
NORTH QUEENSFERRY COMMUNITY CENTRE 2000

A SHORT HISTORY

Some 25-30 years ago our village 'Institute' was demolished due to deterioration of the foundations and walls (this building was originally part the village school some 200 years prior). The then Fife County Council, who were responsible for the demolition, promised the residents of North Queensferry that an alternative Community Centre would be provided.

However, due to the process of time and subsequent changes to the Local Authorities structures in Scotland, firstly, from Fife County Council to Fife Regional Council and now to Fife Council, the matter of a new Community Centre for this village faded into the dim and distant priorities of Fife Council with little prospect of being resurrected for many years, due to financial constraints. Then in the late 1980's a small number of villagers formed themselves into a group to examine the possibility of raising funds to build our own Community Centre. Fortunately at that time a gentleman by the name of Mr Ernie Boyer lived in the village and he was involved in the construction work of the Shell/Exxon petrochemical plant at Mossmorran and which, at that time, was near to completion. Mr Boyer informed us that there were a number of porta-cabins on site for disposal, and if we could provide a site with foundations in place to accept them, he could arrange the transportation of these structures to the site, and again, providing that we could obtain the necessary planning consent and lay in the utility services necessary to render the building fit for public use. This was just the incentive that was needed, and the group, formed themselves into a committee, set to with a will and through the use of local labour; including joiners, electricians, painters, plumbers brickies & labourers(all provided voluntarily), in September 1992, ***OUR VERY OWN Community Centre*** was opened - ***it was ours, we built it, we owned it, AND WE STILL DO***

However, our success was soon to encounter a setback. In its first year, the winter was one of very heavy rain and strong winds, and the roof, being one of flat construction proved to be somewhat lacking in being water-tight, with the result that in several places considerable damage was done inside to the ceilings and floors. Once again the committee set to, with a will and with the help of the Scottish Office, Fife Region, Dunfermline District Council and considerable fund-raising by our selves, we eventually, at a cost of some £35,000, put a new pitched roof over the whole structure and we are now wind and water tight, but unfortunately, the outer shell (*ie. the original walls of the porta-cabins*), are now showing signs of deterioration, and it is our intention to erect a brick skin around the building. Once again, fortunately, the founding committee had the foresight to include in the original plans an allowance for this eventuality and the extra-wide foundations were laid to accept an outer shell at some point in the future. To date we have only been able to partially clad part of the building; namely the west facing wall, that being, the prevailing weather wall. This was achieved due to a local benefactor obtaining suitable concrete blocks, for us 'free gratis'. Nevertheless, we still had to pay £2,761 labour costs, and so, we had made a start to our ultimate objective. This has left us with the challenge of raising the necessary funds to complete the remainder of the building.

We have acquired the necessary planning consent to proceed, but unfortunately we will need to raise around £25,000, of which we have at this point in time the sum of £4,500 earmarked in our reserves, for materials and labour to complete our aim, *ie; to make east end the north and south facing walls into a permanent structure*. It is hoped that this will then render the building serviceable as a Community Centre for many years to come.

At present the Centre is very well used and we currently employ, a caretaker full-time and a cleaner on a part-time basis, at rates of pay comparable to Local Authorities pay scales. The Centre serves as a function hall for weddings, dances, bingo, village meetings etc. There is a fully serviceable kitchen, and the Main Hall has provision for a bar to serve at functions if required, with a smaller hall to accommodate smaller gatherings, there is also a room which is leased to Fife Council to serve as a Council Library and which provides a service to the village and us with some revenue, there are also two changing rooms for the local football teams, with facilities for Home and Away teams, including showers (hot & cold), again a regular source of funds. However, we are about to lose a source of regular income, as the result of the government policy of now providing free nursery places for 3/4 year olds, the playgroup which used the Centre for three mornings per week, are now accommodated in the local school as of last year's (Summer 2000) intake of pupils.

Jimmy Dyce,
North Queensferry Community Centre Committee

15..11.00..

ADDENDUM

Since the writing of the previous 'potted' history, the Centre Committee has managed to have a 'brick skin' put in place around the outside of the walls of the assembled port-a-cabins. This was necessary, in order to keep the wet & windy weather at bay, as it was felt that the plywood exterior would not withstand another winter of the storms that we in North Queensferry are quite often subjected to.

This was placed high on our agenda and was the subject of regular discussion at our monthly meetings. At these meetings we were privileged to have in attendance, the Fife Council Locality Manager **Ms. Ann Barr** for this area, we also regularly had in attendance **Mr Tom Philips** the Link Officer for Fife Council Community Education Department, both of whom were to advise and assist us in obtaining funding for the project .

As we already had some £4,500 in a reserve fund for this purpose, we had at least something to start with. Through the auspices of the two people previously mentioned we were able to arrive at a probable solution. **Ann Barr** being the Locality Manager was able to put a proposal to the Fife Council Adult Training Centre at Hillend, 'that this undertaking could be used as a project for trainees on the building skills programme'. This was accepted by the Training Dept; on the proviso, that we, *the Community Centre Management Committee* could provide for the cost of the building materials and the project labour costs would be met by them. This was deemed acceptable by the Centre Management Committee, and the work

commenced in February 2001, but, unfortunately, because of occasional bad weather, and the trainees requiring to attend the Technical College, it should be completed by Oct/Nov 2001. We were however fortunate, in that, as referred to previously, the members' of the small committee that first set about building the replacement centre in the early 1990's, had the foresight to build the initial foundations proud of the walls of the porta-cabins, thus reducing the costs of putting in place foundations to the supporting of the 'brick skin'. We owe them a great deal of appreciation for their forethought an vision.

It is hoped that the brick exterior will result in considerable savings in heating costs, which in the past has placed a very big demand on the running costs of the centre.

Notwithstanding the fact that the building is now, more or less, complete we now have a Community Centre that will last for very many years to come. The residents of North Queensferry have a Community Centre of which they should be justly proud of, and it is hoped that they will continue to use it as often as possible, and enjoy the facilities that it provides. It is run and managed by a Committee of village people who give their services entirely free and voluntarily. (*The North Queensferry Communitte Centre Management Committee*)

As I have referred to previously and never tire of reminding people;

THIS IS OUR COMMUNITY CENTRE IT BELONGS TO THE VILLAGERS OF NORTH QUEENSFERRY , AND ALTHOUGH WE RECEIVE FUNDING FROM FIFE COUNCIL FOR WHICH WE ARE EXTREMELY THANKFUL. THE CENTRE BELONGS TO THE VILLAGERS OF NORTH QUEENSFERRY.

**WE ARE PROUD TO SAY
IT IS OUR
COMMUNITY CENTRE**

In finality I would like to thank everyone past and present who made it possible to realise our vision of having our very own Community Centre in North Queensferry.

Jimmy Dyce,(Vice-Chair)

October 2001.