

Report of the Scrutiny Review Task Group on the Review of Venues – Bourne Hall and Hook Road Arena

1. Introduction

- 1.1 At the meeting of the Audit, Crime & Disorder and Scrutiny Committee in November 2015, the Committee agreed to include a review of Venues in its work programme.
- 1.2 The Committee received the review terms of reference at its meeting in February 2016, these having been reviewed earlier by the Financial Policy Panel. Councillors Clive Smitheram, David Reeve and Steve Bridger were appointed to form a task group to undertake the investigative work. Councillor Michael Teasdale, member of the Strategy & Resources Committee, was co-opted on to the task group.

2. Aim of the Review

- 2.1 The Venues review was intended to contribute to the development of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy by ensuring services provided by the Playhouse, Bourne Hall (including the museum), Ewell Court House and Hook Road Arena were fit for purpose, met the needs of local residents and were cost effective to provide. Proposals were to be developed for improving the efficiency of the service including an analysis of the customer base.

3. The Investigation

- 3.1 At the beginning of the investigation the task group agreed that it wished to approach the Venues review in stages. As such, the task group has concentrated on Hook Road Arena and Bourne Hall to date. These two venues form the subject matter of this first report of the scrutiny review task group.
- 3.2 The task group's investigation started at the end of February 2016. It continued over the summer into September. The task group undertook site visits, held meetings with Epsom and Ewell Borough Council (EEBC) officers and members, Surrey County Council (SCC) officers, and different voluntary groups. It undertook a small survey on the Bourne Hall Museum.
- 3.3 The dates of all the information gathering exercises of the task group are set out in Table 1 below. In addition, the task group did seek a meeting with the Friends of Bourne Hall Museum, but unfortunately this meeting was unable to take place as planned.

Table 1 – Task Group Activities Undertaken

	Scrutiny Review Task Group Activity	Date
1.	First Meeting of the Task Group	26 February 2016
2.	Bourne Hall Site Visit	3 March 2016
3.	Hook Road Arena Site Visit	9 March 2016
4.	Meeting with the Head of Venues & Facilities	5 April 2016
5.	Task Group Meeting	19 April 2016
6.	Meeting with the Curator, Bourne Hall Museum	27 April 2016
7.	Meeting with the Head of Legal & Democratic Services	10 May 2016
8.	Meeting with the Business Development and Commercial	12 May 2016

	Scrutiny Review Task Group Activity	Date
	Venues Manager	
9.	Meeting with the Epsom & Ewell History & Archaeology Society	24 May 2016
10.	Meeting with the Epsom & Ewell Local and Family History Centre	24 May 2016
11.	Task Group visit to Bourne Hall Yard and Garages	25 May 2016
12.	Museum Consultation with Local Primary Schools	27 June – 9 September 2016
13.	Meeting of the Task Group with the Head of Venues & Facilities, Business Development and Commercial Venues Manager and Bourne Hall Manager	7 July 2016
14.	Meeting with Museum Assistant	20 July 2016
15.	Meeting with Surrey Heritage and the Surrey Museums Partnership	28 July 2016
16.	Meeting with Head of Place Development	4 August 2016
17.	Meeting with Surrey County Council Libraries	23 August 2016
18.	Meeting with Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Community & Wellbeing Committee	6 September 2016
19.	Meeting with Ward Councillors	6 and 8 September 2016
20.	Meeting of the Task Group	6 September 2016

4. Key Findings

- 4.1 The key findings of the task group on Bourne Hall and Hook Road Arena are set out in Parts A and B below.

Part A – Bourne Hall

Overview

- 4.2 Bourne Hall, situated in Spring Street, Ewell, is a distinct, circular building set in gardens. Officially opened in 1970, it was designed as a public building to house a library and community facilities. Design features included space on a mezzanine floor for a museum, an exhibition space, as well as rooms for community use. The design included an entrance ramp and lift for improved accessibility.
- 4.3 Today, the building continues to provide a community facility, housing Ewell Library (now SCC controlled), Bourne Hall Museum, a café, physiotherapist and a range of rooms for commercial and community groups as well as individuals to hire. Within its curtilage, and within the scope of the scrutiny review, are gardens and a lake, small yard with garages (formerly the gardens' nursery) and a former caretaker's cottage. Site plans of Bourne Hall are attached at [Appendix 1](#). (External aspects of Bourne Hall not mentioned above such as the car park and Lodge are outside the scope of this review.)
- 4.4 In recognition of its architectural and historic interest, the building is Grade II listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. First listed in April 2015, the Historic England list entry description states it is architecturally “a striking design, notable for its space-age flair and the generous, top-lit principal interior space”. Under historic interest it is listed as ‘an ambitious example of the

expansion of the library service and the integration of community facilities and disabled access' (Historic England Listing Description¹).

- 4.5 The public entrance to Bourne Hall is situated on the south side of the building, with level access from the adjacent car park. The covered entrance leads into the main foyer, with a corridor running from the left and the right to various rooms. An open stairway (under which the Friends of Bourne Hall Museum shop is located) provides access to the mezzanine floor and the museum. Situated on the right hand side of the foyer is a reception desk. The foyer, a large open space in which exhibitions are often held, is open, with light permeating from the central, round roof lights. At the far end of the foyer are stairs down to the Main Hall with a stage and access to a discreet bar. The café, located behind the stairs down to the Main Hall, has tables and chairs set up across a section of the foyer for use by visitors.
- 4.6 Ewell library is situated across the back of the building looking out onto the gardens and lake, although there is no ready access for the public out into the gardens from the library. The library is separated from the foyer by secure, but moveable room dividers. Its footprint encompasses a children's library, a reference/borrowing area, the Epsom & Ewell Local and Family History Centre, and a number of offices for private (staff) use.

Visitor Attraction

- 4.7 Through its numerous visits and discussions the task group saw first-hand that Bourne Hall was a popular building, often thriving with visitors. People of all ages were seen visiting the museum and library, or relaxing in the café and gardens. The task group understands that Ewell Library is a high performing library with approximately 2,000 book issues each week. Across the week Monday was the quietest day at Bourne Hall, the task group noted that this coincided with the library's Monday closure.
- 4.8 Recognising that data from the most recent of the Council's Citizens Panel Surveys (March 2014) was two years old, and that changes had been implemented to some of the Council's venues in that time, the task group still noted some pertinent results. Bourne Hall was identified as the Council's most visited venue by respondents. The top three reasons for respondents' most recent visit to a Council venue (included Bourne Hall amongst others) were (i) library, (ii) café, and (iii) exercise. These three reasons were, however, closely followed by (iv) event, (v) leisure time socialising, (vi) medical visit and (vii) museum. The top three most important factors for respondents when visiting Bourne Hall were (i) access to the building, (ii) size, and (iii) catering and ease of parking (equal factors). Lastly, respondents' awareness of meeting and activity rooms for hire in Bourne Hall was 80%.
- 4.9 The task group noted that reviews on Trip Advisor (www.tripadvisor.co.uk) relating to Bourne Hall were, in the main positive, many highlighting the range of facilities available at the venue.

Utilisation and Appearance

- 4.10 As a community facility Bourne Hall has a number of different rooms for hire. Bourne Hall is promoted as a versatile venue with space and facilities to accommodate both business and private hirers (individuals and community groups). Its excellent village location, good transport links, gardens and lake are all highlighted in the Bourne Hall

¹ <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1425772>

brochure. Bourne Hall is promoted as a venue for wedding receptions and civil ceremonies. Currently the Main Hall, Rose Room and Studio Room are licensed for weddings and civil ceremonies, the Banqueting Suite can be dressed for dining and the terrace used for outside socialisation. The meeting and conference markets are also targeted with the venue able to accommodate a range of needs from small meetings to large conferences of 300 attendees. Lastly, Bourne Hall is able to accommodate other events and activities such as birthday celebrations, dance evenings, shows, festivals, concerts, exhibitions and classes of varying genre.

- 4.11 On entering the building, turning left gives access to four rooms on ground floor level which are available for hire. The Azalea, Begonia and Camelia Rooms are located on the outer side of the building and overlook the car park. These rooms can be hired either individually or together as one (the Banqueting Suite). Linked to the Azalea Room is a bar which has its own access onto the corridor. On the opposite side of the corridor is the Rose Room. This room is an internal room. Turning right immediately on entering Bourne Hall leads to the Studio Room which is located at the far end of the corridor. This room has access onto the external terrace and from there the gardens and lake. 2015/16 utilisation of these rooms is set out in Table 2 below.

Table 2 – Current Room Utilisation

Room	Utilisation 2015/16 ² (%)
Azalea Room	16.47*
Begonia Room	19.17*
Camelia Room	22.32*
Rose Room	8.78
Studio Room	18.02
Foyer	80.00
Main Hall	34.88

* figures include individual and banqueting suite bookings

- 4.12 The foyer is available for hire and will often be used to hold art exhibitions and craft fairs. In comparison to the other rooms, utilisation currently stands at 80% of its bookable yearly hours. The foyer has over the last three years consistently secured 80% utilisation. It is by far the most popular space for hire within the building. The remaining room at Bourne Hall available for hire is the Main Hall. The Main Hall, as highlighted above, is located downstairs. It comprises a large space with newly installed wooden flooring, a stage and access to a separate bar. Access to this room is via stairs or the lift located just inside the foyer. Utilisation of the Main Hall currently stands at around 35%. For 14/15 its utilisation was very low at 6.13%, this is due to refurbishment work taking place following flooding in March 2014.
- 4.13 All utilisation figures discussed above are also illustrated at Appendix 2. In addition, Appendix 2 includes Sunday bookings where the whole venue is booked by just one particular hirer. Sunday utilisation figures are based on 350 bookable hrs per annum (8am – 3pm for 50 weeks of the year). Average utilisation is also illustrated at Appendix 2. The average utilisation figures reflect utilisation figures for rooms booked from Monday to Saturday as well as Sunday whole venue bookings.

² Utilisation is measured as a percentage of the room's bookable yearly hours which equate to 4000 hrs (Monday – Friday 9am – 10pm and Saturday 9am – midnight, for 50 weeks of the year)

Average utilisation at Bourne Hall across a three year period, 2013/14, 2014/15 and 2015/16 has maintained a near constant level of 40%.

- 4.14 Officers indicated that it was feasible for the Council to generate additional income from an increase in hirers; an examination of unused capacity had been undertaken and a potential field of new hirers identified. However, officers also highlighted that the Council's ability to generate additional income was subject to a number of associated issues being addressed. These are discussed below.
- 4.15 Officers considered that there was a real need for Bourne Hall to be redecorated in order to maximise income capacity. Officers were currently restricted in their ability to target particular markets in a more focussed fashion and compete with other venues given the general appearance of a number of the rooms. There was a particular need for the Banqueting Suite (Azalea, Begonia and Camelia Rooms), Rose and Studio Rooms as well as the Foyer to be repainted. A direct relationship existed between appearance and potential additional income generation. The task group learned that the estimated cost of repainting the Banqueting Suite and adjacent corridor was approximately £6k plus VAT.
- 4.16 Connected to this officers raised issues around the appearance of the venue's main entrance. Officers highlighted that it was desirable to develop the main entrance of Bourne Hall in order to make the venue more appealing, for example new planting and renewal of the Council signs. Incorporation of an external digital advertising unit (similar to that used by the Playhouse) instead of the current advertising banners tied to the main entrance's railings, had the potential to generate a small amount of additional income on an annual basis.
- 4.17 The need to develop a strategic asset management plan to address the maintenance of the interior of the building was highlighted. Development of such a plan would enable officers to plan ahead across a five year period instead of responding to demands as they arose.
- 4.18 A need for new audio/visual equipment at Bourne Hall was highlighted. Current equipment was temperamental and unreliable. Updating the equipment would enable officers to form a marketing strategy to further target the business and conference sectors. Funds to cover the cost of replacing this equipment were available (residual funds from the Main Hall refurbishment following the flood in March 2014).
- 4.19 During visits to Bourne Hall, task group members viewed the overall appearance of the building both inside and out. Members were in agreement that internally rooms appeared dated and were in need of refreshing. Members were, however, impressed with the refurbishment of the Main Hall following the flood. Members considered that signage for visitors just inside the entrance appeared poor; this meant that visitors were reliant upon staff at the reception desk for direction. Outside, although the general overall appearance of the gardens and lake was impressive, members identified details which they considered detrimental to a person's full enjoyment of the grounds. The terrace area needed attention; tall weeds had grown up over the summer and needed removing. On one occasion reference was made by members to a bale of straw left over from the Herald of Spring event which needed clearing. Members considered that there was further potential to improve the overall attractiveness of the terrace area.

Catering Provision

- 4.20 The provision of catering at Bourne Hall which encompasses the Bourne Hall Café, all banqueting/events catering requirements and provision of bar services at the venue's two bars, is met by a private caterer under contract with the Council. Under this contract the caterer has sole catering rights for the public parts of the building. This means that all catering requirements for meetings, conferences, parties and weddings etc. held at Bourne Hall will be serviced by the caterer as per the terms of the contract. Should it wish, the caterer can choose not to service some events, in such cases the Council has a right to engage a substitute caterer. However, should a hirer wish to undertake their own catering, for example, children's parties, or engage their own caterer for a wedding, the hirer will need to pay the caterer a fee for use of the kitchen and its facilities. It would appear that this 'exclusivity clause' is having some negative impact on the take up of rooms and facilities at Bourne Hall by potential hirers and thereby leading to a loss of potential income generation for the Council.
- 4.21 The task group learnt that the catering contract had actually expired in 2014. Catering arrangements had been extended whilst officers were working on development of the future provision of catering at the venue. One particular aspect which was being examined and which the task group was keen to explore was the potential to develop the terrace area to house an outside café facility. However, in addition, a need to redevelop the kitchen at Bourne Hall was highlighted by officers.

Bourne Hall Museum

- 4.22 The museum was founded in 1967, before Bourne Hall was officially opened. It resulted from joint work by the library (then under the control of the Borough Council), the Epsom & Ewell History & Archaeology Society (EEHAS) and the Surrey Archaeological Society (SARs). Working as a documentary group they brought together basic records and archives associated with the borough. Today these documents form the core Borough Records, some of which are held by the museum, others by the Surrey History Centre in Woking.
- 4.23 Bourne Hall Museum is accredited with the Arts Council England. This means it has met nationally agreed standards. Accreditation covers issues such as sustainable development, responsible collections management and active engagement with communities. The museum's ability to meet these standards is reviewed every 2 years. Benefits of accreditation include access to professional advice, support and increased funding opportunities. The museum is staffed by a part-time curator and a part-time museum assistant. Evidence to the review indicated that paid staff brought benefits to a museum's operations including direction, stability and strategic overview.
- 4.24 The aim of the Bourne Hall Museum is to promote the understanding of history in Epsom and Ewell by helping and encouraging people to encounter objects and pictures from the past. Its key objectives are:
- To make the museum collections accessible as a resource for the study of local history
 - To offer visitors an exciting and informative experience in the museum's displays and exhibitions
 - To promote historical awareness in the borough through activities and festivals
 - To provide an educational service suited to all stages and abilities.

- 4.25 The museum, as mentioned above is found on the mezzanine floor of Bourne Hall and is accessed via the circular stairs or the lift, both of which are just inside the foyer. The museum has many artefacts, photographs and information on permanent display including some of particular note such as Lord Rosebery's Hansom cab. Display items are rotated regularly to ensure renewed interest. It is understood that a museum's collection is designed around a central theme.
- 4.26 Over the years the Bourne Hall Museum collection has grown, at the end of 2015 it comprised 14,222 objects. Those not on display are stored at Bourne Hall. Each year objects are bought by the museum (funded by the Friends of Bourne Hall Museum) the museum stores archaeological finds of the EEHAS and others are donated. The museum is the long-term guardian of all these objects and as such has legal and ethical obligations. Stringent rules on disposal apply. This means that any proposed closure or reduction of a museum can lead to lengthy and costly follow up action.
- 4.27 Bourne Hall Museum is open to visitors to view its permanent displays from 9am until 7pm Monday through to Saturday. The office (located off the museum) is staffed from 9am until 5pm Tuesday to Friday. Unfortunately, as the museum's visitor counter broke in 2012 and full records have not been kept since, it is not possible to identify the current number of visitors to the museum. The last figures recorded in 2011/12 highlighted 35,316 visits to the museum.
- 4.28 Museum staff run numerous activities which support the museum's key objectives. They undertake school tours of the museum gallery and will visit schools in the borough (includes those schools just outside the borough, but which are attended by children living in Epsom and Ewell). Staff provide historical talks from a local perspective to the school children and will lead local walks, in the main around Ewell Village, again to provide the children with a sense of local history. Recently staff delivered talks to school children in commemoration of World War 1; about 3,000 school children have been addressed to date. The museum offers a loan box service to teachers. Loan boxes (48 in total), put together by the museum staff, are used by teachers as an educational resource. They each include approximately 20 themed items, for example, covering the Victorian or prehistoric periods. Lastly, staff offer work experience placements for secondary school students each year at the museum.
- 4.29 The museum does not charge for school related activities unless external input is bought in such as re-enactors, in such cases the museum looks to recover its costs. The museum does not charge for its loan boxes. However, if an item is lost or broken the museum will seek recompense. The museum works on a partnership basis with the schools which will advertise museum events in their school newsletters on a regular basis. Museum staff consider that charging schools for museum activities would impact upon their uptake. Some support for running school related activities is provided by the Surrey Museums Partnership which is discussed below.
- 4.30 An exercise was undertaken to gather some feedback from primary schools on their take up and views of the services provided by the museum (services were used by primary schools in the main). Unfortunately minimal response to the survey was received, only four responses from three different schools. One school had visited the museum in the last twelve months, but highlighted that it had visited two or three times. All schools had used the museum's loan boxes and had been visited by museum staff. One particular school had been visited by museum staff more than three times in the past twelve months. Respondents considered that the museum

and its services were highly valuable to their school. One commented “The Bourne Hall Museum is an invaluable resource for the school. It supports the curriculum and brings history to life. It is an excellent tool in helping children of all abilities particularly children with Special Educational Needs to be able to contextualise their learning and give them a hands-on experience that they cannot get elsewhere....” Lastly, all schools stated that it was highly likely that their school would visit the museum in the future.

- 4.31 In addition to school related activities, museum staff run a children’s museum club, re-enactment events such as the Herald of Spring which last attracted 2,600 attendees (approximately 3,000 when including young children), festivals, guided walks (£5 fee for each person attending) and talks to adult groups. The children’s museum club holds meetings on the second Saturday of every month. Between 25 and 50 children attend each session. Any period of history can be covered, for example, Stone Age, World War 2, Ancient Egypt, the Romans and Vikings. One particular event looked at horrible jobs for children in history, another involved metal detecting activities. Summer club activities included flint knapping and an archaeological dig in the grounds of Bourne Hall. The museum applies a small charge to these activities.
- 4.32 Examples of other activities involving the museum include those held to commemorate World War 1. These events provided a local perspective and included an exhibition at Bourne Hall, the use of poppies to mark different events, a recruiting event in Epsom market place, a military camp held at the Ebbisham Centre, different re-enactments including ‘From Town to Trench’ weekend and ‘Kitchener’s March’, establishment of a Facebook page (Epsom and Ewell in World War 1). Positive comments were received regarding the Council’s World War 1 Commemoration events held to date.
- 4.33 Remaining activities undertaken by museum staff include the preparation of temporary exhibitions (often displayed in the Bourne Hall foyer), the provision of family history, building restoration and archaeological support, digitisation of artefacts and records and the publication of events. The museum recorded 21,449 requests for input in 2011/12. This number encompasses all contact made with the museum in that year such as queries, school and other group visits, talks and walks etc. It excludes ad hoc visits to the museum gallery which are covered in paragraph 4.27 above.
- 4.34 Throughout, museum staff work closely with a number of voluntary and other groups including:
- Surrey Museums Partnership (formerly Surrey Museums Consultative Committee)
 - Surrey Heritage (SCC)
 - Surrey Archaeological Society
 - Epsom & Ewell History & Archaeology Society
 - Epsom & Ewell Local and Family History Centre
 - Epsom Civic Society
 - Friends of Bourne Hall Museum

This partnership work is extremely important to the effective operation of the museum and its outreach activities. A brief overview of some of this work is outlined below.

- 4.35 The Surrey Museums Partnership (SMP) is jointly funded by the County, Borough, and District Councils in Surrey. It works with Surrey Heritage at Surrey County Council to support over 40 museums countywide, including Bourne Hall Museum which contributes just under £3,000 per annum. In return Bourne Hall Museum is supported by a county wide network which has a strong voice on a regional and national field, it gains from professional advice (for example disaster handling), countywide advertising and project collaboration (for example celebration of Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month and 'Learning on My Doorstep': Museum Enriching the Curriculum). It also has access to the SMP small grants programme.
- 4.36 EEHAS continues to work closely with the museum today, in particular, on archaeological excavations in the local area, for example the excavation at Church Meadow in Ewell. The museum also contributed to the excavations which took place on the site formerly owned by the North East Surrey College of Technology prior to building works commencing. The museum continues to work with the EEHAS on the cataloguing of all finds which are then stored at Bourne Hall if not placed on display.
- 4.37 The museum is actively supported by the Friends of Bourne Hall. An autonomous organisation comprising volunteers, the Friends of Bourne Hall Museum run the Museum Shop located under the stairs just inside the foyer. It provides the museum with small monetary funds for the purchase of items. It will also provide small scale funding for projects undertaken by the museum which require community input, for example it added £3000 to the Heritage Lottery Fund of £19,300 provided to the museum to fund the Council's recent World War 1 commemoration events.

External Elements

- 4.38 Located close to the exit from Bourne Hall car park, adjacent to the gardens, is the former caretaker's cottage. This building is currently leased to Surrey County Council for the provision of adult services. The task group requested that officers review the terms of the lease to establish whether it continued to be fit for purpose, met each parties needs and whether any improvements could be realised. This work is on-going.
- 4.39 The final area which the task group investigated comprises a yard on the north side of Bourne Hall. This yard, formerly known as 'The Turrets', was once used as the gardens' nursery. It is an enclosed area, located just outside the formal garden walls of Bourne Hall, backing on to the Bourne Hall Health Centre rear car park. It has its own access road off the Chessington Road. Currently used by Operational Services as well as Venues & Facilities as a storage area, the yard is accessed through a locked roll up shutter.
- 4.40 The yard area and garages, visited by the task group on a number of occasions, were unkempt. Various items were stacked up and stored around the enclosure which had weeds growing throughout. Although the three garages were currently used for storage, the small office was boarded up and had not been used for some time.

Part B – Hook Road Arena

Overview

- 4.41 Hook Road Arena is situated between Chessington Road and Hook Road. Site plans are attached at [Appendix 3](#). Hook Road Arena is a large open space comprising a number of fields available to hire for public events. The land was originally

transferred to the Council in 1973 by the Department of Health. SCC part funded the transfer. Restrictions on future use of the land were imposed at the time of the transfer; green belt conditions were also applied. The covenant stipulated that the land was to be used for recreation, for example walking, grazing, and riding or for agricultural use. No buildings were to be erected on the site unless their purpose was ancillary to an activity allowed under the covenant.

- 4.42 Maintenance of Hook Road Arena is currently fulfilled by Operational Services. Some changes have been implemented to the site over time including provision of a gravel track for improved vehicle access. Following heavy rain the ground is soft and unusable by both heavy pedestrian and vehicle traffic. The far end of the site adjacent to Richards Field and Oakdale Road was particularly prone to being waterlogged after sustained rain. This area had not been used for some time.
- 4.43 Hook Road Arena is currently used by both community and private hirers. Regular hirers included car boot sale organisers as well as a local Scout Group which organises a firework display on an annual basis. Hook Road Arena is generating a net profit for the Council although income generation is dependent upon the type of event held.
- 4.44 Officers intensified efforts recently to further promote the venue. A marketing campaign was held at the beginning of the year. Only seven new enquiries were generated. As a result officer time has been refocussed onto other Council venues. Officers have, however, given some consideration to new events that could be targeted as suitable for Hook Road Arena and its surrounding environment.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

- 5.1 The conclusions and recommendations of the task group on Bourne Hall and Hook Road Arena are set out in Parts A and B below. It is worth noting that a number of the task group's conclusions and the recommendation on Bourne Hall suggest that further work and analysis be undertaken. The task group intends that this will assist the Council in making decisions on the best means by which to ensure Bourne Hall continues to meet the needs of local residents and is efficient and effective in its operations.

Part A – Bourne Hall

- 5.2 The task group considers that Bourne Hall is a valuable asset for the whole community. Although located in Ewell Ward, it reaches out beyond Ward and even Borough boundaries. Its collection of different attractions and facilities such as the library, café, museum and gardens encourage people to visit and help promote residents' wellbeing, a link highlighted by the Department for Culture Media and Sports. "Culture brings huge benefits by providing better quality of life and wellbeing within local communities" (The Culture White Paper, Department for Culture Media and Sport, March 2016, Cm 9218, page 32).
- 5.3 Although feedback is generally positive, the task group considers that with some further investment the potential for future income generation at Bourne Hall can increase through people's greater use and enjoyment of the facility. The task group believes that there are opportunities for the Council to look to use the space provided by the unique building and its gardens to better effect, for example utilising the terrace which overlooks the gardens and lake.

Bourne Hall Museum

- 5.4 The task group considers that Bourne Hall Museum is a valuable resource, any loss of which would deprive the borough of a large record of its history and heritage. The museum actively engages with the local community through various means. It interacts directly with young children through the Museum Club and its services to schools. It is involved in different borough festivals and events such as the Herald of Spring; it organises and delivers group walks and talks for adults on local history, works closely with voluntary groups and provides extensive information and advice. Both the Museum and its officers are held by partners in high esteem.
- 5.5 The task group considers that the museum located on the mezzanine floor makes good use of this particular area. Being open both visually and audibly to the foyer and library, alternative income generating uses of this space are restricted. The task group has some concerns regarding the potential for the museum's collection to grow exponentially and the need for extra space that accompanies this. It therefore wishes to emphasise the need for efficient collections management in order to ensure the collection remains relevant, manageable and accessible.
- 5.6 The task group would like the museum in future to ensure it collects and presents appropriate statistical data covering all areas of its work. The task group considers that this should help the museum to illustrate to both residents and members the impact of its work. The Museum should continue to report annually to members of the Community & Wellbeing Committee.

Internal Configuration and Appearance

- 5.7 The task group considers that Bourne Hall has potential to attract greater use of the building and facilities. However, in order to do this the task group believes that some degree of investment by the Council is required in order to provide the best use of the space available and to present the building and gardens in the best light.
- 5.8 The task group considers that the current configuration of the open space at Bourne Hall does not necessarily provide the best basis for realising maximum income generation. The task group believes that the Council would benefit from exploring the possibility of potential adaptations in order to use to best advantage highlights of the building. For example access to the south terrace overlooking the gardens and lake could potentially provide a more attractive wedding venue. Surrey County Council Library Service has expressed a willingness to work in partnership with the Borough Council. Officer suggestions to increase rental opportunities should also be explored.
- 5.9 In connection with the above the task group considers that particular areas of Bourne Hall would benefit from being repainted. The task group believes that rooms available for hire at the venue looked tired and as a consequence utilisation of the rooms was impacted negatively. Consideration should also be given to taking other steps to make the venue more attractive to potential hirers such as use of a digital display, new planting and signs at the main entrance. The task group is supportive of officers' intention to replace the venue's audio/visual equipment with funds left over from the refurbishment of the Main Hall. It understands that officers are currently working on a business case for this purchase.
- 5.10 Lastly, the task group considers that officers should develop a five year maintenance plan for Bourne Hall which reflects any Council decisions regarding the venue.

Catering Provision

- 5.11 The task group is concerned to learn that although the catering contract had expired in 2014, the Council is still reliant upon an extension of this contract. The task group believes strongly that catering provision is a key element to ensuring Bourne Hall is able to provide competitive room hire arrangements. Although recognising other pressures are present, the task group feels that the catering arrangements need to be resolved as early as possible.
- 5.12 The task group is supportive of establishing an external café believing that this has the potential to attract more customers. As such it agrees that the Council should look at a business case for such provision and to link this work with any undertaken in relation to configuration and appearance (discussed above). Work undertaken on potential refurbishment of the kitchen should also be factored in. The task group considers that developmental work should encompass an analysis of whether the kitchen is positioned in the best place to meet future catering needs and associated costs before any refurbishment is finalised.

External Elements

- 5.13 The task group considers that the main opportunities relate to the small yard and garages, formerly known as 'The Turrets', located on the north side of Bourne Hall. Although recognising that the area is used by the Operational Services and Venues & Facilities Teams, the task group considers that the area could perhaps be better utilised. It recommends that the Council undertakes an exploration of potential alternative uses of this site including an analysis of any associated implications, benefits and restrictions.
- 5.14 Lastly, the task group considers that work on-going to review the provision of the former caretaker's cottage should be pursued in order to identify any potential improvements.

Recommendation

In order to ensure that Bourne Hall can continue to thrive in the future, meeting the needs of residents, efficiently and effectively, the Community and Wellbeing Committee should (i) consider and (ii) investigate further as necessary, the matters highlighted by the scrutiny task group in its report concerning:

- (a) Internal configuration and appearance;***
- (b) Catering Provision; and***
- (c) External elements***

Part B – Hook Road Arena

- 5.15 Recognising that Hook Road Arena was currently generating an income for the Council, and that restrictions on its use were in place, the task group considers that officers should continue to explore suitable opportunities to generate additional income wherever possible.

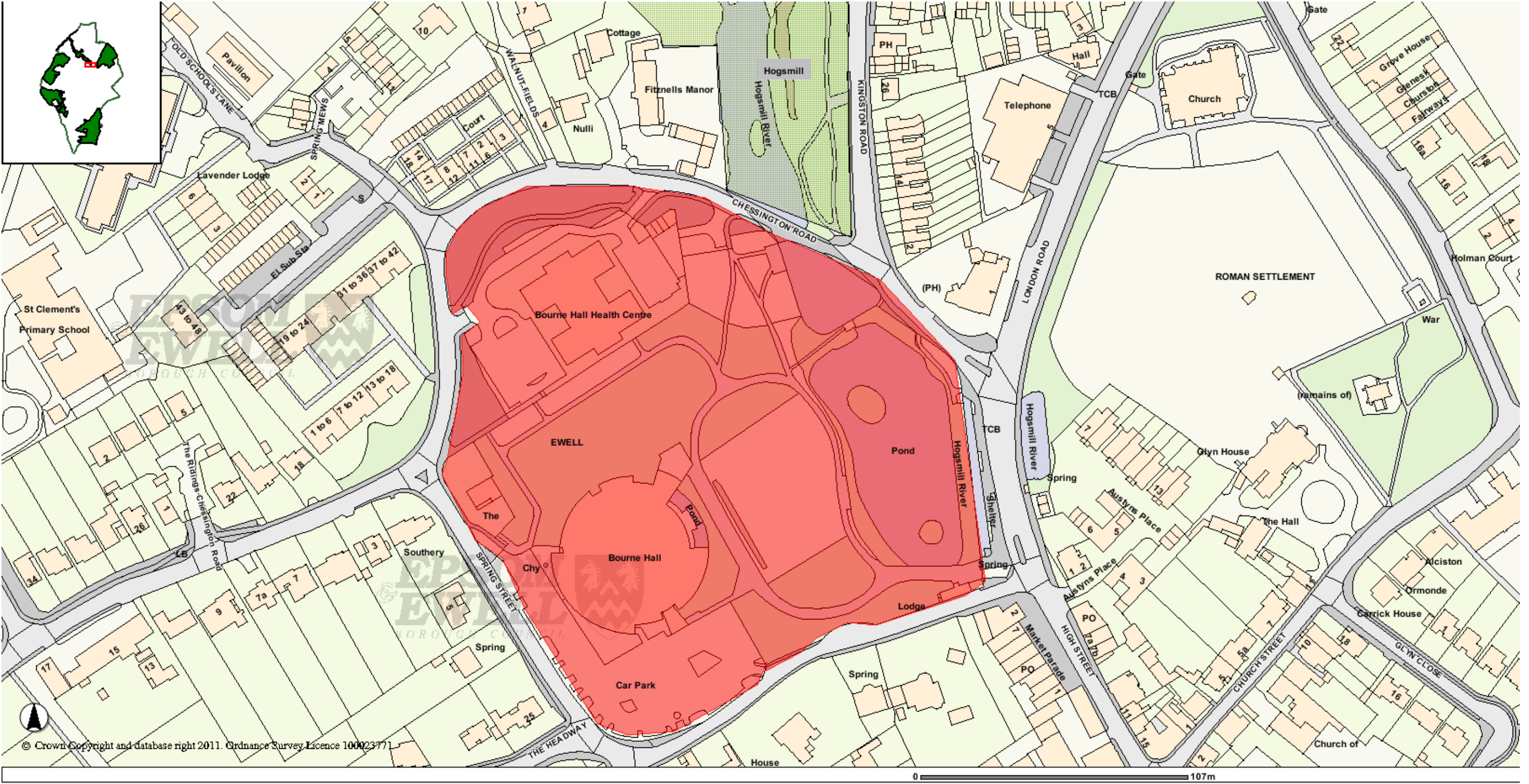
Recommendation

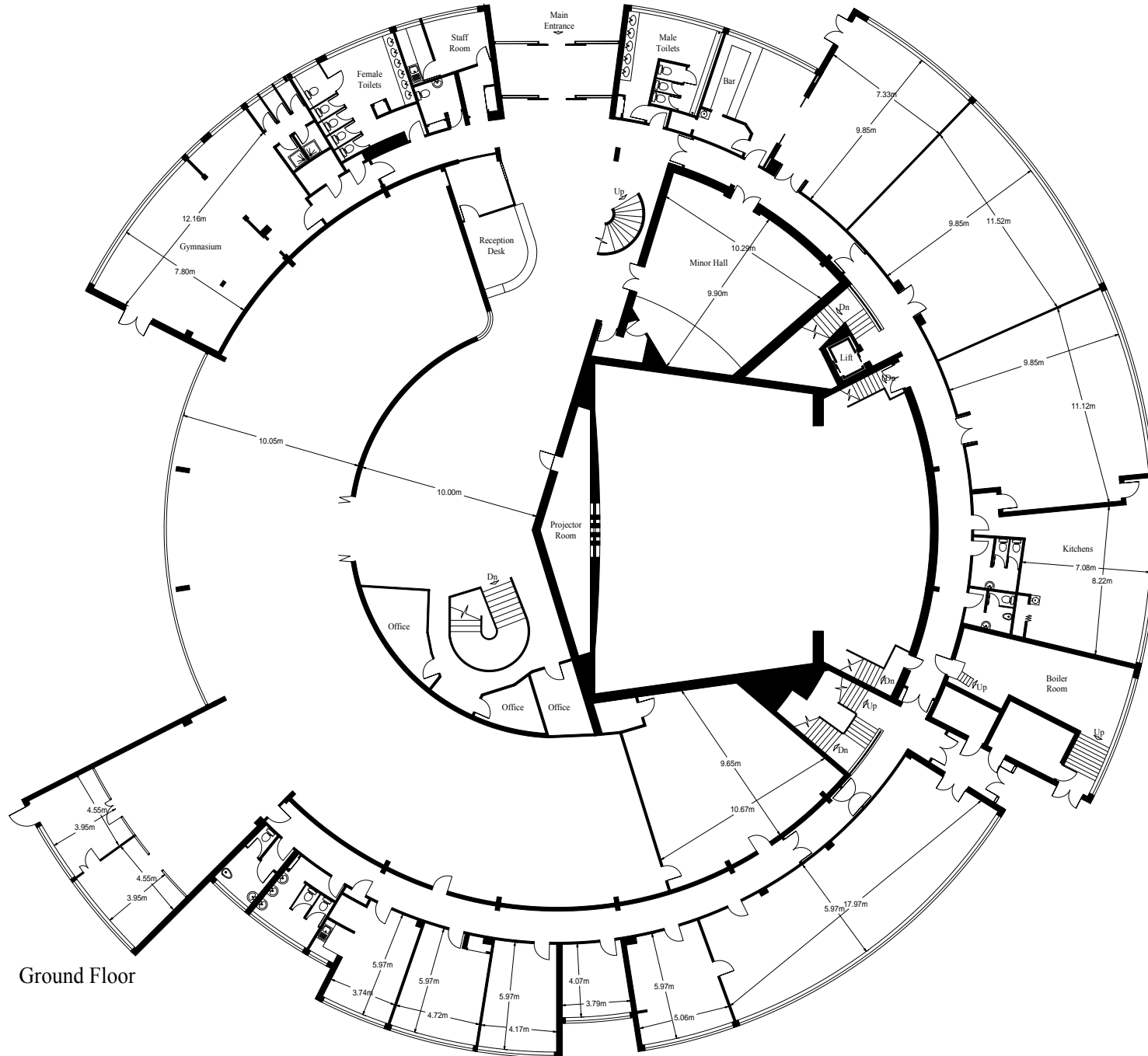
In order to ensure that Hook Road Arena continues to generate income for the Council, the Community & Wellbeing Committee should (i) consider and (ii)

investigate further, as necessary, the matters highlighted by the scrutiny task group in its report to target new events for the Arena.

6. Acknowledgements

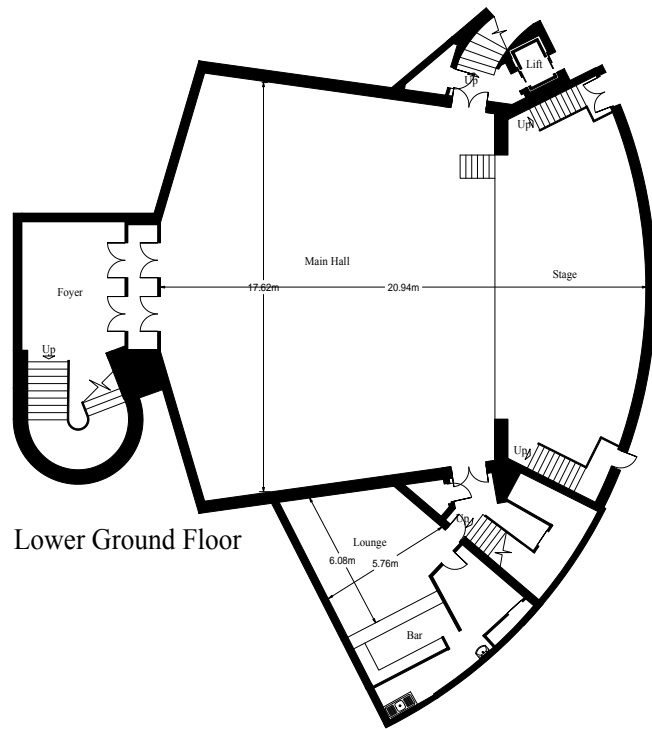
- 6.1 The Scrutiny Task Group wishes to thank all those who assisted the task group complete its investigations, in particular those who attended and provided evidence.



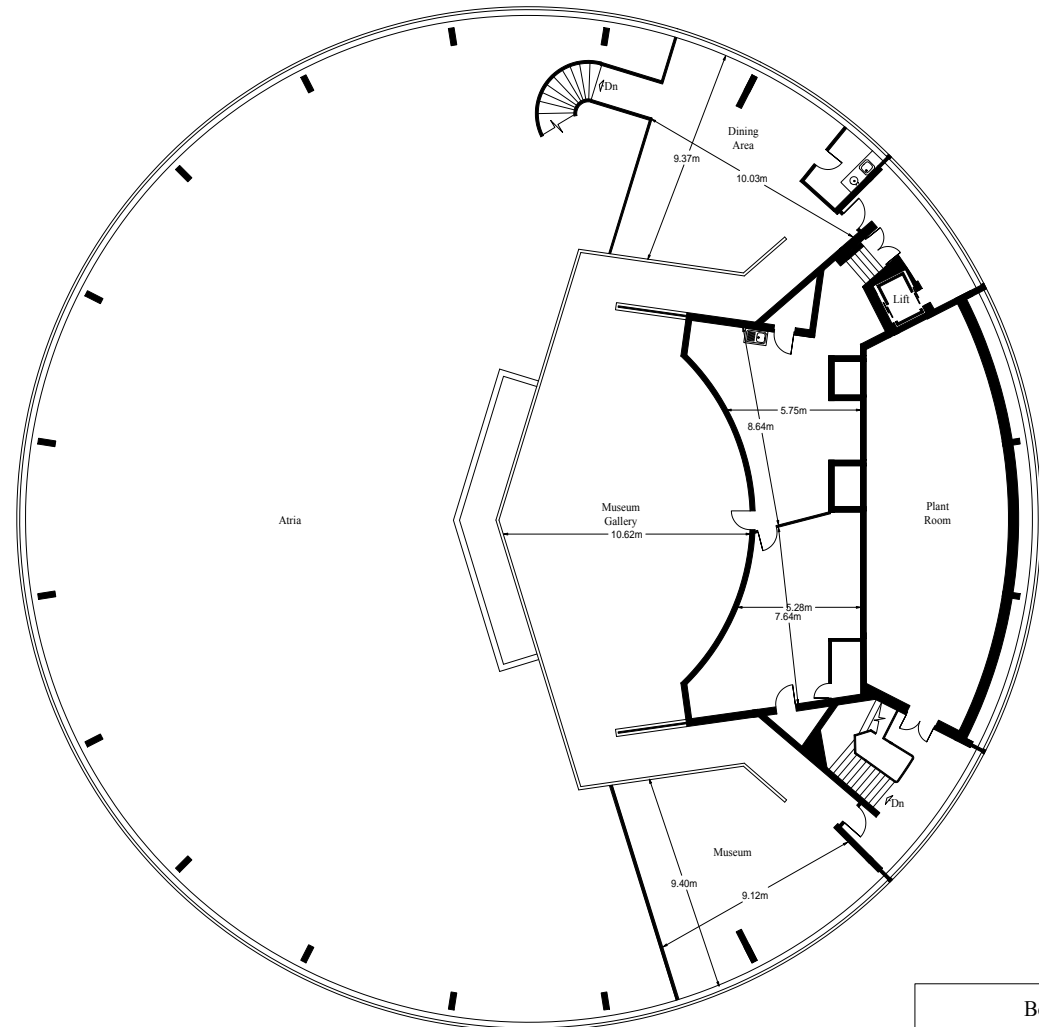


Ground Floor

Bourne Hall, Ewell, Surrey
Approximate Gross Internal Floor Area: 36576 sq.ft./ 3398 sq.mts.
Scale 1:XX Survey Date - 27.4.2005
Floor Plans produced by Proplan 01491 842925 This plan is for guidance only and must not be relied upon as a statement of fact.



Lower Ground Floor



First Floor

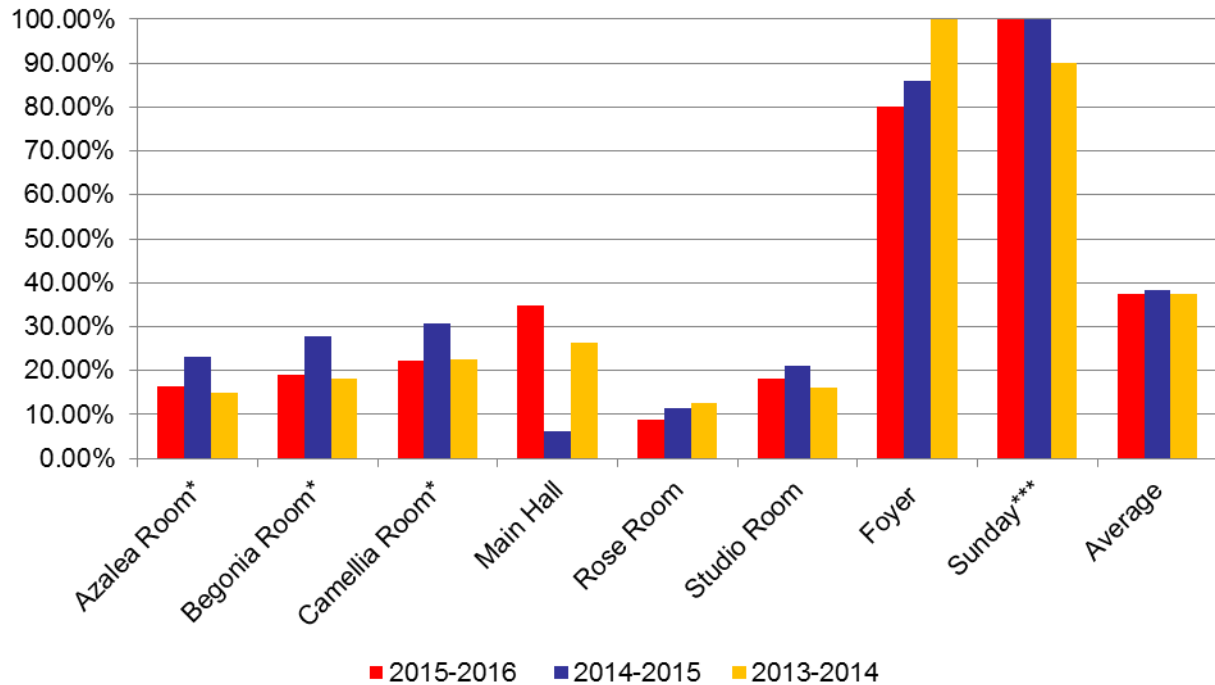
Bourne Hall,
Ewell, Surrey

Scale 1:XX
Survey Date - 27.4.2005

Floor Plans produced by
Proplan
01491 842925

This plan is for guidance only and must
not be relied upon as a statement of fact.

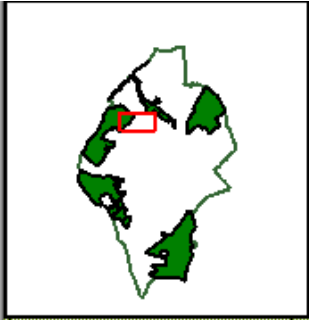
Bourne Hall Utilisation - yearly figures all Hours **



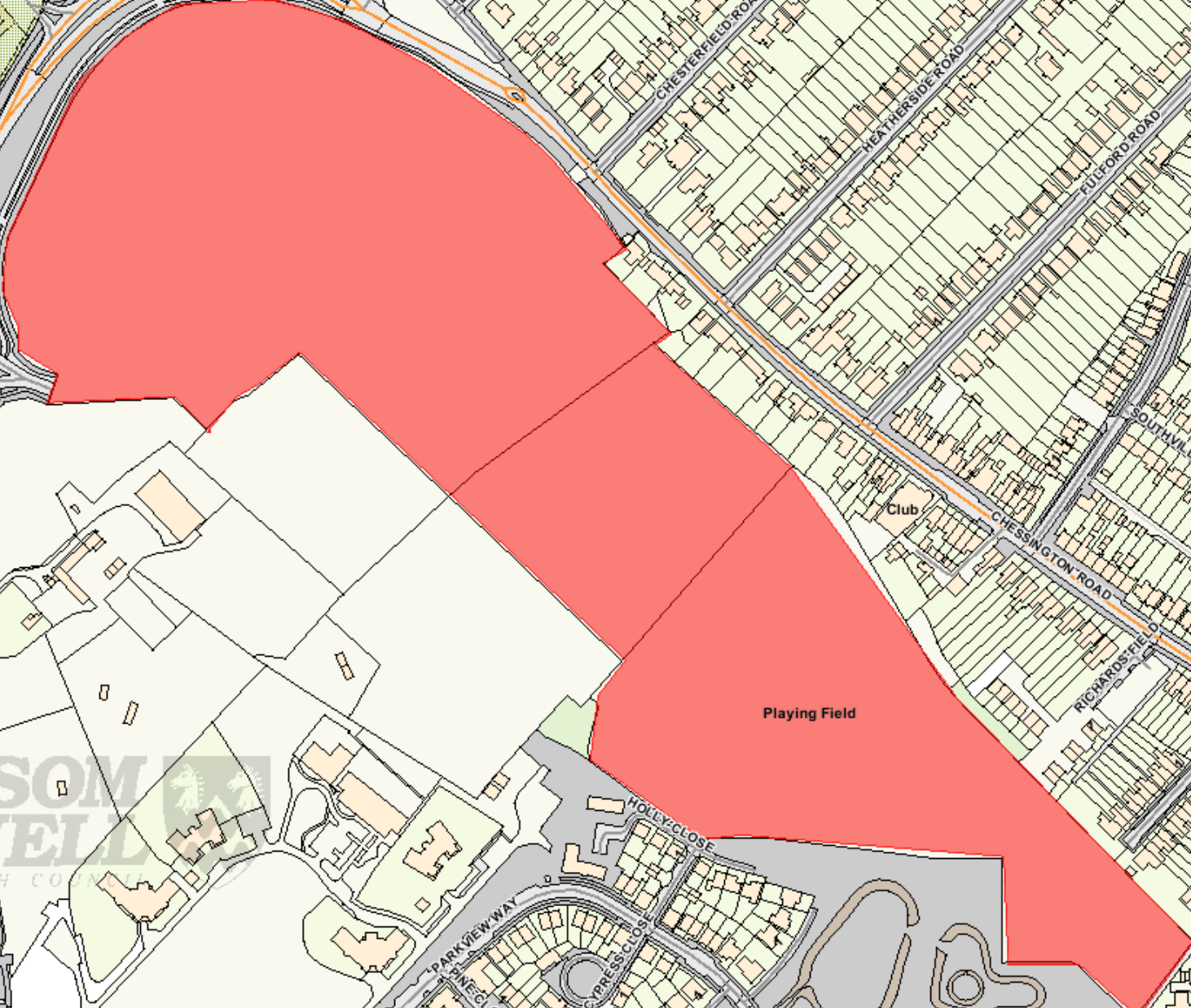
* As part of Banquet Suite added use of Banquet Suite to their figures

** Bookable yearly hours for room estimated as 4000.

***Sunday use (whole venue) estimated as 350 (50 weeks*7) hours



Horton Country Park



Playing Field



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0 230m