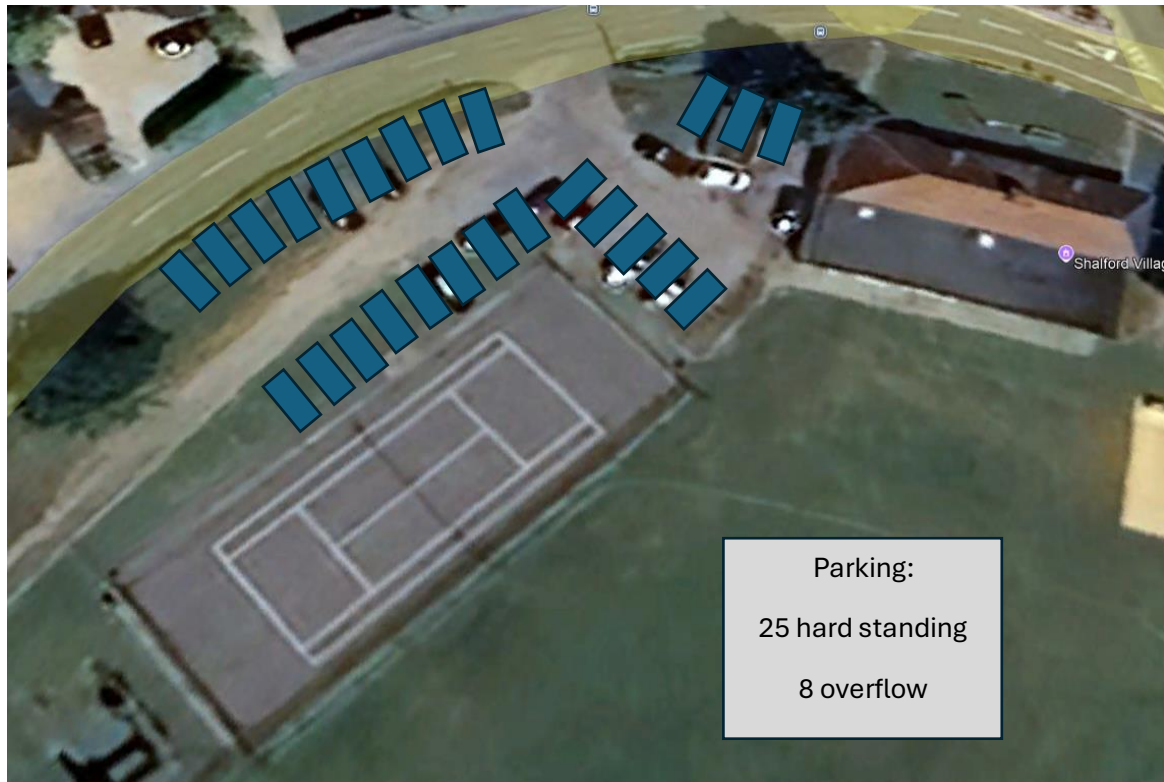
Proposed changes



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Materials to Be Used



Base will be type one MOT and covered with road planings. Road planings are recycled material sourced from old asphalt roads. These are cost-effective and environmentally friendly, providing a durable surface for parking while reducing waste. Their compactability ensures a stable base that requires minimal maintenance. This is the surface used at both Great Sailing and Rayne Village Halls. Road planings also allow for a different surface to be added, if wanted, at a later date (e.g. Shingle or tarmac).

Clarification required on surface, concerns raised over dust



Wood Sleepers: Wood sleepers are long, rectangular timbers historically used in railway construction. For the car park, they will be used to contain the road chippings and mark out the boundary of the car park. They will also help prevent cars hitting the fencing. Wood sleepers are aesthetically pleasing and add a rustic charm to the site, complementing the village's traditional atmosphere.

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Comparisons with Parking at Local Village Halls

To determine the optimal design and capacity for Shalford's new car park, a comparative study of parking facilities at nearby village halls will be conducted. Examples include:

- The Salings Village Hall: Offers about 40 spaces with gravel surfacing and marked bays. This is very similar to what we will use. The car park is open 07:00 to 21:00 every day.
- Wethersfield Pavillion: Features 15 spaces with asphalt surfacing and is open 24hrs a day
- Rayne Village Hall: Provides 30 spaces with gravel surface, similar to what we are proposing to use and is open 24hrs a day. Rayne also has an overflow car park for events such as football giving about another 30 spaces.

These examples will serve as benchmarks to tailor Shalford's car park to the village's specific needs. Shalford will have 33 car park spaces (using the over flow) which is comparable to both Sailing and Rayne.

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Community Engagement

The car park is used by many different sections of our communities. Usage includes parents picking up kids from the school, families using the playground, people using the playing fields, food trucks renting space from the Village Hall, the Village Shop and their customers and people using our local footpaths. The Village Hall supports this use, however, as the main use for the car park is to support those that hire the hall out, it is critical that anyone that hires the hall has priority and other users have to accept this and accept they may be inconvenienced. Careful communication is needed to ensure that any group hiring the Village Hall is not inconvenienced by this additional parking whilst balancing a community spirit and support.

The car park has a significant use from shoppers going to the Village Shop that has been a cornerstone of the village since the 1950s. In 2015 the Village Shop was awarded an “Assets of Community Value” from Braintree District Council that was renewed in 2020. The shop is also supported by the emerging Neighbourhood Plan as a key part of the village’s history and as a key asset that must be kept. The owners of the Village Shop have kindly offered a donation that will cover the majority of our costs. It is proposed that we will nominate three Customer car park spaces for the Village Shop and the opening hours of the car park will mirror those of the shop. It is agreed that parking by staff from the Shop in the Hall car park will be minimised as much as possible and all vehicles will be removed outside opening hours. The shop is very important to our community and it is critical that we are seen to be supporting this valuable asset.

Residents’ Opinions

Community consultation is a critical component of this project. Residents will be invited to share their opinions through an open public meeting. Key points for discussion include:

- Potential benefits, such as improved accessibility and convenience.
- Concerns regarding environmental impact and disruption during construction.
- Suggestions for design features, such as native plant landscaping or lighting policies.

A summary of residents’ feedback will be included in the final proposal, ensuring transparency and alignment with community priorities.

FEEDBACK FROM OUR PUBLIC MEETING:

The public meeting was well-attended, with residents representing a wide range of concerns. Many participants voiced strong support for the expansion, highlighting the car park’s role in sustaining both the Village Hall, however many also raised concerns about potential light pollution and privacy issues, with most asking for a hedge to be planted.

There was also issues raised over the surface, it became clear that the term “Road Plannings” was not fully understood and a definitive example needed providing. The meeting concluded Outside with a walk around that answered most of the issues.

Following the meeting, a vote was taken and it was unanimously agreed that Phase 1 would include a hedge as shown earlier in this document and the tarmac surfacing where the old toilet block was would be completed.

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Target timings will be the main car park finished by end of August and the Tarmac targeted within 2025. The Hedge timing will be dictated by planting schedules and is current planned for October. Debbie will looking into the best type of hedge and bring this to the next committee meeting and the residents opposite the Village hall also offered to financially help with the Hedge.

Costs and Finance

The estimated construction costs for the car park will be broken down as follows:

- Removal old toilet and soil, including site preparation (£10,500 – £8000 provided free from Andrew Hull and Deersbrook Farm and £2500 payable to contractor)
- Material costs:
 - £5,000 for road planings and wood sleepers.
 - £4,500 for Tarmac and concrete curbs
- ~~Contingency: £1,000.~~
- Additional costs: £1000 for Hedging.

Total estimated costs: £21,000

Funding Sources

Funding:

- £8000 Free work from Andrew Hull and Deersbrook
- £6800 Village Hall
- £4000 Donation from Village Shop
- £1200 Donation from Parish Council
- £1000 Donation from Martin

Should we wish to upgrade from Road chippings we will need a significant fund (£5k to £10k). To achieve this we will need to set up a Just Giving page and get community support. This will be part of the process and once the funding is met we can the proceed with a different surface.

A detailed financial plan will be prepared to ensure transparency and sustainability.

Timings

As the work needed requires the goodwill of Andrew Hull and Deersbrook farm, we need to work around their schedules, this will mean any work in September to December will not be possible, it is therefore in the best interests of the Village Hall to move quickly to a decision on this matter to work can commence in August.

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Conclusion

The proposed car park at Shalford Village Hall represents an opportunity to enhance accessibility and community engagement. By utilising cost-effective materials like road planings and wood sleepers, incorporating residents' opinions, and studying local benchmarks, the project is designed to be both practical and inclusive. The next steps will involve presenting this proposal to the village hall committee and beginning the funding process to bring this vision to life.

Action Steps

- Distribute community surveys and host a public consultation meeting. [Done]
- Prepare detailed maps and designs for committee review. [Done]
- Secure initial funding and commence site preparation. [Agreed]

By working together, Shalford can transform its village hall into an even more welcoming community space.

Note: Public meeting agreements

- A hedge will be planted by the metal fence in the position shown on page 2. It will follow the new hard standing surface and end near the tree.
- The Tarmac will be targeted to be laid this year.
- Lines will be made on the tarmac to try and ensure correct parking.
- The majority of construction will take place weekends and evenings and will be completed by the end of August.
- A definition of Rad planings is required, there are concerns of dust with one neighbour having experienced this at Great Saling.

Note: Village Hall Committee Sign-Off

The Shalford Village Hall committee will be responsible for approving the final design of the car park. Regular meetings will be held to discuss updates, address concerns, and secure the sign-off required to commence construction.