

Proposal to build a rehearsal facility at the bottom of Rectory Hill, Amersham

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Why do you need a new premises?

A. The band currently rehearses at the Methodist Church Hall in Winchmore Hill. This is under threat of closure and it is likely that the band will have to vacate the building within the next 2 years. In addition, the band has grown significantly and the hall is now too small for our needs. Access is difficult and there is limited on-street parking.

Q. Isn't there somewhere else you could rehearse?

A. Over the last 18 months the band has made an extensive search for a new home. We have looked at hiring space in over 65 different local buildings, community halls, churches and schools. None of these are suitable either due to lack of storage space or because they are not available on the evenings that we rehearse. There is a recognised shortfall of community facilities in Amersham.

Q. Why do you have to build on green belt land?

A. Last year the band made an offer for the St John Ambulance Hall in Bensheim Way, but was out-bid by a private investor. We also investigated the possibility of purchasing a number of other properties including commercial properties on local industrial estates. None of these were suitable due to price, parking, space, or potential noise issues. An alternative greenfield site was also evaluated but that is currently unavailable.

Q. Why have you chosen this site?

The proposed site at the bottom of Rectory Hill is un-used, inaccessible, partly overgrown and suffers from litter. It is our view that the proposed development would be an improvement. A significant part of the site will be left undeveloped.

The site is close to the town centre which makes it easily accessible for those using public transport.

Q. How will you minimise the visual impact and avoid spoiling the view from Church Street?

A. It is the intention to retain most of the current trees, hedging and vegetation that currently screen the site from view. Our plan is to construct a single storey building which will be positioned at the bottom of the site and which will be largely hidden behind the existing vegetation. The building will be a barn style construction which will fit in with the local surroundings. Extra planting will be provided to increase the screening and there will be planting around the carpark.

Q. Will you be cutting down all the trees on the site?

A. Two of the large trees on the site are now dead and will need to be removed for safety reasons (this is regardless of whether or not the bandroom proposal is approved). Other trees, including two large hornbeams will be retained together with most of the hedging and vegetation on the School Lane and Rectory Hill boundaries. Some vegetation will be removed to create the access onto Rectory Hill, but the large trees will be retained.

Q. How often will the band use the building, will there be lots of extra traffic?

A. Currently the band rehearses on Monday and Thursday evenings. We would like to extend this as the band grows, perhaps to include an additional weekday evening and on Saturday daytime. There is a different band which rehearses on Wednesday morning and which may also use the building. There will be additional traffic entering and leaving the site prior to and after each rehearsal, but the level of traffic is expected to be small in comparison with the current traffic on Rectory Hill.

We also expect to be able to provide for one-to-one teaching although this would be a very low level of extra traffic.

Q. How long will construction take and how will the construction traffic be handled?

A. This is a relatively small building which could be constructed within just a few months. Large construction vehicles will be told to route via Rectory Hill north and not via Amersham Old Town.

Q. How much noise will the band make?

A. The building will be insulated to minimize external noise. For near neighbours it is not expected that noise levels will be greater than existing noise from traffic and other sources. Noise measurements carried out at a similar bandroom in Wantage showed that external noise emanating from the building was very low.

Q. Will the building attract vandals or crime, as the site is hidden from view?

A. It is our intention to secure the site perimeter and to install security features including lighting, video and alarm systems. The site will be visible from the surgery building.

Q. Will other community groups be able to use the building?

A. We would like to be able to offer limited use of the building to other selected community groups, particularly music groups which could benefit from the facilities that we include within the building. Currently we are in discussion with other potential users.

Q. Can the parking space be used by other people?

A. Currently we are not proposing to make the car park available for general public use. This is because we want to ensure that the site is secure. If there is strong local support for public use, and Council approval, then we may re-consider this.