

THE HISTORY OF OUR VILLAGE HALL FUND (*an historical document*)

During a meeting of the Residents' Association in June 1951 Mrs Young suggested making a collection to institute a fund for a Village Hall. This collection realised £15 – the very first instalment in our Village Hall Account. By the end of 1965 it had amounted to £114. With efforts such as Bazaars, Jumble Sales and Whist Drives, we had £300 in 1958, and we transferred it to a special account giving a special interest. All this time, with increasing membership and increasing interest in the venture, we had NO HOME! Committee meetings, Whist Drives and a very flourishing Mixed Choir were accommodated in members' houses. The committee had given Mr Barlow authority to enquire about any vacant plots in the 'Village on which we might build our Village Hall. He contacted the owners of

1. A corner plot at Foads Hill and Clive Road. There were difficulties of building, so this site was rejected.
2. A large plot in Foads Hill next to Holly Cottage. He was told by a Herne Bay solicitor that he could give no information regarding ownership or sale.
3. A large plot at the corner of Sea View and Clive Roads was considered but we were 'pipped at the post'.

Another Sea View Road site was turned down by the committee of the day as two members did not consider this to be a good proposition as the road was not made up. When all seemed lost the Borough Council said they would purchase a part of Spantons Meadow for the Hall when they were assured that we had saved our portion of the cost of the hall.

With renewed expectations, a weekly Tote was started in November 1960 and 50% of the takings were invested in the V.H. Fund We held very successful Fetes on the Viking Green, by permission of the Council.

It was in 1961 when Mr. Barlow heard that the property in Sea View Road, called The Chalet, owned by K.C.C. was soon to become vacant. This site was to be cleared for the proposed new main road, but agreement was reached that we would be allowed a yearly tenancy. A Chalet fund was opened to pay for reconstructing and renovating this very dilapidated hut. The work was carried out by male members voluntarily, and we must pay a special tribute to Mr Peter Moorling and the late Mr Pearman for working unceasingly until the new interior lining and roof was completed. Donations came in from many sources – local efforts – sale of produce – and the proceeds from our Social Fund- and here we must mention a very generous donation from Mr and Mrs Kingsley; the gift of the buffet counter from Mr Avery, and the piano from Mr and Mrs Jones. In February 1963 we paid our first rent and on June 6th we opened the hall with a Social, inviting Cllr. T. Dalton – who had been instrumental in getting K.C.C. to agree to our tenancy. In July the chalet Fund was closed, having paid all accounts rendered.

The Tote was very successful for 4 years, and our V.H. Fund rose from £730 in 1960 to £1740 in 1964. The Tote was discontinued in 1965 because of the fall in subscribers, but most of all because progress towards our New Hall and the purchase of the site was so very slow. Although the Dept. of Education and Science offered the Association a Grant in July 1965: this was promptly frozen by the Chancellor's restrictions on expenditure within 48 hours of the offer. After six months the offer was renewed and the Council decided to go ahead on the purchase of the land, the completion of which we patiently await.

Since 1963 we have successfully maintained our temporary hall using it regularly for meetings, Bazaars, Jumble Sales, Flower and Fruit Shows, Children's Parties, occasional private use, and more increasingly, for handicraft Drama and choir meetings of the Townswomen's Guild. Two years ago we spent time and money to repair and paint the chalet, but now again the roof leaks and the general facilities are very poor so that we feel our hard earned funds are wasted in trying to keep it habitable.

Our Secretaries in the intervening years – Mr Richardson, Mr Turner and our present secretary - have worked hard to further our cause. Detailed plans are now being prepared and it is hope the planning permission will be obtained before the end of March. We have been offered a Grant by the Dept. of Education and Science, and we have an architect and a builder living in Cliffsend willing and able to get on with the job. Once the land has finally been conveyed to the Council we can build. All is being done to urge this along – it cannot be long now.

(As reported by Mrs Barlow, Treasurer – before the building of our current Village Hall.)

What a wonderful reminder of the tenacity of our residents in the 1950's and 1960's – we have a lot to thank them for, and this should give us the courage to continue to try to improve the facilities of our current residents.