

North Muskham *capturing memories*

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The Third Hall MRCC – 2009 onwards

Muskham Rural Community Centre by Jeff Hannabuss and Jude Andrews

The second building lasted nearly 20 years, but the costs of maintenance were increasing annually in the latter years: a leaking roof especially on the flat roof of the small hall, rotting timbers in the window frames and even in the main timber structure of the building, led to plans to provide a building of greater permanence.

After a few false starts the Parish Council reenergised the push for a new building by forming a steering group and asking people with key skills from the village to participate. Plans were drawn by local architect Nick Hutchings, although many alterations were made to the original plans, as the needs of the different village groups were considered more closely. A sub-committee of the Parish Council and the village hall committee were established to develop the project and consider how it could be financed. The main funding was provided by bidding to the National Lottery and other charitable fund providers. These bids were put together by Jude and Arnout Andrews.

The first bid went into the National Lottery in November 2006 and we were awarded £12,000 to draw up full plans and get planning permission, write a business plan and apply for match funding. In April 2008 we heard the full award was granted.

The finance secured included:
 £350,000 The National Lottery;
 2 x £50,000 Landfill Tax Environmental Bodies WREN and Biffaward
 £55,000 Public Works Loan (to be repaid over 30 years by the Parish Council and the MRCC)
 Circa £70,000 Village Fundraising/donations. This included:



Aerial View of the new MRCC alongside the old Village Hall

- £10,500 Buy a Brick and Gift Aid
- £15,000 Muskham Out of School Club
- £5,000 Muskham Players
- £6,500 Black tie Ball and Auction at Kelham Hall
- £4,000 Black Tie Ball and Auction at MRCC –
- £3,000 Summer Fayre
- £800 Christmas Craft Fayre
- £700 Scarecrow Festival
- £600 Quiz and Fish and Chip Supper
- £570 New Years Eve Party
- £550 Charity Fun Run



Those who donated and worked on this project are all named in the entrance to the Hall

The build was put out to tender and the contract was awarded to Carlin Construction. It was completed in time for its formal opening in November 2009. The final



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cost of the building was £550,000 plus extra costs for such as curtains and blinds, new chairs and tables, crockery etc.

The building although commonly known as ‘the new village hall’ was called The Muskham Rural Community Centre, providing facilities for all the village groups as well as a quality venue for weddings, functions, social events etc. The centre, known simply as the MRCC, provides a large hall, complete with a fully-equipped stage and lights, a small hall, which was later extended to provide bar facilities, a meeting room, kitchen, changing rooms behind the stage, toilets, including disabled, and plenty of storage!



MRCC field side showing playgroup’s playground



The old village hall alongside the new MRCC



Changing room end of MRCC



Demolition of the old village hall



Main Hall dressed for a wedding





Outside wedding ceremony of Scooter enthusiasts



Monday Pensioners Lunch Club's Christmas Lunch



All set for a stage performance



Advent Window by Muskham Out of School Club and Playgroup children December 2020

Jude Andrews recalls some of her memories of that time:

“In June 2004 the North Muskham Village Hall entrance was literally the doorway into my new life. I had recently moved up from Bristol to live much nearer to my in-laws. I took my 1 year old son (and my large bump) to a mums and toddlers session one Thursday afternoon. I didn't know anyone and although I didn't realise it that day, through this group I went on to find my friends for the rest of my lifetime. I guess this is the way many new families in the village meet the friends they are going to know and grow up with. Our babies and toddlers started playgroup together and then went on to Muskham Primary School and in most cases secondary school too.

As I had plenty of experience of running and fundraising for charities in Bristol, I got involved with the playgroup committee and represented them at the village hall committee. It wasn't long before I was drawn into the fundraising for the new hall and dragged the husband into it too. We burnt the midnight oil drafting options appraisals, funding strategies, cashflows, budgets, funding applications, policies and whatever other hoop each different funder needed us to jump through. Once we had the National Lottery funding confirmed the other match funding bids slotted into place and our funding 'jigsaw' pieces all fitted together. I remember at our last meeting at the old village hall we had a saucepan on the table catching the drips from the leaking roof. Everyone involved could be really proud that our community finally had a new building for future generations.



Julie Ross, Jake Todd, Jacob Partridge, Manni Norkett, Scarlett Follen, Neve Andrews and Jude Andrews.

When you write a funding bid for that much money, you have to promise to meet all sorts of milestones and criteria. So once it was up, I felt obliged to see it through and make sure we did create the community hub we had promised. After a stint as Chair, then Treasurer I have done my best to keep the finances in order (£46,000 income 2018/19). When Joan Sinclair, our booking Secretary retired I took that over too 'temporarily'. Five years later I am still doing it! (any volunteers?).

I am really proud of what we have achieved. It was huge team effort. So many people put in their time and their money to make the building happen and continue to run, so each day local people of all ages walk through the door for social activities, sports, play and family celebrations. Maybe I'll get to take my great-grandchildren to a toddler group there one day?

May 2021