

FRECKENHAM VILLAGE HALL

1. INTRODUCTION

The Village Hall is a Registered Charity under its constitution sealed on 27th November 1979 and the objectives of the Charity under its constitution are:-

“The provision and maintenance of a Village Hall for the use of the inhabitants of the Parish of Freckenham without distinction of political, religious or other opinions, including use for meetings, lectures and classes and for other forms of recreation and leisure time occupation, with the object of improving the conditions of life for the said inhabitants”.

2. REPRESENTATION

The Village Hall Committee, who are also the Trustees, consists of 7 elected Members and 7 Representative Members. The Representative Members currently represent the Parish Council, the Parochial Church Council, the Community Council, the Flower Club, the Mothers & Toddlers Club, the Carpet Bowls Club and the American Community in Freckenham. The Committee can also co-opt additional Members as they see fit.

3. 1989 COMMITTEE

In 1989, a new Committee was formed with myself as Chairman and Nial Murphy as Secretary and it was decided that the old Village Hall, built in 1894, was no longer viable as a Village Hall and that the Committee should investigate the possibilities of building a new Village Hall.

4. SITE INVESTIGATIONS & VILLAGE SURVEY

Following the appointment of the 1989 Committee, 8 possible sites were investigated within the Village as to the suitability for the new Hall and initially the Committee opted for building the new Hall on the edge of the playing field. At an Extraordinary Parish Meeting in December 1990, this site did not meet favourable support due to flooding and engineering problems and the Committee decided to continue their investigations for another site. Other sites investigated included a site in North Street, one in Mortimer's Lane, another in Elms Road and a further site in Church Lane. None of these found favour with Forest Heath District Council and eventually the present site in Fordham Road was offered by Shores Charity.

During the period of site investigation, in December 1992, the Committee undertook a Village Survey and out of the 213 responses, 202 were in favour of a new Hall on a new site if funds could be raised.

5. SITE PURCHASE

The Committee entered into negotiations with the Trustees of Shores Charity and agreed to purchase the site for £3,985, and the purchase was completed in 1997.

6. DESIGN AND FUNDING

The Committee were advised through all stages by Suffolk ACRE, who strongly recommended the appointment of a specialist architect and the Committee appointed the Wilkinson Pratt Partnership of Ipswich as their architects. The architects produced a feasibility report in January 1996 and the draft plans favoured by the Committee were presented at an open meeting of Villagers. The final plans were then agreed and detailed planning permission was obtained in September 1996.

7. FUND RAISING

In 1989 the Village Hall Committee had no funds whatsoever and it was decided that serious fund raising would have to begin if the Committee were to achieve their objectives of building a new Village Hall. Funds were also required to run and maintain the old Village Hall, which was then in a poor state of repair. In the 8 years up to 1997, when the new Hall was open, Villagers raised in excess of £55,000 themselves, of which approximately £45,000 went towards the new Village Hall, the balance being used to maintain and run the old Village Hall.

In those 8 years, numerous fund raising activities took part in the Village, including the Punch Party, which has now become an annual event, barbecues at Drift Cottage, Race Nights, Raffles, the introduction of the 100 Plus Club, the brick sponsorship scheme and, of course, generous donations from Villagers by way of Deeds of Gift and covenants. Clearly, there was a substantial shortfall in the funding for a new Hall, originally estimated to cost approximately £100,000. The Committee set about approaching various authorities and after much hard work were successful in obtaining funding from 21st Century Halls (the Millennium Commission), Forest Heath District Council, the Rural Development Commission, the Suffolk County Council and other miscellaneous funding, including generous annual contributions from the Parish Council. The details of this funding is set out later.

By the end of 1996, the Committee felt that they were ready to invite building tenders and six tenders were received, the lowest of which was from C J Murfitt Ltd of Soham in the sum of £174,723.37. It should be said that by the time tenders were invited, the specification for the new Hall had been upgraded and the budgeted cost was then in the order of £140,000. The architects advised that the Committee should not attempt to reduce the specification and should apply to 21st Century Halls for the balance of the funding, so that Murfitt's tender could be accepted. With great surprise to the Committee, 21st Century Halls agreed to fund the whole of the shortfall, which amounted to £88,400 and as other funding was in place, the Committee were then able to accept Murfitt's estimate and work began in June 1997.

Apart from a few minor mishaps the contract went well and Murfitts completed the new Hall in December 1997 and it was formally opened, I am pleased to say, by my wife in February 1998.

8. SALE OF EXISTING HALL

Once the new Hall was complete, the Committee, through an independent agent, put the old Hall on the market and eventually succeeded in obtaining the princely sum of £8,000. This was a bonus to the Committee's fund raising and enabled the Committee to have some surplus funds for future expenditure.

9. CONCLUSION

We now have a new Village Hall, which hopefully all Villagers are proud of. It is hoped that, over the years, further activities within the Village Hall will be developed so that the Hall is used for activities, which will benefit the Community as well as for social and leisure events.

Thank you to everyone for the wonderful support, which you have given the Committee over the last 10 years. We would not have done it without you.

10. SUMMARY OF COST

I set out below a summary of the income and expenditure, so everyone can be aware how the new Hall was funded:-

<u>Income</u>	<u>£.p</u>	<u>Expenditure</u>	<u>£.p</u>
21 st Century Halls	88,400.37	C J Murfitt Ltd	179,235.00
Rural Development Commission.	25,000.00	Architects/Structural Engineers	15,440.39
Suffolk County Council	5,000.00	Miscellaneous including land purchase	18,409.63
Forest Heath D C	48,333.00		
Village Fund Raising	44,607.05		
Miscellaneous	1,750.00		
Total	<u>£213,090.02</u>	Total	<u>£213,090.02</u>

John Orgill
Chairman of Freckenham Village Hall Trustees
1989 - 1998