

# RADYR & MORGANSTOWN COMMUNITY COUNCIL



## THE OLD CHURCH ROOMS (OCR)



## MOVING FORWARD – RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2021 & BEYOND

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## 1. HISTORY OF THE OLD CHURCH ROOMS (OCR)

The Old Church Rooms were built in 1880 as a 'National School' (i.e., a school run by the established church) to a design by John Pritchard, the Diocesan Architect. The OCR was the inspiration of the Rev H J Humphreys, who wished to establish an efficient Sunday School. Lady Mary Windsor-Clive donated the land and donated £300 on behalf of Lord Windsor towards building costs. The Taff Vale Railway Company also donated £300. The eventual cost was £1100, the extra cost also being borne by Lord Windsor.

The National School was opened on 1 July 1880 and, in 1881, the building was 'licensed for divine worship' to provide a convenient alternative venue for the remote Parish Church of St John Baptist (in Danescourt). In 1882 the Rector and Churchwardens agreed to transfer the use of the National School to a newly formed School Board and, in 1896, the School Board erected its own school (now Radyr Primary). The National School then reverted to the Rector and Churchwardens.



On 20 September 1896 the National School became 'The Mission Church' and it was fully equipped for services by the installation of an altar, choir stalls and the three stained-glass windows in the apse.

When Christ Church opened in 1904, 'The Mission Church' ceased to be used for religious service and became known as 'The Church Rooms'.

The building remained in the ownership of the Church until it was bought by the Community Council in 1988 with the aid of a mortgage provided by Cardiff City Council. Initially the RMCC jointly managed the OCR with the help of the Radyr & Morganstown Association (up until 2019).

The OCR was extended in 1994 by the Community Council supported by grants from the Welsh Office and the Foundation for Sports and Arts. In 2000 the Garth Room was restored and supported by grants from the Prince's Trust and the Welsh Church Act Funds. The building was further extended in 2016 to provide new toilets, a large meeting room and a small kitchen facility.

## 2. CURRENT MANAGEMENT & USAGE OF THE OCR

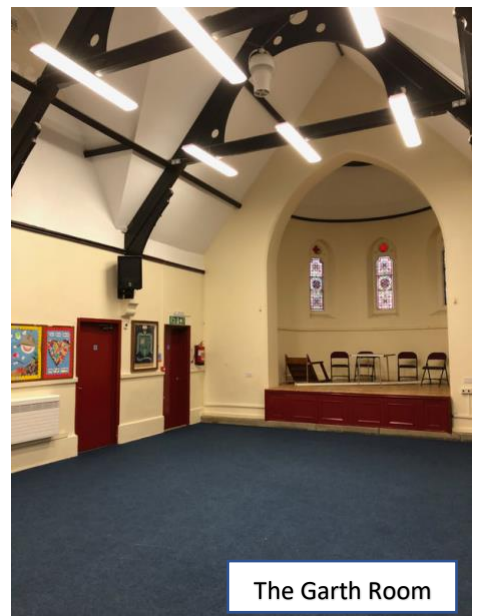
The OCR consists of the following bookable rooms: -

- *The Weir Room*
- *The Garth Room*
- *The Castle Room*

Besides the above visitors have access to toilets, kitchens and storerooms.

The Community Council now has sole use of the Chain Room which is a small meeting room with an adjoining office for the RMCC clerks.

**Need photos of Chain Room & Weir Room below!**



The building is maintained on a needs must basis. RMCC's part-time handyman carries out basic repairs and renovations and external contractors employed when needed. However, there is no rolling programme for maintenance and enhancement.

**Recommendation 1: - Council is invited to agree that it needs to develop a Maintenance/Enhancement Plan for the OCR – see also suggestions for improvement below. (this needs to be further costed and approved by Council).**

Possible items for consideration/inclusion on any maintenance/enhancement plan: -

<b>Accessibility and welcome</b>	Employ bilingual signage throughout.
	Something, somewhere saying 'Welcome' would be good!
	Install a bike rack. This could be very small/unobtrusive things (e.g., small metal bars bolted to a wall, in which front wheels can be inserted and locked)
	Audio loops to be considered/installed for sure.
	Consider installation of ramps/lift – cost permitting.
<b>Storage and Facilities</b>	We should review the contents of the storeroom. We have found rotting food in there! Should we still provide storage for the RMA? A container similar to the one at Radyr Woods would be good on the grass area (does that need planning?) Would need a screen to hide it?
	Some groups would like storage space (e.g., the Ardwyn Signers, for their music sheets) - we should see if we can install some cupboards etc.
	We need a simple PA as an option for those who find the current PA system too complex. (e.g., for use at children's parties etc.)
	We need better user guides for equipment - to reduce calls for help by hall users.
	There is very little private sector use of the OCR. They generally want a hotel style service, e.g., coffees, biscuits, mints, pads and pencils, flipcharts and pens, lots of parking etc. Also, the Castle Room is quite small - with a sloping roof.
<b>Outside Spaces</b>	With a fence, the grass area could be used as a play area by groups with young children.
	The side facing Heol Isaf could do with a trellis and some climbers. Pugh's have offered to help - with some free gifts.
	A short length of the embankment at the rear of the building, by the fire escape route, needs support. This can be done with planting. Jim Goodwin (of the Radyr Woods Wardens) can advise us over this.
	The ugly stretch of wall to the right of the front door could do with a mural – perhaps painted by pupils of Radyr Comprehensive.
	A banner on the railings is a good idea to drum up business and let passers by know who owns the building.
	Replace unattractive blue door at front of building.
<b>Inside Spaces</b>	Garth and Weir room need a revamp. There is something gloomy and depressing about them. The clerks have some good ideas here.
	Publicise the history and working of the RMCC. There is little, if any, acknowledgement that this is the meeting place of the RMCC. The “Chairmen Board” is not visible to the public and there is little if any information about the history of the building.
	Should we make more of the mural and other displayed items?
<b>Publicity</b>	We should produce leaflets that afford readers an insight into what we offer and at what cost. These could be displayed in local shops, schools etc.
	A banner on the railings is a good idea to drum up business and let passers by know who owns the building.

*NB: The list above is far from exhaustive and further items/suggestions would be welcomed.*



*A possible site for a commissioned wall mural*



*Could we display a banner on the railings advertising our ownership and facilities for hire?*



*The blue fire door is far from attractive sight from the main road and should be replaced/enhanced.*

Regarding current use it is quite easy to extract detail from the “Hallmaster” booking software. It is worth noting that the RMCC inherited the fees it charges from the Radyr & Morganstown Association (RMA) which were set almost on an individual basis, depending on what they thought appropriate for each organisation. 'Block rates' were set rather than hourly rates - so users could book morning, afternoon or evening. There wasn't much flexibility within that (so you could pay the same for an hour as someone else would pay for three hours!). As such the RMCC had complaints!

In September 2019 we switch to using the Hallmaster system which uses hourly rates. People can book exactly the time they need. Hallmaster was set up whilst setting hourly rates that would keep users paying pretty much the same amounts that they paid prior to Hallmaster. We didn't want to introduce Hallmaster and new fees at the same time.

Hallmaster produces various reports. Usage of individual rooms; usage by group etc. It's quite a powerful tool. It also does the invoicing and keeps track of payments.

With regard to future charging, we have looked at rates set by other halls across and near Cardiff. We are cheap! No other hall sets different rates for users from outside the area. Most halls just have one rate, whatever the nature of the person/organisation using the hall. That is certainly simpler to administer. We should seek a small profit, to help invest in the building. Lots to think about here!

#### OCR Charges - Proposed new fees

Below are two spreadsheets dealing with the OCR charging matrix. They show the incomes we received (or could have received, with different fees) from the Garth and Weir rooms (where we raised the vast majority of our income, since the Chain and Castle rooms were used very infrequently, by comparison).

The first (below) outlines our current fees and shows the income over a set period. This shows an income of £8,589 based on our current charging structure.

Name	Category	No of sessions	Mins per session	Total mins	Total hours	£ per hour	Total income (£)
Breakfast Club		95	90	8550	143	5.25	750.75
Ardwyn Singers		17	150	2550	43	6.25	268.75
Carers Wales	E	2	195	390	7	8.5	59.5
Party Hire	A	27	260	7020	117	6.25	731.25
Concept Players	E	17	160	2720	45	8.5	382.5
Cook Stars		27	90	2430	41	5.25	215.25
Ty Mynydd	A	3	160	480	8	6	48
Dance Angels		19	130	2470	41	5.25	215.25
Danybryn	E	4	322	1288	21	8.5	178.5

Pilates		24	100	2400	40	5.25	210
Harp Tuition	A	4	345	1380	23	6.25	143.75
Helen O'Grady	A	24	145	3480	58	6.25	362.5
Karate	A	17	90	1530	26	6.25	162.5
Latchkey		100	172	1720	287	5.25	1506.75
Maes yr Awel	B	2	110	220	4	11	44
Monkey Music	A	34	180	6120	102	6.25	637.5
Nursery		88	270	2376	396	4.25	1683
WI		5	180	900	15	5.25	78.75
History	A	2	150	300	5	6.25	31.25
Film club	D	3	210	630	102		0
Railway		5	210	1050	18	5.25	94.5
RP Haven	E	36	215	7740	129	6	774
Shine		16	210	3360	56	5.25	294
St John's Ambulance		22	200	4400	73	5.25	383.25
Thai Chi	D	20	105	2100	35		0
Assylum Drive		3	165	495	8	5.25	42
Carers Alliance	E	2	150	300	5	8.5	42.5
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>							<b>8589.25</b>

*Category A: Any organisation or person delivering services to the public in the OCR*

*Category B: Businesses and public bodies using the OCR for reasons other than delivering services to the public in the OCR*

*Category C: Private events organised by members of the public*

*Category D: R&MCC, the RMA, the OCR HMC, Radyr Woods Wardens, MP and AM surgeries*

*Category E: Everyone else*

*Please note that this table represents data from September 2019 (when Hallmaster was first used) to September 2020. Of course, activities were severely curtailed following March 2020 and the emergence of Covid-19.*

The second spreadsheet (below), covering the same period, enables us to see the impact on our income as we change the charging structure. At present, it shows an income of £13,640 for a fee for everyone of £8 per hour. This represents a 60% increase in income.

Name	Category	No of sessions	Mins per session	Total mins	Total hours	£ per hour	Total income (£)
Breakfast Club		95	90	8550	143	8	1144
Ardwyn Singers		17	150	2550	43	8	344

Carers Wales	E	2	195	390	7	8	56
Party Hire	A	27	260	7020	117	8	936
Concept Players	E	17	160	2720	45	8	360
Cook Stars		27	90	2430	41	8	328
Ty Mynydd	A	3	160	480	8	8	64
Dance Angels		19	130	2470	41	8	328
Danybryn	E	4	322	1288	21	8	168
Pilates		24	100	2400	40	8	320
Harp Tuition	A	4	345	1380	23	8	184
Helen O'Grady	A	24	145	3480	58	8	464
Karate	A	17	90	1530	26	8	208
Latchkey		100	172	1720	287	8	2296
Maes yr Awel	B	2	110	220	4	8	32
Monkey Music	A	34	180	6120	102	8	816
Nursery		88	270	2376	396	8	3168
WI		5	180	900	15	8	120
History	A	2	150	300	5	8	40
Film club	D	3	210	630	102	8	816
Railway		5	210	1050	18	8	144
RP Haven	E	36	215	7740	129	8	1032
Shine		16	210	3360	56	8	448
St John's Ambulance		22	200	4400	73	8	584
Thai Chi	D	20	105	2100	35	8	280
Assylum Drive		3	165	495	8	8	64
Carers Alliance	E	2	150	300	5	8	40
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>							13640

Our last full year's income was £23,808, for the year ended March 2020. A 60% increase over that figure would provide an annual income of £38,092. This would help pay for hall improvements etc - as well as other initiatives across the community.

For most users (17 out of the 27 users on the spreadsheets, this would represent an increase of £1.75 or £2.75 per hour). For four users, it would be a reduction of 50p per hour. For users enjoying a very favourable rate at present (e.g., the nursery, at £4.25 per hour, the increase would be greater – however, see below).

It is worth bearing in mind:

a) £8 per hour would still be much less than other halls charge (usually around £15 per hour).

b) We can find no evidence that other halls charge local residents less. Were we to do this, we could get a name as a relatively wealthy part of Cardiff being the only one to charge outsiders more.

c) Charging everyone the same, especially with this relatively low rate, has a number of advantages:

- *It is much easier to administer*
- *We wouldn't need different user categories (which makes Hallmaster more difficult for users and clerks. it's not always clear in which category to place a group. Also, some groups have more than one category reflecting their different activities)*
- *We have very few business users, so this lower rate may increase that side of our business*
- *It would be easier to advertise and market the hall. The message would simply be: "£8 per hour!". We could put that simple message on a poster on the railings facing Heol Isaf.*
- *Why should regular users pay less than children's parties (for instance) - when many of our regular users make a profit from their business at the OCR?*
- *It would probably be reasonable, however, to let R&MCC itself - and users planning 'good things, free for the community' to have free use of the hall (e.g., the RMA as it plans the festival).*
- *Very few hall users are likely to compare what they pay with other types of hall users. They will simply pay £8 per hour - and most likely see that as a fair price (especially if they've researched other halls).*

We can increase fees for our very favourable rate regular users in a two-step process (e.g., nursery from £4 per hour to £6 per hour from 1 September 2021; then £8 per hour from 1 April 2022). The exact timing of these increases should be determined by the OCR Management Board, reflecting the impact of Covid restrictions on hall users.

Following a similar approach, it is recommended that the fee for the Castle Room should be set at £6 for all users (cheaper than the Weir and Garth rooms because it is a smaller space).

The Chain Room is no longer available for hire, since it is now being used as our Clerks' office.

#### Possible discounts

For most groups the hourly charges would not increase a great deal. Private users, such as those arranging their children's birthday parties at the OCR, would see a decrease in charges (down from the current £12.50 per hour to the proposed £8 per hour).

Even so, some groups or individuals may have genuine difficulty affording these costs. We should make it clear, therefore, that a reduced fee could be made available for groups and individuals unable to afford £8 per hour (or £6 per hour, for the Castle Room). In those cases, we would ask the relevant group or person to explain why they would be unable to pay £8 or £6 per hour. It would be for the OCR Management Board to agree to any reduction in fees. The amount of the reduction would be at the discretion of the OCR Management Board. Some

reductions may be for a limited period only (for instance, following the establishment of a new group or organisation, which needs time to collect membership fees etc).

The Hallmaster system would enable the clerks to enter the agreed reduced fee, rather than the standard £8 or £6 fee.

**Recommendation 2 - Council is invited to agree that:**

- **A flat fee of £8 per hour should be introduced for all users of the Garth and Weir Rooms.**
- **A flat fee of £6 per hour should be introduced for all users of the Castle Room.**
- **The new fees should be introduced in stages (as illustrated above).**
- **Discounts should be provided for groups or individuals unable to afford these fees, at the discretion of the OCR Management Board.**

It is hoped that should the above be enacted then consideration may be needed as to how the building is managed and maintained. If usage increases as well as the building being further developed (see above and below) then it would not be unreasonable to assume that this would require more time to manage and maintain the building. As such the following recommendation should be considered: -

**Recommendation 3 - Council is invited to agree that:**

**It will keep a watching brief on its capacity to manage and maintain the OCR and if necessary be prepared to enhance staffing resources in order to adequately manage and maintain the OCR.**

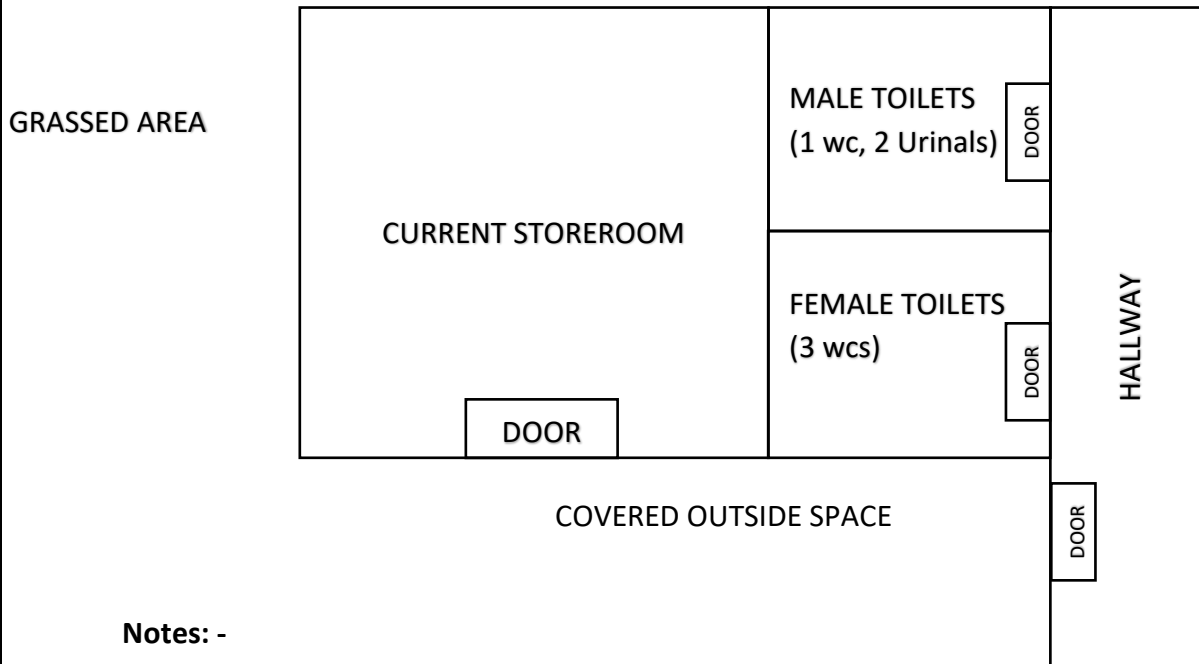
### 3. POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS MOVING FORWARD

Whilst the above can be relatively easily agreed, developed and acted upon, perhaps as a council we need to be more ambitious and forward thinking. The OCR Management Board has discussed and distilled the potential for two enhancement projects: -

- *Repurposing and development of the downstairs store room.*
- *The potential to build and manage a “Community Festival Hall”.*



**SOME PRELIMINARY SUGGESTIONS &  
THOUGHTS FOR RE-PURPOSING DOWNSTAIRS STORE-ROOM**



**Notes: -**

The above diagram represents the current end-plan of the ground floor of OCR.

It has been suggested that we might repurpose the current storeroom to have a smaller room for rent that would be accessible to those with mobility issues.

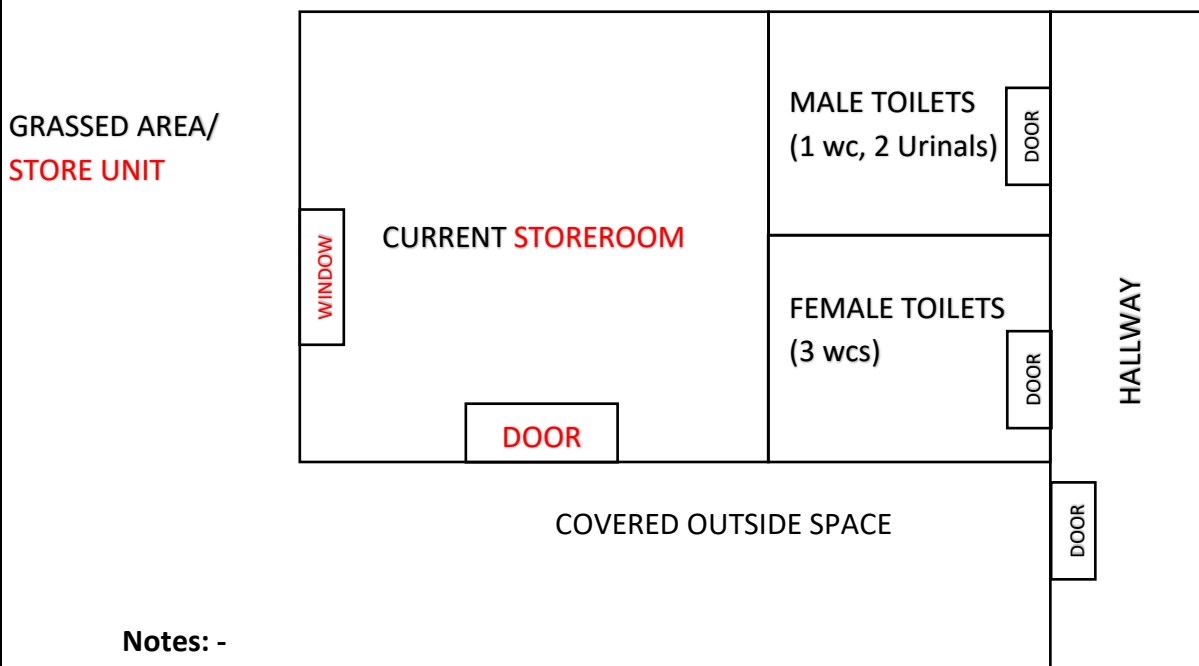
If we are to do this, we need to take a recommendation to the council and be able to cost our plans, ensure it is in the Council's budget.

Points for consideration should include: -

- *What is the Purpose of the Room? Its use will determine whether some or all of the following points will be needed.*
- *How will the room be accessed, via existing door (probably the only solution) or by another means?*
- *How will the room space be planned/developed?*
- *We need to be mindful of existing services and whether they will need to be moved, enhanced or new provided in the room – i.e., electricity, water, gas, IT, heating, wastewater.*
- *Would users use existing toilet facilities, or have new?*
- *Would there need to be welfare facilities – e.g., small kitchen or “tea-point”? This would need waste provision/plumbing?*
- *What about adequate ventilation/heating? This will need to be in accordance with building regulations.*
- *What about security?*
- *Would we want linkage to existing building, or will it be a stand-alone?*
- *DDA Requirements would need consideration.*

- We would need to measure the thermal performance of existing floor, walls and ceiling - to be in accordance with building regulations.
- We would need to consider fire precaution measures – e.g., alarms and extinguishers.
- Where would the exiting items of storage be rehoused?
- We would need to check existing building insurance for change of use.
- We would need to check with Planning Department for possible change of use.
- We would need to check with Building Control on proposed change of use and implications.

### SCENARIO 1 FOR RE-PURPOSING DOWNSTAIRS STORE-ROOM (EASIEST/CHEAPEST?)



#### Notes: -

Install store unit on grassed area to house dislocated items.

Install **window** for light (possible security issue).

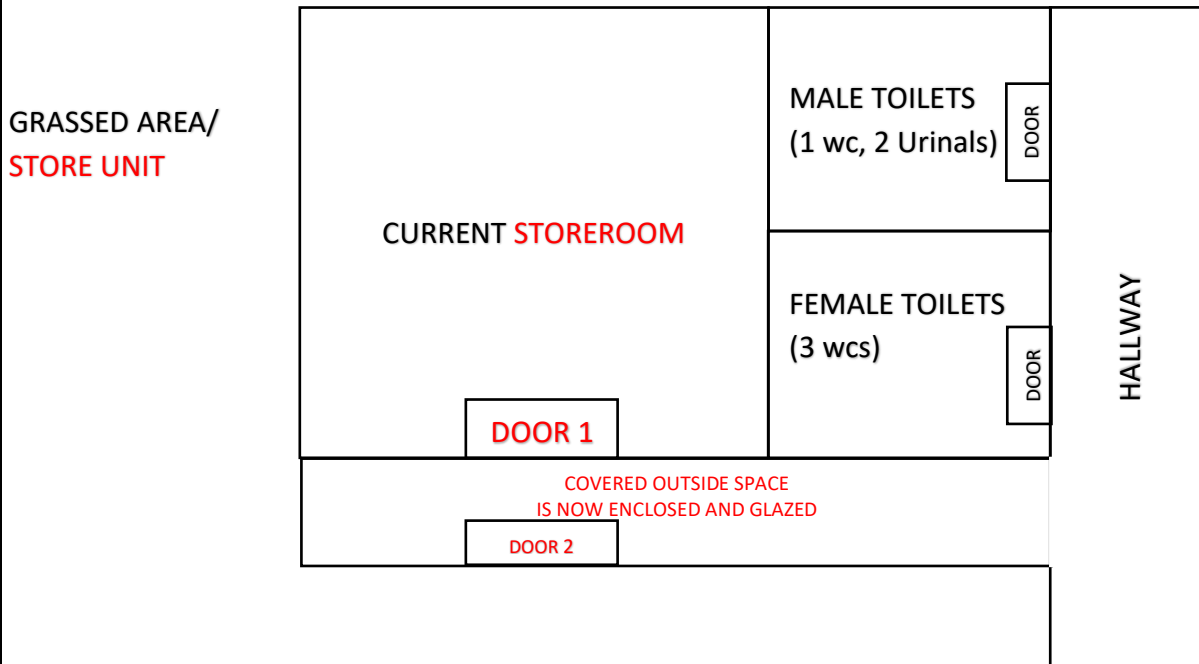
Enhance **door** to improve appearance/allow light into room/be more secure. Replace existing door with glazed double door with side panels.

Improve specifications of the **storeroom** for use by the community (to include facilities for refreshments, heating, lighting, furnishing etc.)

*Pros – easiest and cheapest model.*

*Cons – rather basic, room separate from rest of building, toilets would have to be accessed by entering main building etc. This might be a security risk as users might need the entry code.*

**SCENARIO 2 FOR RE-PURPOSING  
DOWNSTAIRS STORE-ROOM (BEST/MOST EXPENSIVE?)**



**Notes: -**

Install store unit on grassed area to house dislocated items.

Enhance **door 1** to improve appearance/allow light into room. This door is no longer an external door. This may mean we don't need the window proposed in scenario 1. Replace existing **door 1** with new glazed double door with side panels.

Improve specifications of the **storeroom** for use by the community (to include facilities for refreshments, heating, lighting, furnishing etc.)

Build new **full height glazed screen** plus new entrance **door 2** to create an internal corridor space to provide linkage to existing facilities without the need to go outside. Existing rear door to be removed.

*Pros – the new room is a part of the main building, facilities can be accessed by users of the new room without going outside the building, the appearance of the building is enhanced.*

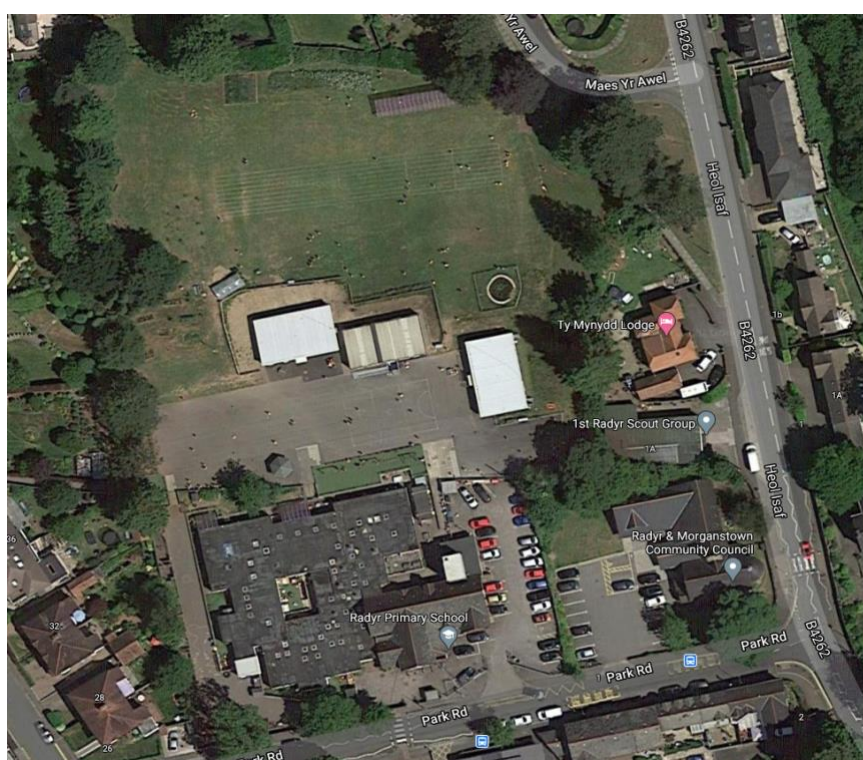
*Cons – this scenario involves the most expense/work, we would need to consider the existing toilet ventilation and modify it.*

## WHAT ABOUT A “COMMUNITY FESTIVAL HALL”

One suggestion that has been mooted is we should be more ambitious and seek to build one such hall.

Of course, this venture would need far more thought and development with the following thoughts/questions needing consideration: -

	Questions	Thoughts/Notes
1.	Who would manage this project?	Surely we would need to employ a person/persons with relevant expertise?
2.	From where would any funds come?	Through grants, Section 106 monies, the Precept, Reserves?
3.	Where would the hall be built?	Is there a site within the community? Could it be built on land provided by both the RMCC and the neighbouring Primary School (Dual Use) – see aerial photograph below. This is obviously speculative and sensitive.
4.	What would it be used for?	Community Use – e.g., by the community’s schools, by any local performance groups, by the Cinema Club, for Hire, to provide Badminton Courts etc.
5.	How would it be managed?	Surely we would need to consider a Hall Manager, as well as increasing our Handyman capacity/resources. Any staffing additions could also help to manage some of the above as described earlier on in this document.
6.	Further points for consideration:	Is there a need for such a facility? We would need to ascertain the answer to this question.



**Recommendation 4 - Council is invited to agree that:**

- **The idea of the development of the downstairs store be explored.**
- **The idea of a “Community Festival Hall” be explored.**