

COMMUNITY CENTRE REPORT 2017 (CC)

The big event for the village occurred on 6th September 2016 when the last payment was made to the Public Works Loan Board after 25 years. The Community Centre now totally belongs to Worlingworth. A weekend of celebration took place on 10th-11th September. This special event brought many long-standing village organisers together. It began with a film evening on the Friday with a showing of Akenfield followed by Pretty Woman. There was a full day of activities on the Saturday with children's film morning (Wallace & Grommit and Toy Story), exhibitions from all the clubs/societies in the village, a history of the Community Centre, a free hog roast, the Broadside Boys, step & morris dancing, a variety of competitions such as harvest bonnets & hats, children's fancy dress, garden on a plate, all-comers best recycled outfit, the best ode or limerick, a sponge cake decoration competition aka an ice-off, a photo montage of all residents and an evening gala party with the band Accolade. The intention was to bury a time capsule, however when it arrived it was much bigger than expected and it has subsequently been agreed to put it in the roof space of the building. The event cost £6,375 with funds being raised from the PC (£3,000); private sponsorship (£2,820); income from the Hog Roast (£196); donations (£60) and £300 from the SCC locality budget.

The idea of a Community Centre began in 1976 with the aim to organise a village celebration to mark the Queen's Silver Jubilee in 1977. There were no children's play facilities, no sports facilities and the old wooden village hall built in 1922 was felt to be past its usefulness. The organising committee circulated a questionnaire and a house to house collection to raise funds for the hall. A fete to celebrate the Queen's jubilee was held at Paradise Farm. In 1977 Herbie Havers agreed to sell 3-4 acres of his 50 acre field behind the Swan Inn to create a playing field. It cost £4,000 to purchase and a further £6,000 to develop as a sports and playing field. Between 1977-1982 the village raised over £10,000 with a variety of fund-raising activities to finance the project. The field was fenced, access created to the field from Church Road, all the stones hand-picked from the land and then seeded. In 1979 the Parish Council became Custodian Trustees for the site and set up a 'Village Hall Management Committee'. The field was officially opened at the May Day fete 1979 by Christine Webber of Anglia TV. In November 1979 a temporary wooden pavilion was purchased for £1,600 + VAT until a new village hall could be built with the help of grants. Many local craftsmen from village clubs and societies helped to refurbish the hall and trees planted by school children. It was officially opened in September 1981 by Miss Edna Dyson, found Chairman of the CC and headmistress of the local school. It was used extensively by village organisations including the Brownies, Guides, Youth Club, Football and Cricket clubs, British Legion, Pool & Darts League, Community Council, Parish Council and available for private hirings. In 1982 the CC won 1st prize in the Suffolk Village Ventures Competition, for new voluntary projects, for its work to create the facility for the village. The Social Club was formed in 1982 to enable a bar to be run and a variety of entertainment evenings began to take place. By 1989 it was felt the existing hall was deteriorating and that in the long term a purpose built hall would be in the best interest of the village. The following year, plans were received from an architect and an estimation of costs of £115,000. An application was made to the Public Works Loan Board for a loan of £50,000. Tenders were put out in 1991 and R.E. Gobbitt & Sons, local builders, were appointed to build the new hall. It was opened on 8th February 1992 by Herbie Havers and Miss Barbara Carter, President & Vice President of the new Worlingworth Community Centre. Fundraising and entertainment has continued to enable the loan to be paid off and to keep the hall in a good state of repair. During the time there have been 167 people as committee members on the various community centre committees.

After much hard work last year a community library was opened in a refurbished portacabin with books donated by villagers. It was run on an honesty basis at 20p to borrow a book. Unfortunately, following theft of the small amounts of money, it was decided to make borrowing a book free of charge. New lights were installed to include 8 soft uplighters which has made a big difference to evening events and 100 new red & gold chairs were purchased to replace the old blue ones. In the playing field four new swings had been installed.

How does the Community Centre run? The most expensive slot to hire is Saturday 12 noon - 11.30 p.m. at £100. Minimum hire is 3 hours at £12 per hour but frequent users i.e. monthly bookings is

reduced to £8 per hour. There is a bar available, all heating has to be paid by the hirer with £1 in the slot and all electrical items must be PAT tested. It is expected that each hirer leaves the hall in a clean state and removes all rubbish. To help raise funds the CC run a monthly Tote. The cost is £1 per month with a 1st prize of £40, 2nd prize of £15 and 3rd prize of £5. The recycling bins for glass, paper, clothes & shoes also raise money for the CC as well as being a useful resource for villagers - however it was announced that the clothes & shoes bank would be removed due to abuse as pillows, blankets, sheets and household waste in black sacks were continually put into it. Monies raised from the sale of the recyclable bins helps towards the cost of the CC quarterly publication 'What's On In Worlingworth'. In 2015-2016 £644.40 was received.

The Social Club which is within the umbrella organisation of the Community Centre seek help and support to remain viable. They rely on volunteer helpers, a number of which have retired recently owing to health concerns and work commitments. They aim to put on a fund-raising event each month, there was a Race Night in April, Karaoke was held in June and September and a curry night in July with choices of chicken jalfrezi, lamb rogan josh and chickpea curry all served with rice, dahl, naan bread, poppadom & chutney/raita/onion salad for £10 per person, a fish & chip supper in September. The Harvest Supper was held in October with a 3 course meal for £10. A curry & quiz night was held in October, and back by popular demand an Elvis night in November.

The annual Village Fete took place in June with all the usual stalls, tombola and a barbeque - funds raised amounted to £1,400. The annual firework display took place in November with a spectacular display of fireworks. A Halloween Disco was held in October for children with a £2.50 entrance fee to include a hot dog/burger. In December a Christmas Party is held for village children under the age of 11 which includes a visit from Father Christmas and also in the same month the Community Choir held a concert with community carols. Carpet Bowls is run on the 1st Friday of the month.

On 21st April the CC invited parishioners to a 'Picnic in the Park' to celebrate the 90th birthday of the Queen at the CC, being damp on the day the event was moved inside. Not a lot of people participated but those that did had a lovely time.

Recently the toilet facilities have been refurbished and are now known fondly as the 'Totten Toilets' due to the tremendous fundraising efforts for the refurbishment project by Diana Totten of the CC Committee.

The refurbishments in general over the past year to the CC have greatly enhanced the building and the CC are pleased to report that the venue has been booked for three wedding receptions in the next few months of 2017.

Report compiled by Janette Robinson, Village Recorder