



PARISH COUNCIL
Kempsey



**Funded by
UK Government**

Update on Kempsey's Community Café project

Background

Since 2014, every parish consultation and survey has identified a café as the most requested new facility in Kempsey. The latest Parish Survey carried out in 2022 reaffirmed this with 66% of respondents identifying a café as one of the top facilities they would like to see — the highest-scoring single request.

The Pavilion, at Plovers Rise Playing Fields, is an underused parish facility. Whilst needing refurbishment to meet current standards for accessibility, safety, and hygiene, when weighed against other options, this was found to be the most appropriate and cost-effective location for a café.

Following a presentation proposing the Pavilion be repurposed to become a community café, with any profits being reinvested in the parish, helping to repay initial investment and support future community projects, the full Parish Council voted unanimously to support the project.

By investing in the café project, the Parish Council, Malvern Hills District Council and the UK Government are helping to transform an underused building into a welcoming community space. The café is intended to support a range of local needs, from reducing social isolation and improving wellbeing to providing an affordable, comfortable meeting place with a simple café menu, including good quality coffee and cake. It will offer opportunities for local people to gain experience and contribute through volunteering, creating an accessible hub where residents can find informal advice, support and a place to connect, whilst strengthening our community, which is the goal at the heart of the Kempsey Parish Vision.

Pilot project

A pilot café was run in early summer 2024 to test the feasibility of a café and to assess community interest. The pilot was run in conjunction with St Mary Church¹ and consisted of:

- A 'horse-box' café, generously provided at no cost by a local business².
- Operation of the café entirely by volunteers with support from local groups.
- Open on four Fridays in May
- 308 parishioners attended, many returning weekly.
- Feedback confirmed a strong desire for a permanent café in the Pavilion

¹ Many thanks to Mrs Joy Clee and to all volunteers who generously participated in the café pilot, serving and providing cakes, and to all who supported the pilot by visiting and bringing neighbours and friends.

² Many thanks to Mr Ian Woods for providing the horse box café free of charge.

- Based on the prices charged, a permanent café would not be loss making and could be run as a 'not-for profit' enterprise.

The pilot demonstrated strong demand, clear social benefit, and the community's enthusiasm for a permanent café. We are grateful to everyone who helped bring that early vision to life.

Pavilion refurbishment and funding

The Pavilion requires upgrades to:

- refurbish the kitchen area to meet modern standards including food-hygiene standards
- upgrade the 'club' area into a more attractive meeting space.
- improve accessibility through new tables and chairs
- develop an area outside for summer use.

The project has secured, after significant effort, a Malvern Hills District Council Rural Development Fund award which is funded from the UK Government's UK Shared Prosperity and Rural England Prosperity Funds. This grant is specifically targeted at rural communities to:

- upgrade local facilities
- support rural producers and suppliers
- reduce isolation
- create shared community assets.

The value of the award is up to £7321 to be matched by Parish Council funds and those from other sources. We warmly welcome this grant and are grateful to local contractors offering heavily discounted support for the refurbishment.

The award is time limited, with works to be completed by 31 January 2026.

Work Completed to Date

Significant preparatory work has already been undertaken to ensure the café will be viable, and fit for long-term community use.

1. Operating Cost Modelling

We have completed detailed cost forecasts covering:

- utilities (electricity, water, heating)
- stock and consumables
- cleaning, waste management, and maintenance
- insurance
- equipment depreciation
- contingency for seasonal variations.

This modelling ensures the café can operate sustainably without requiring ongoing subsidy.

2. Staffing

We have developed:

- a hybrid staffing model, combining paid part-time roles with trained volunteers
- role descriptions and responsibilities
- expected hours for peak and off-peak periods
- training requirements, including food hygiene, safeguarding and customer service.

Advertising for the remunerated staff positions will start shortly.

3. Utilities and Stock Supply Chains

Work completed includes:

- identification of local suppliers for coffee, dairy, baked goods, and essentials
- utilities requirements scoped for the refurbished building
- equipment compatibility checks.

4. Risk Assessment and Ongoing Compliance Requirements

We have conducted or scheduled:

- full risk assessment (Health & Safety, fire, safeguarding, allergen control, slips/trips, manual handling)
- allergen and food-safety procedures (HACCP³ outline already completed)
- insurance requirements
- building compliance checks
- ongoing maintenance schedule for equipment and utilities.

This ensures the café meets regulatory standards from the first day of opening — keeping customers, volunteers and staff safe.

Founding Members scheme

A 'Founding Members' scheme will be introduced to support long-term sustainability.

Members will receive:

- Founding Member 'cuppa & cake' or savoury snack once a week or once a month, depending on their level of membership
- significant discounts all year round
- Founding Member events
- participation in shaping the café as it develops.

This scheme helps keep prices affordable for everyone while allowing early supporters to play an active role in shaping the café's future.

³ Hazard Analysis & Critical Control Point

Timeline

With funding secured and the ordering of equipment and preparatory work underway, refurbishment will take place between November this year and January 2026, including:

- refurbishment works
- equipment installation
- staff training
- safety checks
- supplier onboarding.

★ Projected Opening: Quarter 1, 2026

Contact

For questions, ideas, or offers of support — including interest in the part-time café manager role, volunteering or work experience — please get in touch with:

✉ Claire Witton, Deputy Clerk, Kempsey Parish Council at
kempseyparishcouncil@gmail.com

This project is part-funded by the UK Government
in partnership with Malvern Hills District Council.