

## New Village Hall Development

### Phase 1

The purchase of Chrishall's former Methodist Hall and Chapel was completed by the Parish Council in June 2014. This followed the near unanimous support from the residents of Chrishall Village for the purchase as a new facility to replace the very small Village Hall adjoining the Primary School. The purchase was financed by a loan from government provided through the Public Works Loan Board which in turn is financed through a relatively small increase in the council tax paid by Village Residents.

Once the building had been purchased the Village Hall Committee first focussed on looking after the existing users of the former Methodist Hall to ensure their continued use of what is now known as the South Hall.

A programme of works was prepared and undertaken to, in the first instance, ensure that the premises were wind and watertight, and then to greatly improve the facilities in the South Hall in terms of heating, electricity and security, followed by redecoration. These works were largely completed by Christmas 2014.

Attention was then turned to the former Methodist Chapel, now known as the Chapel Hall. A new kitchen has been provided along with a large storage cupboard and toilets. The largest part of the project was the re-laying and levelling of the floor. Being a former Chapel, the floor was built with a slight incline to allow the congregation a view of the proceedings. At the same an under floor heating system was installed. There is also an office for the Anglican Church which has remained in regular use throughout.

Works to the Chapel Hall were completed and a fantastic large new hall was available to the village by the end of June 2015, twelve months after the purchase was completed.

The total cost of these works has exceeded £80,000 and has been met principally from grants and from financial reserves of both the Parish Council and Village Hall Committee. Generous funding was provided to the Parish Council by the Jubilee Fund, the Essex County Council Annual Fund and the Councillors Fund. Further grant funding was provided to the Village Hall Committee by the Stansted Airport Fund, the Tom Amos Charity, the Essex County Council CIF Fund, the Uttlesford District Council Fund and there was also a generous donation from a previous resident of the village. Both the Parish Council and Village Hall Committee wish to record their thanks publicly for this very generous financial support.

The official opening was held in July 2015 for all residents of Chrishall and the facilities were much admired.

## Phase 2

A programme of further enhancements is planned, when it is hoped to improve the car park and exterior of the halls from existing funds and also to raise new funding for a programme of energy efficiency improvements. Three stages are planned for this latter project:

Firstly we are keen to improve the insulation by getting additional insulating panels fitted to the upper walls. Having had a limited number of the panels fitted already, we are confident that new ones will further reduce heat loss as well as improve the sound absorption of the walls.

Secondly we would like to have secondary double glazing installed as the windows are currently single glazed. This too should make a big difference to the energy efficiency of the hall.

Once the above have been completed we would like to have solar panels fitted. The roof is south facing and quite large and, aside from the benefit to the environment of burning less fossil fuel, there should be considerable financial benefit from generating our own electricity. A significant reduction in this cost would help to secure the financial viability of the halls.

The village hall is already proving to be a popular community asset and completion of Phase 2 will make it an even more attractive venue for all the residents of Chrishall and the surrounding area.