

Beckingham cum Saundby

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The Village Hall, Play Area and Playing Field....



It all began in 1944 when the Football Club was being formed. The only other sports club at this time was a Cricket Club and the two clubs decided the village should have a proper sports ground so they would not have to ask local farmers for the use of a field. A village meeting was called to rally support, which was well attended. From this meeting the Watson family, who owned Beckingham Shipyard and were benefactors to the village, donated a 7.7 acres field in May 1946, which is now the playing field and many people promised to help raise funds for equipment.



The Walhead brothers made a detailed plan for the layout of the tennis courts, a bowling green, a play park for children, along with football, cricket and hockey pitches. Under a working committee headed by Miss Nora Watson things began to take shape, with equipment being installed which was paid for with money raised from various events. During 1947 the committee decided that a village hall was needed to complete the project.



Miss Watson visited the County Hall in Nottingham to talk to those who dealt with village halls and her visit was successful. The Rural Council allocated a village hall to Beckingham, measuring 60 feet long by 24 feet wide, which was delivered in September 1947. The hall was erected and by June 1948 water, electricity and sewerage were connected. The Official Opening of the Playing Field took place on 12th June 1948, Mr Howden the Managing Director of Newells Engineering was asked to perform the ceremony.



The Opening Ceremony of the Village Hall was on 3rd September 1948. The formation of the tennis, bowls and hockey clubs now took place. The first Committee of Management was elected comprising of representatives from 16 village clubs and organisations and 8 trustees, under the Chairmanship of Mr Leslie Selby, and was registered as a charity. The clubs and organisations represented included Church Councils, Parish Councils, Womens



Institute, Beckingham Institute, School Managers, Pioneer Club, Village Produce Association and six sports Clubs. The first Annual General Meeting of the Beckingham and Saundby Village Hall Management Committee was held in May 1950. A caretaker/groundsman was employed at a weekly wage of 30 shillings per week, the rest were volunteers.

During the next few years dressing rooms were added, paid for by the Football and Cricket Clubs. In 1978 the hall was extended towards the tennis courts and in 1980 was further extended towards the Bowling Green. At the same time the kitchen and car park were enlarged. All the work done on the playing field was voluntary, the clubs being self-supporting, paying rent for the courts, greens and pitches.



Over the years the play equipment has gradually been removed, due to both deterioration and more stringent safety rules. The last of several play items erected in the 1950s and 60s, the swings and the roundabout, were removed in 2001. A Millennium project to improve the play park resulted in two wooden adventure items being installed, thanks to donations from the Parish Council and Awards for All. These were complemented by new swings erected in July 2001.



In October 2001 the small group of committee members asked the villagers "Do you want a village hall?", to which there was a great response, resulting in a larger committee being formed. Over the next few years grants of £240,000 were obtained and on the **Open Day 24 March 2007** Mrs Shirley Brasher (nee Bloomer), the niece of Miss Nora Watson, opened the modernised and extended village hall with a purpose built nursery for Pre-school, changing rooms, a modern kitchen, new windows, central heating system, fire alarm and facilities for the disabled to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act 2004.



In 2008 the Village Hall celebrated their 60th year with a **Diamond Jubilee Open Day**. The day incorporated the Official Opening of the newly refurbished tennis court - to be used as a multi purpose activity area- made possible with a generous donation of £3,500 from Mrs Shirley Brasher, along with a grant of £16,000. Mrs Shirley West, one of the original members of the thriving tennis club of the early years performed the opening ceremony.



Other original members of the tennis club were also invited to the event. In 2009/2010 as a result of the village Parish Plan a **Multi Use Games Area** was constructed with the help of grants of £63,000 and fundraising by the MUGA Committee. This was opened in June 2010 by John Mann MP during a Village Hall Fun Sports Day.



The children's play area was much improved in 2012/2013, thanks to the hard work of Don Brown and financed by Nottinghamshire County Council. New equipment includes a cone climber, kiddies swings, a roundabout with wheelchair access, a zip wire and two picnic tables. The adults, young and old, have not been forgotten with five outdoor gym exercise items erected next to the Multi Use Games Area. These facilities and items of equipment are valuable amenities to the community for everyone to enjoy, it is hoped for many years to come.



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