

RUYTON'S NEW VILLAGE HALL

Ruyton XI Towns once had village halls that were the envy of local communities in Baschurch, West Felton and Nesscliffe, but as these villages improved or acquired new facilities Ruyton got left behind. Hall improvements were made many years ago by a group of enthusiasts who provided much-needed toilets in the Memorial Hall and a stage in the Village Hall as well as better lighting, heating and acoustics. Unfortunately steep steps remain in both halls restricting their use and we now have some of the poorest facilities in the country both indoors and out, for a community of our size.

The village is hilly, with beautiful views and a river in the valley. However this makes it hard to find any safe level sites for a new hall that are not already built on. The existing halls are on very small sites where they cannot be extended, and adjacent to a busy main road making it difficult to park. Several years ago the New Hall Committee surveyed the village to find out what was needed and drew up plans to suit all age group requirements. The new building will be cheaper to run, will have a kitchen, proper heating, and will be accessible to all, being on one level. Pre-school will have a much better hall with an outside play area, RATS (Ruyton Amateur Theatrical Society) will have a good stage for performances and will share changing facilities with the village football team. As well as village organisations, the local college is interested in a computer facility; and the larger hall can accommodate club badminton, bowls or short tennis.

The existing halls usually break-even year on year, due to a diligent committee, and the lack of any alternative facility. If the community uses the new building as often as the present halls the future looks very encouraging, and could even make a profit.

The new village hall site on the Doctor's Meadow has now been approved, but delays in obtaining planning permission meant a loss of funding from Advantage West Midlands. A Lottery application is now being put together for a new funding round starting in June. There will be a fashion show by Mackays of Oswestry to help to raise funds, when they are able to do it.