

History of Buckland Newton Village Hall

BN village hall was originally built as a prefabricated building just after the 2nd World War in 1947 for the use of the inhabitants of the Parish and surrounding catchment area.

The original building was a rectangular structure built of concrete panels on a reinforced concrete frame, with an asbestos roof and reclaimed oak block floor sitting straight on the soil. The design life of these buildings was around 50 years and this was the case here. By the 1990's the reinforcing metal in the concrete frame began corroding with the concrete spalling off. The asbestos roof leaked, springs were rising up through the wooden floor and the metal windows were also corroded. This all made the building damp, draughty and impossible to heat satisfactorily. It had become totally unsuitable for the more vulnerable members of our society such as the playgroup and toddlers and 'Over 60's'. Usage had fallen off and the committee were encountering insurmountable safety issues as a public building.

Following a fire at the western end in 1983 which destroyed the stage and kitchen, a modern kitchen and committee room were added at the rear of the hall. A further upgrade in 1988 added an entrance hall and toilet facilities, including disabled facilities at the eastern, (front) end. These were not altered during the rebuilding of the new hall.

When the decision to rebuild the village hall was taken in 2000, it was clear that only the central 'prefabricated' section of the hall could be replaced, since both modern ends had been rebuilt in very recent years with a great deal of effort and fund raising on the part of the community.

In summer 2000, the committee started on drawing up a design for a new village hall leaving both ends intact, with the help of a Sherborne architect. It was costed at £160,000 including VAT.

The key elements of the design was that it should fit the needs of all the user groups. A further key element of design, bearing in mind the chilly old hall, was to make the hall warm and as cheap to heat as possible. This involved maximise free energy from the sun, install the highest quality of insulation, and have large, low energy radiators for rapid heating.

The large roof windows extending over the veranda have worked brilliantly in giving the hall not only good light, but also a great deal of free latent energy. It is often not necessary to add any additional heat. The patio doors have worked well by allowing extra light on the southern side, allowing the covered patio to be part of the user space during the summer, and providing an above average number of fire escape routes.

Insulation was a byword all the way through construction. The floor, the walls and the roof are thickly insulated, and the windows and patio doors are double glazed. This reduces heat loss to the minimum and all the energy put into the building, whether free from the sun, or via the oil fired boiler, is retained, making the hall comfortably warm for minimum expense. The large wall allow the building to heat up quickly

A final key element of the design was to install a sprung wooden floor, similar to that installed in sports halls. This would be of value to the Yoga and Keep Fit groups as well as the little ones who use the floor as a recreation surface. The original oak block wooden floor of the old hall was one of its much loved features, and still exists in the committee room. The wood chosen for its colour and

pattern was Canadian Maple. Because it is a sprung floor, it is mounted on rubber strips and hence has quite a lot of give in it. It also has sufficient space underneath to allow the running of a hearing loop for those with a hearing aid.

December 2000 saw an application to the Lottery Board for £125,000. The local community made a tremendous effort at fundraising throughout 2000 and 2001 and raised £25,000, and the County and District Councils contributed £10,000.

The lottery award was received in spring 2001 and demolition of the old hall started in March 2001. The building was completed by September 2001 ready for the start of the autumn term. The building company used was Snook and Sons from Sturminster Newton. A Lottery Award plaque (now known as the Community Fund) is displayed in the entrance hall.

In 2012, the original kitchen was renovated and upgraded by "Simply Kitchens" of Sherborne at a cost of £5693 ex VAT. This replaced the units, work surfaces and flooring to meet modern Environmental Health requirements (5 star). Funding for this was achieved without dipping into the VH Investment fund and came from charitable donations, a District Council grant, fund raising and a donation from the village fete.

During the winter of 2013/2014 the Committee Room was renovated and upgraded, repairing walls, replacing the floor and one window and repainting. The cost for this was less than £1000 thanks to freely given labour by two committee members, Mr and Mrs Marpole.