

Concise History of Westoning Village Hall

1840	Grant application to build 2-roomed school £200, and master's house £115. Waste land of the Parish given by the Lord of the Manor for a National School (Established Church) 'for the education of the children of the labouring, agricultural and poorer classes'.
1841/2	School built?
1844	HM Inspector mentions 'new building'.
1854	Drawings of suspended wooden floor.
1860	Plans with details of proposed new school house but also showing the 2 school rooms larger but no infants room.(date from County Records)
1870	Education Act - audit of provision and requirement. Listed as accommodation for 48 boys & girls and 38 infants, but required accommodation for 52 more children.
1872	Grant application to build new School house and probably at the same time extend both school rooms and perhaps add the infant room? ? ?
1895	Parish Council formed, Mr Trepte (school master) appointed Clerk.
1898	Flitwick School Board takes control of school and minutes talk of 'infants room'(today's kitchen).
1907	Mr Strickland replaces Mr Trepte as Master.
1910	Premises described as "deplorable and not possible to make satisfactory". Board managers resisted proposition of new school as a 'waste of public money' and of proposed site as 'a) too near the road, b) too near the railway, c) low lying land, d) too far from the school house'.
1913	New County School opened under County Council control. Master continued to live in the school house.
1920	Westoning Social Club formed, chairman Howard Spensley. ? bath rooms built. Mr Pride, the school master, is secretary of club. 2 billiard tables, one large & one small.
1927	First Club minute book to be retained, probably one before but now lost. Club run from October to April, when the clocks changed. Newspapers available and 2 billiard tables. Run by committee members.
1929	January - Fire involving storage barn and Bath Room door (the present ladies loos were equipped with tin baths and people paid to have a hot bath). The water storage tank was somewhere raised up on girders in the region of the passage way. Entrance to the Baths was from the rear of the building. Howard Spensley to provide a shed for the storage of the 'platform'.
1930	Redecorated with "2 coats of distemper" - H Spensley paid half the cost.
1931	H Spensley promised to "put in sufficient ordinary wiring when the electricity cables are brought along Church Street".
1932	H Spensley paid £7 for 9 "lighting points", the club paid for one extra in the large room to be height adjustable for 'concert nights'.
1936	Club in financial difficulties - appealed for new members and cut caretakers wages from 12/- to 6/- a week! Users of the baths were requested to "do the pumping".
1937	Walls renovated. HS paid to have mains water laid to baths, expected cost for water to be 28/- a year. 2 electric heaters installed in main room, other heating was by open fires/ stoves.
1938	March 3 rd H Spensley died. September - informed that under H Spensley's will the building was bequeathed to the village.

1939	<p>Sir Frederick Richmond declined to be president of the club but donated £10 for "blacking out".</p> <p>October - caretaker paid extra "for day school 2 and reference to Education Authority paying rent so probably used as school for evacuees.</p>
1940	<p>Furnace repaired.</p> <p>January - provisional committee formed, they seemed to think H Spensley should not have been able to dispose of the building, it should have passed to the new Lord of the Manor, Sir Frederick Richmond, but he did not wish to be on the new committee.</p> <p>August - first AGM of the Spensley Trust held on Tuesday 20th August</p> <p>September - Duties of Warden defined as "Clerk to the Committee and to supervise the work of any paid official or servant of the Committee" - Mr Pride appointed (he had been secretary of the Club and lived in the school house).</p> <p>September - the new Spensley Trust discussed by the Club - all Club furniture and stock handed over to Trust.</p> <p>Bank account opened at the National Provincial Bank in Luton - Sir F Richmond donated £50.</p> <p>Refugees from London occupy the building.</p> <p>Caretaker appointed.</p> <p>Mr Pride continued to live in the house "on the terms as before", his tenancy secure under the rent act. He converted the back bedroom to a bathroom and did other alterations at his own expense.</p>
1941	<p>Two extra rooms were wired for electric cookers. Billiard tables dismantled to make more room for refugees. Refugees paid privately or under government scheme.</p> <p>Mr Pride sought permission to build a WC upstairs with small cloak room underneath to the school house, again at his own expense.</p>
1943	<p>The number of refugees has reduced therefore income reduced.</p> <p>Discussions about after the War - make alterations or erect new premises?</p> <p>June - first meeting held in the Old School since December 1940.</p> <p>July - only one refugee family left & they were asked to leave as soon as possible.</p> <p>September - all refugees gone - building disinfected and distempered, roof, windows and fireplaces repaired. One cooker retained in 'back room'.</p> <p>Home Guard start to use the building several times a week & use Bath Room as lock-up store also fix up indoor firing range!</p>
1944	<p>July - more refugees in 2 rooms until September.</p>
1945	<p>A sink & 2 electric heating points fitted in "back room" (kitchen).</p> <p>September - 8 windows repaired.</p> <p>Mention of a 'New Village Hall Committee' but ST refused to meet them.</p>
1946	<p>First lady on the ST is the WI representative.</p> <p>Applied to Ampthill RDC to remove wall between main room and billiard room - refused.</p>
1947	<p>Interior redecorated and repairs to roof, ventilator in main room and porch door.</p>
1948	<p>Crisis meeting about expense of re-roofing building. Fund raising committee formed.</p>
1949	<p>January - decided to re-roof school only at present (£253).</p> <p>April - Mr Pride accused of acting wrongly in some way but vote of confidence given!</p> <p>May - Mr Pride resigns</p> <p>June - David Bucknall appointed Warden.</p> <p>July - Alterations needed before Annual Stage Play Licence could be granted.</p> <p>Suggestions by County Architect - propose to build permanent stage & dressing room. Stage must have exit to the outside which would be provided by the door</p>

	<p>leading to the SW porch. The dressing room must have outwards opening door to outside. Removal of centre wall considered an excellent idea (no girder needed only buttress support at each side). Emergency exit required at SE end, double outwards opening doors with panic bolts - suggests using existing window frame to reduce amount of brickwork to be removed?</p> <p>September - resolved to build dressing room on to NW wall with connecting passage behind existing NW wall (baths wall), also to remove chimney stack in NW wall of premises. Existing bath rooms to be stripped & boiler removed, passage to remain unaltered. Sewers to be laid for proposed ladies toilets. Contractor re-roofing premises asked to remove centre wall.</p> <p>October - Chairman states that "contrary to my instructions the contractor removed the centre wall"?</p> <p>December - planning permission for dressing room refused (reasons not given). Warden given permission to erect porch on school house.</p> <p>April - New Village Hall Committee liquidated.</p>
1950	<p>August - licence to alter building granted.</p> <p>October - Builder asked to move door to classroom (kitchen) to the right. Washbasin in new Gents cloakroom to be substituted with a urinal! To join school and school house sewers at on point ready to connect to main sewer.</p>
1951	<p>October - Dressing room finally built and servicing hatch provided. Building also re-wired and 3 electric heaters installed plus one in the new dressing room. Building may have been plastered and redecorated at this time.</p>
1952	<p>In the red, trustees stand as £25 guarantors. Bank account changed to Barclays, Amptill. Temporary urinal needed on the site of the old one which was removed during the alterations?</p> <p>School house garden fenced off to new double door near house or maybe later?</p> <p>September - New sanitary arrangements installed?</p>
1953	<p>Hall running at a loss - decided to increase the charges by 50%!</p>
1954	<p>Question of gents sanitary arrangements raised 'at present men have to pass through the kitchen to the rear'. Resolved to pull down old lavatories and convert west porch to one WC and a brick urinal.</p>
1956	<p>House roof in bad state, emergency repairs done.</p>
1960	<p>Kitchen fire smoking badly.</p>
1961	<p>House roof causing concern but could only afford emergency repairs again.</p>
1962	<p>February - school house re-roofed at cost of £332 but had 12 months to pay.</p>
1963	<p>Bingo organiser donates £50 to install kitchen sink and water heater.</p>
1964	<p>2 slow combustion heaters placed in front of fireplaces in main hall & left in all winter.</p> <p>Floor under stage has dry rot</p>
1966	<p>Mention of rubbish stored in stage end porch therefore not used as a gents loo?</p>
1968	<p>July - Exterior decoration, new double porch doors, repair stage, repair kitchen floor and re-line stove with new firebricks.</p> <p>November - Kitchen floor in such a state needed completely renewing: paid for by Bingo paying a year in advance and a loan from the welfare committee?</p>
1970	<p>Hall & kitchen re-decorated, also kitchen fireplace removed and bricked up, a Rayburn stove provided.</p> <p>Committee volunteers replace the stage.</p> <p>Main hall floor inspected by Rentokil</p>
1971	<p>Receive £200 grant from Dept. of Ed. & Science for new wooden floor in main hall.</p>
1972	<p>Playgroup started</p>

1974	Plans submitted for store room attached to kitchen, quote £600. Volunteers erect false ceiling in main hall. Hall re-decorated and door cut in wall in readiness for new store room. Charges go up 50%. Parish Council offer £200 towards store room. Apply to Beds.CC for grant.
1975	Quoted £700 for electric central heating and £1250 for gas - too expensive consider Calor Gas. Resolved to change to Calor Gas heating - not done? Ask PC for more money. September - Gas connected. 2 heaters in main hall and one in the kitchen - £600. Solid fuel heaters removed, chimneys capped and walls made good. Store room built. Loan from PC.
1976	Gas hot water system installed in kitchen Stage window bricked up and outside gents boarded up!
1977	Path tarmaced & kitchen re-decorated.
1978	Gardeners Ass'n request permission to use dis-used outside loos for storage but refused as going to be renovated. Parish Council seek permission to survey the building with a view to enlarging premises.
1979	April - Special meeting to discuss enlargement plans - accepted in principle except the position of the bar! School house re-wired Revised extension plans to cut cost. Parish Council form working party to discuss extension or new community centre/pavilion in the rec. Hall re-wired
1980	January 7th - Special meeting to discuss new Community Centre. Decide to get the property valued with a view to selling and putting money towards new charitable purpose for the village. January 23rd - District Valuer had valued property but value not minuted. April - Trust not in favour of selling, decide to get planning permission for hall extension. July - Planning permission granted. Gardeners Ass'n given permission to alter outside toilets and to use for storage. Architect asked to cost extension project. August - Time switch introduced to cut power at 11.50pm after complaint from resident in Tythe Barn Close.
1981	RCC write to say there will be no grant aid available in 1981/82. New toilet block considered first priority. Visit by Fire Safety Officer recommends new emergency lighting essential. June - PC agree to pay for emergency lighting and new outside toilets. November - Visit by the Environmental Health Officer - male & female toilets are dirty and need re-decorating and one washbasin is cracked!
1982	March - Decide to hold Fete in rec. to raise money to re-decorate interior. PC offer to pay for fire-proof suspended ceiling in main hall. June - New entrance doors referred to! October - Letter of thanks sent to the PC for financing the new gents toilet block, main entrance and suspended ceiling in main hall . Quote of £480 to re-decorate main hall and stage accepted - burgundy & pale blue - was it done?

1983	<p>Cold water tank support girders removed from passage. PC agree to pay for suspended ceiling in the kitchen. Floor under kitchen sink concreted. Suggestion to extend building in line with new foyer. Kitchen re-decorated - honeysuckle walls, sand gold paint work Emergency lighting converted to maintained system.</p>
1984	<p>Main hall re-decorated and entrance path re-surfaced. Payphone installed. Roof leaking at ridge, also ladies toilet/dressing room roof leaking - repaired. Volunteers re-decorate passage & stage.</p>
1985	<p>January - unable to obtain spares for gas heaters in main hall - PC agree to pay for new heaters. April - Similar problem with kitchen heater - PC agree to loan to replace heater. November - School house walls have dry rot & rising damp.</p>
1986	<p>January - Main hall roof leaking - repaired. Main door rotten! July - Kitchen floor has holes - repaired. £4000 loan received from the National Council for Volunteer Organisations repayable over 8 years. Building Society Fundraising account opened.</p>
1987	<p>Kitchen hand-wash basin fitted free. 2 new rear doors fitted. New low flush cisterns fitted in ladies loo. West porch roof repaired. PC give £350 grant and £450 loan to buy new chairs.</p>
1988	<p>Guttering repaired. Estimates to alter ladies loos but no money. Wall at west end of old 'yard' dangerous - lowered and pointed. Hall re-decorated by NACRO. Ladies loo floors re-surfaced 'at considerable cost'. Window frames in bad state and foyer flat roof leaking.</p>
1989	<p>Store room roof leaking. Playgroup request more storage space, consider extending store room. 5 new UPVC windows in main hall. PC give £200 for 5 new tables.</p>
1990	<p>New gas fire fitted in dressing room. Planning permission granted for new store room, £575 grant from Beds.CC, £553 from Mid Beds.DC and PC give £500 grant. Electrics in new store room to be done by 'ourselves'.</p>
1991	<p>New store room complete in January but not dried out & in use until June! PC give £350 for 5 more tables plus 2 bought by Trust. 96 sets of cutlery purchased.</p>
1992	<p>School house windows, guttering and front door need replacing - PC give £1000 grant towards repairs. Whole building surveyed, recommends renewal of all guttering, downpipes, etc, lower chimney stacks and cap & ventilate them, repair broken slates and ridge tiles. September - School house windows replaced November - Hall guttering and downpipes replaced.</p>
1993	<p>Hall chimneys reduced, capped & vented, amendments to store room guttering. May - new UPVC windows fitted in foyer & gents loo. Hall redecorated 'buttermilk and cappuccino', also exterior of building. PC give £1000 towards re-roofing the dressing room & ladies toilets.</p>
1994	<p>Volunteers re-decorate the dressing room. Foyer roof - some wood rotten, roof replaced with slope. 2 small hall windows had to be replaced as well. Kitchen roof cowls removed and new vent fitted.</p>

1995	<p>Main hall cowls also removed - PC gave grant. New concrete kitchen floor and units fitted (£1931.50 grant from Mid.Beds.DC plus £2500 loan from PC repayable by July 1996). Store room gutter re-routed from soak-away to storm drain.</p>
1996	<p>Paving slabs laid to rear of building, some donated, laid by Community Services. PC give £1000 towards new hall curtains. Foyer & passage carpeted.</p>
1997	<p>Central heating installed in school house and downstairs loo fitted in lobby below upstairs loo. PC give £1000 towards Trust funds. Ladies toilets block regularly. Receive 574 shares in Woolwich Plc when it became a bank. David & Sheila Bucknall retire - Mandy Vincent appointed new warden. New concrete floor laid in school house room nearest hall. Ceilings replaced in downstairs reception rooms and large bedroom; advised against enlarging loft hatch as joists not strong enough to hold much, only an inspection hatch really. TV survey done of ladies loo soil pipe and pipe lined to avoid further blockages. Woodworm in stage joists treated.</p>
1998	<p>Wall behind urinals in gents tiled. Gas heater in gents loo repaired after vandalism. Apply for PC grant towards replacing ceiling tiles and dressing room window (cannot be opened). Dressing Room window replaced.</p>
1999	<p>Applied to EB Beds for Landfill Tax Grant, Small Lottery Grant and to Mid Beds Council for grants to re-roof the building (apart from the house), replace the hall ceiling and lights, replace damaged kitchen cupboard doors, re-decorate inside and out and to enlarge and resurface the area out the front. (Hall pale green, house door dark green) Mandy Vincent resigns due to changing family circumstances - Kirsty & Neil Bunyan appointed. June - Grant from Small Lotteries, £4000, to replace hall lights and kitchen cupboard doors. July - Grant from Landfill Tax, £8500, for roof repairs and balance from Mid Beds Council for hall ceiling, redecoration and enlarging and resurfacing out the front. Most work done over the summer but resurfacing work completed during October half term. Gully between store rooms enlarged. Informed house chimneys are unsafe. October - Kitchen floor breaking up under island unit - repaired.</p>
2000	<p>House chimney stacks at front re-pointed, rear one taken down and rebuilt. 2 new gas heaters installed in main hall Plans drawn up to build new toilet block to include disabled access. Gate and fence put up at the side of the house and fence repaired at the back. 'New' piano purchased. December - Kirsty resigns as warden</p>

2001	<p>David's old garage removed.</p> <p>Light erected by Parish Council to shine over car park and front area.</p> <p>March - Barbara Ephgrave appointed as Warden.</p> <p>April-June New kitchen cupboards fitted and new bathroom suite fitted in school house. Also some re-wiring and re-plastering done in the School House.</p> <p>Village Hall finger post fitted at the cross-roads.</p> <p>New fire-guards made for main hall heaters.</p> <p>New roof cladding fitted to storeroom roofs.</p> <p>20 new 'card tables' purchased.</p> <p>Payphone removed as expensive and most hall users now have mobile phones.</p>
2002	<p>New exit doors fitted to foyer.</p> <p>Gas heater in gents loo replaced with electric one.</p> <p>Hall floor packing supports found to be rotten near house side door and these were replaced with slate. Inspection trap established under doormat.</p> <p>Parish Council had the car park edged and re-surfaced.</p>
2003	<p>New exit doors fitted to house-end entrance.</p> <p>Damp in school house bathroom chimney breast still present.</p> <p>Quotes obtained to replace the kitchen safety flooring as holes and cracks continue to appear despite patching. Back kitchen wall has rising damp – new floor delayed until solution found.</p> <p>New external notice board erected.</p> <p>Horse chestnut trees felled at rear of Hall – some die-back and cause of trouble with children attempting to get conkers.</p>
2004	<p>Kitchen floor dug out and completely replaced as concrete deemed to be the cause of the surface breaking up. New safety flooring laid in kitchen and gents & ladies loos.</p> <p>New ceiling and lights in the kitchen plus a new fridge.</p> <p>Re-decorated throughout (terracotta & ?).</p> <p>New roof on back room/ladies toilets</p> <p>Overhead phone wires removed.</p> <p>Old school clock restored, fitted with modern movement and replaced in the hall.</p>
2005	<p>Hedge cleared out & re-planted at rear of school house.</p> <p>Steam cleaner purchased</p> <p>New school house side gate fitted</p> <p>Applied for a Premises License</p> <p>Two new cookers purchased</p>
2006	<p>Gully between store rooms replaced</p> <p>New water heater fitted in the kitchen</p> <p>Stable door fitted between hall & kitchen at Playgroup's request</p> <p>Two new teapots purchased</p>
2007	<p>New notice board</p>