



**Research
material on
the history of
Hartford
Village Hall**

by ANNE LOADER

MESSAGE TO READERS



Exhibition on social history of the Village Hall and recreation grounds

This booklet was originally published as a spin-off of the celebrations in July 2023 to mark the centenary of Hartford Village Hall and its site. It contains the research material used as the base for an exhibition about the social history of the hall and grounds staged on 23 July 2023.

Obviously more fascinating information was unearthed than could be used in the display, and it was felt that this should be made available to anyone interested in finding out more about the subject.

Direct quotes are reproduced from many sources including Parish Council minutes, newspapers (thanks to the British Newspaper Archives) and Hartford News, plus facts obtained from genealogy websites (such as Ancestry.co.uk and Findmypast) and individuals.

Many thanks are due to Trisha Parker for transcribing extracts from the 1920-23 Parish Council minutes.

The online booklet can be searched.

It should be emphasised that this is a collection of source material rather than a conventional book. It also contains an article on the chronological history of the Village Hall and recreation grounds that was published as a supplement in the July 2023 edition of Hartford News.

The events which comprised the fortnight of celebrations in 2023 included a Picnic in the Park, music in Royalty Wood, a Cycle Hub open day, a mixed pairs competition and a taster session organised by the Bowls Club, a 24-hour tennis marathon in aid of Cancer Research UK staged by the Tennis Club, displays in the hall by a number of local organisations, a very rainy garden party, an art project by Cloughwood Academy and the creation of a time capsule by pupils at Hartford Manor Primary School.

ANNE LOADER
August 2023

VILLAGE HALL TIMELINE 1923-2023

1923	Founding of Hartford Recreation Club on the Fountain Field and erection of Clubhouse/Village Hall	1983	ICI sells the Fountain Field to the Parish Council for £25 plus legal expenses; Bowls Club celebrates Diamond Jubilee
1928	Club has between 260-280 members	1986	Seven burst water pipes in Village Hall, flood damage cost £300
1940	Members of HM Forces stationed locally allowed to use the hall for recreation during the week	1987	Storage building erected on land behind Village Hall
1950s	Club prospers after the War	1987	Disabled access installed
1960	Wild stag grazes on the grass tennis courts; club has 460 junior members	1990	No smoking at council meetings
1962	Parish Council bails out the Recreation Club which is now in serious financial trouble	1993	Scoring hut by bowling green erected; parking spaces marked out; monobloc car parking extended
1969	In a membership drive, newcomers to the village receive a circular about the club, which has been rescued by a small group of dedicated members	1994	Pavilion erected near tennis courts; Village Hall "No smoking" zone
1970	Name change from "Hartford Recreation Club" to "Hartford Bowls and Tennis Club"	1995	Kitchen refurbished
1971	Clubhouse redecorated by members	2000	Bowls Club awarded the Sefton Shield for the most improved bowling green in Mid-Cheshire
1973	Bowls and Tennis Club celebrates its Golden Jubilee - there are now more than 200 members	2001	Environmental grant of £8,000 for improvements to the Fountain Field
1974	Cherry trees planted round perimeter hedge to mark demise of Northwich Rural District Council	2004-5	Hall re-roofed and repainted
1976	Parish Hall Joint Management Committee set up to run hall; members from Parish Council and Bowls and Tennis Club	2011	Major refurbishment and extension at Village Hall
1976	Renovations and improvements to Parish Hall, new tables and chairs	2012	Hall has its own website
1977	Licence granted for music and dancing; extension work to changing rooms, toilet and kitchen area	2014	Installation of fully insulated and double glazed shed for Bowls Club
1978	Name changed to "Hartford Village Hall"	2015	Defibrillator made available
1979	Exterior of building painted Hirers to pay flat rate for whole hall	2017	New safety measures implemented
		2018	Flagpole erected, CCTV installed
		2020-21	Pandemic - hall closed to public
		2023	New pétanque court; Hall celebrates centenary

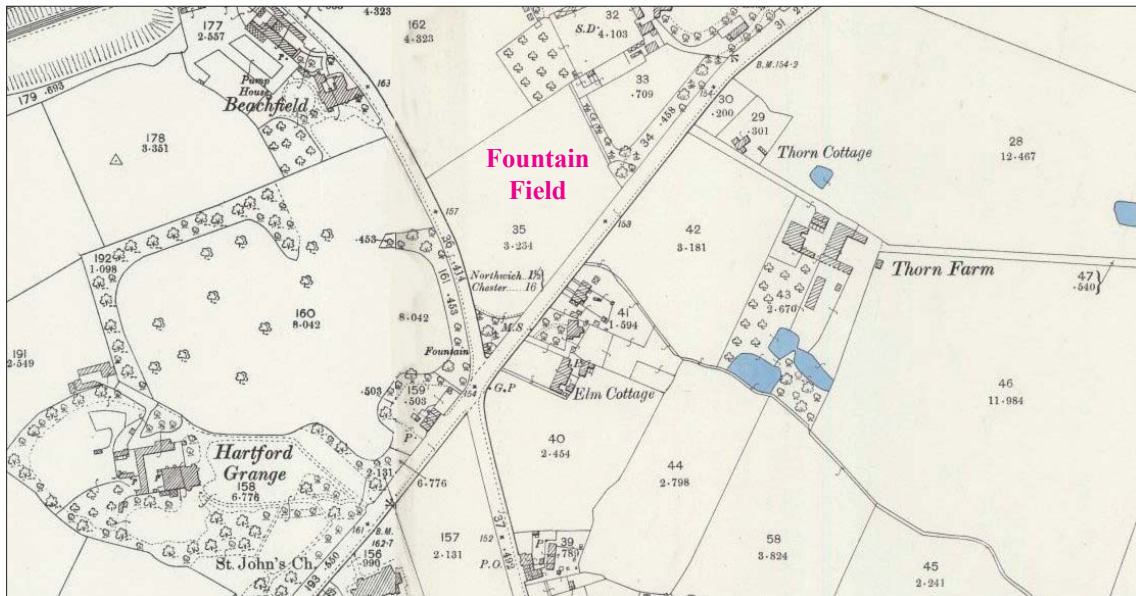
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25 inch to the mile OS map, showing the Fountain Field in 1898 (National Library of Scotland)

HARTFORD PARISH COUNCIL SETS UP THE RECREATION CLUB PROJECT

Relevant extracts from the Hartford Parish Council Minute book covering 1918-1934 are reproduced as follows (page number quoted for easy reference):

1920

Page 41: At the 214th Meeting of The Hartford Parish Council held in The School on Monday March 8th 1920 at 7.30 pm

The Chairman proposed that the War Memorial Committee be asked if they could see their way after providing a Memorial in the churchyard - to devote the balance in hand towards the cost of providing the proposed Bowling Green and playground for children. Mr Mills seconded and the resolution was carried, four voting in favour and two against.

Page 44: At the 215th Meeting of The Hartford Parish Council held in the School on Monday April 19th 1920 at 8 pm

A letter was read from the War Memorial Committee stating that the Committee did not think it wise that the money available from the War Memorial Fund should be devoted to any other uses than those originally decided upon, namely the Cross in the churchyard and some form of Recreation room.

Page 46-47: At the 216th Meeting of The Hartford Parish Council held on Monday June 14th 1920 in The School at 8 pm

The Chairman referred to the proposal of Messrs Brunner Mond & Co to present the Field by the Fountain to the Parish Council for the purpose of a Village Club and Bowling Green and Mr Powles submitted a rough plan of the proposed Scheme. Considerable discussion took place particularly with reference to the raising of the large sum required to carry out the Scheme and the matter was left in abeyance pending the receipt of an official submission of the proposed Gift from Messrs. Brunner Mond & Co.

Page 50-51: At the 218th Meeting of The Hartford Parish Council held in The School on Monday October 11th 1920 at 8 pm

The following letter from Messrs Brunner Mond & Co was read:

To the clerk of Hartford Parish Council:

*Dear Sir,
You are probably aware that, at the sale of Major Marshall's property, this Company purchased the field at the corner of Church Lane and Chester Road. The Company was*

subsequently approached by certain residents of Hartford with a request that it would present the field to the Parish for the purposes of a War Memorial Club to comprise Clubhouse, Tennis Courts and Bowling Green.

The matter has now received the consideration of my Board, and I am instructed to ask you to inform your Council that the Company is prepared to make a free gift of the land to the Parish subject to a sufficient sum of money being first raised to cover the cost of building a Club-house and laying out the ground. Will you kindly bring this letter before your Council in due course.
Yours truly, D. Marsh, Secretary

A long discussion took place with reference to the cost of providing a Club House. Mr Powles submitted a rough sketch of the same and estimated that the cost would be considerable and if it were decided to leave the matter over until the War Memorial in the Churchyard was completed, then some idea might be formed of what balance the Committee would have in hand for the prospect of a Club House.

On the proposed idea of Mr Powles, seconded by Mr Burrell, It was unanimously resolved:

That a most cordial vote of thanks be accorded to Messrs. Brunner Mond for their kind offer and that they be informed that the Council had the matter under consideration.

It was proposed by Mr Moore, seconded by Mr Knight and unanimously resolved:

That the Deed of Gift of the additional Field and the Conveyance of the Right of Road to same be deposited for safe custody at the offices of Messrs. Hall-Cook and Chambers, Solicitors.

Page 53: At the 219th HPC Meeting on Monday November 11th 1920

It was decided to adjourn the consideration of Messrs. Brunner Mond & Co's offer of the Fountain Field to the next meeting of the Council to enable the Local War Memorial Committee to report on the balance available for the purpose of erecting a Club House and report to the next Meeting.

The proposed code of Rules for the Recreation Ground was discussed and Mr Powles promised to look same over and report to the next meeting.

Page 55: At the 220th Meeting of The Hartford Parish Council in The School on Monday 10th day of January 1921 at 8 pm

Mr Powles informed the Council that the War Memorial Committee would have a balance of about £385 to donate towards the erection of a Village Club and intimated that he did not propose to charge anything for his services in connection with The Memorial erected in the Churchyard and on the motion of the Chairman, seconded by Mr Kirk, a hearty vote of thanks was accorded to Mr Powles for his services.

The Revd H.H. Pitts suggested that probably Messrs. Brunner Mond & Co would be agreeable to allow the conditions of the offer of land for a Club House etc if the Council pointed out that they had £400 in hand and proposed to proceed with the Bowling Green. The Council approved and it was decided to again adjourn the matter after the War Memorial Committee had met.

It was unanimously decided that the proposed Code of Rules for the Recreation Ground were (sic) necessary and that they lie on the Table.

1921

Page 57: At the 221st Meeting of The Hartford Parish Council in The School on Saturday 28th day of January 1921

The Chairman read a letter from the Revd. H.H. Pitts stating that he had interviewed Mr. Watts, a Director of Messrs. Brunner Mond & Co. who informed him that the Company would agree to ratify the terms of their Gift of land on the lines suggested at the last Meeting of the Council and it was decided to await a written communication from the Company to that effect.

Page 58: The Chairman explained that a Mr Harding of Winsford would be pleased to provide the Council with a Timber building for the purpose of a Club House and it was resolved:

That Messrs. Powles and Platt go over to Winsford to go into the matter with him and if necessary to go on to Rugeley to inspect the Army Huts over which Mr Harding has control.

Page 59: At the 222nd Meeting of the Hartford Parish Council held in the School on Monday the 28th day of February 1921 at 8pm

The Minutes of the last Meeting were read and confirmed. The following letter was read:

*Winnington January 29th 1921
Mr H. Mason, clerk,
Hartford Parish Council*

*Dear Sir,
In further reference to our letter of the 17th August and yours of the 12th October, we understand that it is desired to commence work on the Bowling Green and Tennis Courts at an early date. The matter therefore has been further considered by our Directors, and it is proposed to lease the field for a long term to be decided at a nominal rent. It is suggested that there should be a clause in the lease providing that in case the field and buildings to be erected thereon should cease to be used for the purpose for which the lease is granted for a specific number of years, the property should revert to the Company, compensation being paid to the Trustee of the Club for any value which may then remain in or on the land from such occupation.*

If your Council approves of the above Scheme, and the work of laying the Bowling Green and Tennis Courts can be done by voluntary labour, we will give notice to the present tenant of the field, and let you have the land necessary for carrying out this work as soon as possible.

Our Directors are of opinion that the £400 in the hands of the War Memorial Committee should be reserved for the purpose of erecting a Club-house.

*Yours truly
For Brunner Mond & Co. Ltd
J.P. Mackarel, Assistant Secretary*

The Council discussed the terms of this letter and on the motion of Mr Powles seconded by Mr Knight, it was unanimously resolved:

That the clerk write Messrs. Brunner Mond & Co thanking them for their letter and inform the Company that the Council would be prepared to agree to a lease of the Fountain Field at a nominal Rent, and for a term of years to be afterwards decided upon, and the Council would be glad if they might have the draft of the lease for consideration.

Page 61: Messrs Powles and Platt submitted a detailed report of their inspection of the Timber Building at the Salt Union works and, if suggested improvements were made, they recommended the Council to favour a similar Building for the purpose of a Village club. On the motion of the Revd H.H. Pitts seconded by Mr Stubbs it was unanimously resolved: That Messrs Powles and Platt proceed with the matter and that they have full power to purchase a club House on behalf of the Council.

Page 62: At the 223rd Meeting of the Hartford Parish Council in The School on Monday the 14th day of March 1921 at 8 pm

Mr Powles gave the following Estimated cost of the proposed Timber Building for the purpose of a Village club. He had not been able to accompany Mr Platt to inspect the Buildings at Rugeley but he hoped to do so in the course of a few days.

2 Huts & erection	£300-0-0
Covering outside with Metal lathing and stucco	£125-0-0
Covering Roofs with Asbestos slates	£100-0-0
	<u>£625-0-0</u>
The inside and outside decoration extra	

Page 67: At the 225th Meeting of the Hartford Parish Council held in the School on Monday June 13th 1921 at 8 pm

The clerk reported that he had not received the draft lease of the Fountain Field from Messrs. Brunner Mond & Co as promised and it was decided that on receipt of same a Meeting of the Council be called.

Page 68: At the 226th Meeting of the Hartford Parish Council held in The School on Monday July 25th 1921 at 8 pm

The Council had before them a draft of the proposed Lease of the Fountain Field from

Messrs. Brunner Mond & Co. Ltd and after fully discussing the conditions, it was unanimously resolved, on the proposition of the Revd. H.H. Pitts, seconded by Mr Birtwistle, that a letter be written to Messrs Brunner Mond & Co on the following lines:

"That at a Special Meeting of the Parish Council held that evening to consider the draft lease of the Fountain Field, the Council were unanimously of the opinion that Council could not see their way to accept the terms, chiefly on account of the excessive sum of £1000 requested in Clause 4. The Council considered it impossible to raise that sum by voluntary subscriptions and did not feel justified in applying for a loan, which would mean an extra burden on the Ratepayers for 30 years. Would they be prepared to omit Clause 4?"

Page 70: At the 227th Meeting of The Hartford Parish Council held in The School on Monday October 10th 1921 at 8pm

The clerk read copy of letter he had written to Messrs Brunner Mond & Co as instructed at the last meeting and no reply having been received to same it was resolved that the clerk again write to the Company asking if they had any reply to make.

Page 72: At the 228th Meeting of The HPC on Monday November 14th 1921 at 7.30 pm

The Chairman informed the Council that he and the Revd H.H Pitts had met the Directors of Messrs Brunner Mond & Co and discussed the terms of the proposed lease of the Fountain Field. The Company agreed to modify clause 6, placing a remission of £400 in lieu of £1000 on the cost of the Clubhouse, reduced the rent to 1/- per annum and made other concessions to meet the wishes of the Council. The Lease was read over and fully discussed by the Council.

The Revd H.H Pitts afterwards proposed

"That the Council acknowledge with gratitude, the kind way in which the Company had met the Council and the Lease be accepted and the Company asked to agree with the Council that Clause 6 be deleted because it would probably not be necessary to apply to the Ministry of Health to sanction the adoption of

Bye-laws. Mr Stubbs seconded and it was carried unanimously.

Page 75: At the 229th Meeting of The HPC on Monday November 28th 1921 at 8 pm

A letter was read from Messrs Brunner Mond & Co Ltd with Lease of the Fountain Field for signature, the Company agreeing to the deletion of Clause 6 as requested by the Council.

It was proposed by Mr J Wilson Birtwistle, seconded by Mr John Platt and unanimously resolved

"That the Lease presented to the Meeting by Messrs. Brunner Mond & Co. Ltd of the Fountain Field in Hartford be executed on behalf of the Council by Alfred Every Powles (Chairman of the Council) and Arthur Stubbs and Samuel Knight, being two members of the Council.

On the motion of Mr Knight seconded by Mr Platt it was unanimously resolved

"That Mr Powles be requested to prepare a Sketch plan of a suitable Building for a Parish Room to be erected on the Foundation Field.

1922

Page 76: At the 230th Meeting of The Hartford Parish Council held in The School on Monday February 6th 1922 at 8 p.m

The Chairman informed the Council that he had interviewed Mr J. E. Fletcher (Solicitor) with reference to the powers of the Parish Council to provide a Village Club. He advised that the Parish Council could provide a Parish Hall and let same for the purpose of a Village Club and suggested that the lessors of the Foundation Field be requested to alter the wording of the Lease, substituting the words "Parish Hall" for 'Village Club' and the Council empowered the Chairman to request the lessors to agree to such alteration.

The Chairman submitted a plan of the proposed Parish Hall and estimated the probable cost would be about £900.

The Council unanimously approved of the plan and after discussing the question of meeting the cost of same, it was decided that the best course to adopt would be to arrange



By virtue of the Local Government Act 1894 and of a Sanction under the Seal of the Ministry of Health dated the fifteenth day of June One thousand nine hundred and twentytwo the Parish Council of Hartford in the County of Chester (hereinafter called "the Council") in consideration of the sum of Six hundred pounds now paid by Alfred Every Powles of Manor Cottage Hartford aforesaid Esquire (hereinafter called "the Mortgagee") to James Clark Nicol the Treasurer of the Council do hereby grant and assign unto the Mortgagee such proportion of the poor rate and of the whole or any part of the revenues of the said Council and of all other rates (if any) out of which the Council are authorized to defray expenses incurred by them in the execution of the said Act as the said sum of Six hundred pounds doth or shall bear to the whole sum which is or shall be borrowed on the security of the said rates to hold unto the Mortgagee from the date hereof until the said sum of Six hundred pounds shall be fully paid and satisfied by the instalments hereinafter mentioned And it is hereby declared the said sum of Six hundred pounds shall be repaid without any interest being charged thereon to the Mortgagee his executors administrators or assigns within a period of Twenty years from the date hereof by equal instalments of Fifteen pounds each every half year on the twenty ninth day of September and the twenty fifth day of March in each year during the said period of Twenty years until the said sum of Six hundred pounds shall be fully paid and satisfied and every such payment as aforesaid shall be made to the Mortgagee or the

First page of the mortgage agreement dated 15 June 1922 whereby Mr Alfred Every Powles of Manor Cottage, Hartford, lent the Parish Council £600 towards the cost of the Recreation Club which was to be paid back without any interest in £15 sums each March and September for the next 20 years. Mr Powles (1863-1938) was a Hartford-born architect.

for a private loan of £600, repayable with interest over a number of years. On the proposition of Mr J. Kirk, seconded by Mr Knight, it was unanimously resolved

That the proposed Scheme be laid before a Parish Meeting to be held in The School on Monday February 20th at 8 pm.

Page 78: At the 231st Meeting of The Hartford Parish Council held in The School on Monday 20th February 1922 at 7.30 pm

The Chairman stated that he had approached Messrs. Brunner Mond & Co with reference to the proposed alteration of the wording of the Lease at the Foundation Field and the Secretary (Captain Marsh) informed him that, under a new Act, the Council had power to build a Village Club and it was decided to leave the matter in the hands of the Chairman to ascertain the legal position of the Council.

Page 80: At the 232nd Meeting of The Hartford Parish Council held in The School on Monday the 13th day of March 1922 at 7.30 pm

A letter was read from the clerk to the County Council stating that the application of the Parish Council for sanction to raise a loan for the purpose of erecting a Parish Hall would be placed before the next Meeting of the County Council in May next.

Pages 84-85 : At the 234th Meeting of The Hartford Parish Council held in The School on Monday the 12th day of June 1922 at 8 pm

A letter was read from Mr A. Stubbs with reference to his tenancy of the Fountain Field and on the motion of Mr Mills seconded by Mr Birtwisle it was unanimously resolved

That the clerk forward a copy of the letter to Messrs Brunner Mond & Co. and ask them to attend to the matter.

The Chairman read a letter from the County Council sanctioning the proposed loan for the purposes of a Parish Hall. The Chairman also read correspondence he had had with the Minister of Health who promised to get the matter through without holding a local inquiry.

Page 86: At the 235th Meeting of The Hartford

Parish Council held in The School on Monday the 14th day of August 1922 at 8 pm

The Chairman reported that he had received the sanction of the Ministry of Health to the proposed loan for the erection of the Parish Hall and he was proceeding with the plan of the Hall and proposed to take the levels of the Fountain Field the following day.

It was unanimously decided that the Revd H.H. Pitts and Messrs. A. Rutter, F. Moore and S. Knight be appointed a Committee for the purpose of proceeding with the laying out of the Bowling Green and Tennis Courts on the Fountain Field.

On the proposition of Mr Moore seconded by Mr Birtwisle it was unanimously resolved

That the repair of the Fountain fence and Coronation Seat be left to the Chairman to carry out.

Pages 88-89: At the 236th Meeting of Hartford Parish Council held in The School on Monday October 9th 1922 at 8 pm

The Chairman stated that he had completed the Plan and Specification of the proposed Parish Hall and obtained the approval of the Rural District Council to same and the following tenders were submitted:

Ernest Bostock	£1317-10-0
Richard Taylor	£1247-0-0
Fredk Whitehead	£1174-0-0
W& T Wood	£1157-0-0
Wm Forster	£1097-0-0
Hulse Williams	£1049-0-0

The Chairman explained that it was possible to reduce one or two items in the Specification which would reduce the Estimates. The Council discussed the different Tenders and on the proposition of Mr Rutter seconded by The Revd H.H. Pitts, it was unanimously resolved

That the Chairman be empowered to accept Mr Hulse Williams & Co's Tender subject to satisfactory terms being arrived at with regard to the proposed reduction in the Specification.

Mr Moore reported that the Committee appointed for carrying out the laying of the Bowl-

ing Green and Tennis Courts had met. The Revd H.H. Pitts was appointed Chairman and he (Mr Moore) Secretary to the Committee.

Major Jackson had kindly promised to provide suitable Turf from Vale Royal Park free of cost and the Committee had received an Estimate of £158-10-0 from Mr Gaunt for laying out the Greens. It was not however considered advisable to spend such a large amount and the Committee proposed to carry out the work by voluntary labour if possible and engage Mr Gaunt to supervise the work.

On the proposition of Mr Newman seconded by Mr Mills the Minutes of the Sub-Committee were confirmed.

It was decided that the clerk and Mr Stubbs to turn his Cattle on the Fountain Field that the grass may be eaten off.

Pages 90-91: At the 237th Meeting of The Hartford Parish Council in the School on Tuesday November 14th 1922 at 7.30 pm

The Chairman reported that he had interviewed Messrs Hulse Williams & Co and after reducing certain items on the Specification of the proposed Parish Hall he had accepted their Tender of £996-0-0. The work (excluding outside painting) to be completed by March 3rd 1923.

Page 91: On the proposition of Mr Knight seconded by Mr Rutter it was unanimously resolved

That the revised Tender of Messrs Hulse Williams & Co for Nine hundred and ninety six pounds be confirmed and that the Chairman sign the Contract submitted on behalf of the Council.

Mr Moore read the Minutes of the Bowling Green and Tennis Courts Committee and on the proposition of the Revd H.H. Pitts seconded by Mr Birtwisle same were confirmed.

Mr Knight proposed

That the Committee be empowered to issue a Circular letter to Householders asking for donations towards the cost of laying the Bowling Green and Tennis Courts.

Mr Birtwisle seconded and it was unanimously carried.

1923

Page 93: At the 238th Meeting of The Hartford Parish Council held in the School on Monday the 8th day of January 1923 at 8 pm

The Chairman reported that there was a balance of £400-7-4 in the Bank in the name of the War Memorial Committee to be utilised towards the cost of the proposed Parish Hall and out of that Fund he had paid to the Contractors Messrs Hulse Williams & Co the sum of £135 on account of the Contract.

On the motion of the Rev H.H. Pitts, seconded by Mr Knight, it was unanimously decided to confirm the payment of £135 to Messrs. Hulse Williams & Co.

Mr Moore reported that the Bowling Green and Tennis Courts Committee had issued 71 Circular Letters to parishioners requesting Donations towards the cost of laying out the Greens and up to the present time had received 3 replies and the sum of £3-11-7.

The Chairman informed the Council that Sir John Jarmay had very kindly offered to present his Billiard Table to the Council to be placed in the Parish Hall when completed, and he (the Chairman) moved that a very hearty note of thanks be accorded to Sir John Jarmay for his most generous Gift. Mr Knight seconded and it was unanimously resolved.

Pages 95-7: At the 239th Meeting of The Hartford Parish Council held in the School on Monday the 5th day of March 1923 at 7.30 pm

Parish Hall Mortgage: Mr J. E. Fletcher, Solicitor, attended the Meeting and read over and explained the Deed of Mortgage from Mr. A. E. Powles to the Council of £600 [*worth about £29,200 in 2023, according to the Bank of England*] towards the cost of the new Parish Hall repayable at the sale of £15 half-yearly for a period of Twenty years without Interest.

On the proposition of Mr Rutter seconded by Mr Newman it was unanimously resolved

That the Chairman of the Meeting (The Revd. H. H. Pitts) and two members of the Council,

Messrs John Hall Mills and John W. Birtwisle sign the Mortgage Deed on behalf of the Council.

The Deed having been duly executed and Mr Powles having handed over the sum of £600 to the Council, the Chairman proposed

That the most grateful thanks of the Council and the parishioners generally be accorded to Mr Powles for his great kindness in advancing the money on such liberal terms. Mr Knight seconded and it was unanimously carried.

The Chairman also proposed that a very hearty vote of thanks be accorded to Mr Fletcher for his very kind help and assistance in connection with the loan. Mr Powles seconded and it was unanimously carried.

Mr Powles reported that the War Memorial Committee had a balance of £400-14-7 to be devoted for the purpose of the new Parish Hall and he had paid that amount to Messrs. Hulse Williams & Co the Contractors for the new Hall. The sum of £135 reported as paid at the last Meeting of the Council being included in the above sum of £400-14-7.

It was proposed by Mr Moore seconded by Mr Birtwisle and unanimously resolved

That Messrs Hulse Williams & Co be paid the sum of £260-0-0 on account of the erection of the Parish Hall on production of the Certificate of the Architect.

Page 98: Mr Moore reported that the Sub-Committee had collected £70-14-0 towards the cost of the Bowling Green and Tennis Courts and the Report of progress made was approved of by the Council.

Pages 100-101: At the 240th Meeting of the Hartford Parish Council held in The School on Tuesday the 17th day of April 1923 at 8 pm

The Council discussed the arrangements for the Opening of the Parish Hall and the proposal to let same with the Tennis Courts and Bowling Green to a Recreation Club and it was unanimously resolved

That Sir John Jarmay be asked to open the Parish Hall and

That the Revd H.H. Pitts, Messrs Powles, Knight, Moore, Rutter and the clerk discuss and suggest the most suitable terms and conditions for letting the Parish Hall &c to a proposed Recreation club and submit same to the next Meeting of the Council.

Pages 103-104: At the 241st Meeting of the Parish Council of Hartford held in The School on Monday the 7th day of May 1923 at 7.30 pm
Recreation Club: The clerk reported that the Sub-Committee appointed at the last Meeting of the Council met at the School on Monday April 23rd last and the following recommendations were made to the Council:

(1) That the new Parish Hall and Recreation Ground be let to a Recreation club at the Rent of One pound for the first year. The Council to have the free use of the Parish Hall for Meetings.

(2) That the proposed Recreation club consist of a Committee of 20 members, 5 to be elected by the Parish Council and 5 by the Ex-Service Men's club, the remainder to be elected by the Annual Meeting of Members of the Recreation club.

(3) All Rules made by the Recreation club to be subject to approval by the Parish Council That a Public Meeting be called for Monday May 7th at 8 pm "to form a Recreation club and elect Committee of Management".

At the proposition of Mr Newman seconded by Mr Birtwisle it was unanimously resolved

That the foregoing Recommendations be unanimously adopted by the Council.

That a Public Meeting be called for Monday 7th May at 8 pm "To form a Recreation club and elect Committee of Management".

On the proposition of Mr Newman seconded by Mr Birtwisle it was unanimously resolved That the foregoing Recommendations be unanimously adopted by the Council.

It was proposed by Mr Rutter seconded by Mr Mills and unanimously resolved

That Messrs Frank Moore, Samuel Knight, J. W Birtwisle, C.E. Newman and The Revd H.H.



The official opening of the Recreation Club was performed on July 23, 1923 by Lady Jarmay (in the big hat), wife of Brunner Mond's technical director Sir John Gustav Jarmay of Hartford Lodge, who donated not his time but his more precious billiard table. Here everyone is on the veranda overlooking the bowling green. The traditional black and white Cheshire 'magpie' exterior of the building is clearly seen.

(Photo courtesy of Mark Bevan.)

Pitts be appointed to represent the Council on the proposed Recreation Club Committee of Management.

On the motion of the Revd H.H. Pitts seconded by Mr Newman the Account of 2/- for 1 year's Land Tax on Recreation Field be passed for payment.

Page 105: At the 242nd Meeting of The Parish Council of Hartford held in the School on Monday July 9th 1923 at 8 pm

The clerk submitted a quotation from the General Accident Assurance Co of 5/-0/0 on £1000 on the Building of the Parish Hall. The Council considered the sum too high and it was resolved

That the Company be asked for a reduction and that the Chairman and Vice chairman be empowered to complete the matter.

It was proposed by Mr Newman seconded by Mr Moore and unanimously resolved

That the Code of Rules submitted by the Hartford Recreation Club be approved.

Page 106: On the proposition of The Revd H.H. Pitts a very hearty vote of thanks was accorded to Messrs A. and J. E. Fletcher for their kindness in carrying out the Loan on the Parish Hall free of charge.

The Revd H.H. Pitts proposed

That the Council record their best thanks to Mr Frank Moore for the splendid work he had done in connection with the Recreation Club.

Mr Birtwisle seconded and it was unanimously carried.

N.B. After its vital work to set up the new Parish Hall, the Parish Council seems to have washed its hands of the project. The next meeting of the council (the 243rd) makes no mention of the opening ceremony. However from this date onwards council meetings were held in the hall for a considerable time.



Hartford Recreation Clubhouse taken from the crossroads, constructed in the Cheshire vernacular 'magpie' style. After the installation of traffic lights.

HARTFORD RECREATION CLUB AND ITS PLACE IN THE VILLAGE

This material is taken from digitised copies of local newspapers held by the British Newspaper Archive.

facilities to members of the H M Forces stationed in the parish to use a portion of the Parish Hall for recreation during the week.

NOVEMBER 1927

A series of wide-ranging improving lectures were held each winter in the hall under the auspices of the Hartford Recreation Club. In November, Col J A Saner VD delivered an address on "The Sun, the Moon and the Stars," the Vicar's wife talked about "The modern novel" and the Rev G S Payne MA, Rector of Delamere, broached another huge subject, "The Cathedrals and Chateaux of Northern France".

DECEMBER 1938

Mr Rutter stated that he had been deputed by the Hartford Recreation Club to request the Council to consider an application from the club for increased accommodation. There were about 260 to 280 members and a great demand for darts games for which there was insufficient accommodation and members were leaving the club owing to that cause, and the club hoped the council would assist them in the proposed enlargement of the Parish Hall. (This was later postponed because of "the unsettled state of the country...")

OCTOBER 1940

The Parish Council chairman informed the council that the Recreation Club had granted

APRIL 1943

Post-war planning: Among eight eminently sensible and forward-looking proposed policies, the Parish Council recommended to Northwich Rural District Council: "(3) That a community centre be provided for educational and recreational purposes on the site of the Fountain Field, at present in the possession of the Parish Council."

JANUARY 1946

Two soldiers who broke into Hartford Rec on October 24 and stole 24 packets of playing cards, a door key and two small knives, total value £3 18s, appeared before the Cheshire Quarter Sessions. They had been identified by a finger print expert at Scotland Yard. They pleaded guilty and were sentenced to terms of imprisonment.

APRIL 1946

At the AGM of the Recreation Club, with Mr S Knight presiding, the hon treasurer, Mr R J Sargeant, gave a satisfactory report and the hon secretary, Mr H Owen, spoke of the club's position and the hopeful prospects for the future. Both the treasurer and the secretary wished to be relieved of their offices, and Mr

W E Knight was appointed treasurer, and Mr W G Morris secretary.

APRIL 1947

The biggest ever financial year, with expenditure twice as heavy as has ever been known before, was reported by Mr W E Knight (hon treasurer) at the AGM of the Hartford Recreation Club. Mr Knight said that in view of the great amount of expenditure the members could congratulate themselves upon ending the year in a solvent position. If as much progress was made in 1947 as in 1946, the club would definitely be on its feet by the time of the next AGM.

The balance sheet, which was unanimously approved, showed a large increase in membership, receipts of over £111 from whist drives, and donations of over £92 from a special appeal for funds. On the expenditure side, £120 had been spent on re-laying the bowling green and £102 on providing shale and netting for tennis courts, while the heaviest item was £251 for the wages of a fulltime groundsman.

Presenting his secretarial report, Mr W G Morris said a most encouraging feature of the year was that 50 new members were enrolled.

JUNE 1947

Hartford Parish Council unanimously vetoed a rule passed by the Recreation Club members to allow the admission into club premises of members under 15 years of age.

MARCH 1951

The Recreation Club notice of AGM on 17 April stated that "membership of the Tennis Section this season will be strictly limited and any resignations must be to hand by April 30 in order that the Committee may fill vacancies at the subsequent meeting. In considering applications for membership, priority will be given to residents of the parish of Hartford."

OCTOBER 1951

An announcement was inserted in the *Chronicle* giving notice "that a Parish Meeting of Local Government Electors for the above named Parish will be held at the Recreation Club, Hartford, on Monday, 8 October 1951, at 7 o'clock in the evening, to consider the following resolution:

That the Hartford Recreation Club grounds be open for games on Sundays to all members over 15 years of age between the hours of 1pm and 5.30pm. That the Clubhouse be closed with the exception of the changing rooms.

JANUARY 1953

Hartford Over 60s Club held their first meeting at the Hartford Recreation Club, with 80 old folks attending and vowing to return on February 12. They had a singsong, entertainment and refreshments.

FEBRUARY 1959

Members of Hartford Recreation Club rejected a proposal by Mr W G Morris (secretary) to raise the age for admission to membership from 15 to 18 years.

Outlining his proposal to a packed annual meeting on Tuesday, Mr Morris said that there had been a considerable increase in the number of junior members in the last two years. They were admitted with the primary object of encouraging games such as tennis. Unfortunately there had also been an increase in damage done to the premises and equipment.

On Wednesday nights – whist night – people playing cards found it very difficult to concentrate with a crazy rhythm on the other side of the room.

His proposal met with strong opposition from both the younger and older generations of club members, but it was agreed that things needed "straightening up".

Mr T H Lumsden (chairman) said, "Unless someone feels like leaving us a nice little legacy I do not think that we shall be in such a happy position again. Last year we suffered a financial loss, although we did cut those losses by minimising expenditure. There has been a large amount of wanton damage to club premises and equipment. This is costing us a lot of money and should not happen."

MARCH 1959

Hartford Recreation Club got an honourable mention in a *Chronicle* article on leisure facilities available in the district. It read:

Hartford Recreation Club is another club

providing recreation for old and young, from teenagers to old age pensioners. It has a membership of around 270, including more than 100 junior members. Main facilities are tennis, table tennis and billiards and snooker. A bowling green is used mainly by the older element. For the most part, members live at Hartford, Castle, Weaverham and Sandiway. Members are eligible to play outdoor games from the age of 14, and at 15 can join the club proper.

OCTOBER 1960

A wild stag that had been roaming around Mid-Cheshire for three weeks turned up in Hartford and grazed on the tennis courts.

OCTOBER 1960

A filler paragraph in the Liverpool Echo of October 13 stated "Hartford Recreational Club, one of the largest in mid-Cheshire, has had a facelift. Painting and repairs have cost over £80."

NOVEMBER 1960

The Chronicle published a story which said: The young people of Hartford Recreation Club want to jive to "pop" records, play table tennis and games. The old want to sit quietly at their card games, have a smoke and chat or play billiards and snooker.

The young want to erect a building of their own, adjoining the present club and to instal a bar in the existing club to improve the financial position which has declined gradually over the years.

Mr W Birtwistle told colleagues on Hartford Parish Council on Monday: "The place is untenable for the older members on winter evenings. There is a terrific row as the young ones play table tennis and the banging against the partition is like a cannon going off.

A bar would also necessitate someone being in charge all the time too, and a rota system would inevitably fall down. It is not the thing for a village club, either, and this was not the idea when the club was built, anyway."

"The young and old will have to be separated. The old complain about not being able to play snooker. I, too, went regularly at one time but I have not been for years now. Perhaps a de-

cent hut for the table tennis section would be a good thing but those not actually in the team do not seem to be interested in the game now, added Mr Birtwistle.

Mr W G Morris said: "There is an awful lot of hooliganism going on with the deliberate breaking of record players, chairs and a piano. Is it worthwhile spending money to give members more facilities if they are not looking after the facilities they have now?"

"It is a good thing to have the club open in winter but I doubt if even 150 members use it," said Mr T H Lumsden. "Do the expenses incurred on heat, light and other things really merit it staying open?"

"We have had the club for 37 years," said Mr Morris, "during which time there has been an increase in the number of tennis courts but a decline in the popularity of the sport. Nine courts, in my view, is not an economic number and three would be ideal."

Where have the missing tennis players gone? "Family life, television and cars are to blame," suggested Mrs H Perry.

Mr Morris added: "In 1954 there were subscriptions from 450 junior members. This year half the subscriptions had not been paid while in the last six years membership has dropped by more than 100. Something must be done very soon to ease the financial burden."

The Parish Council will meet five representatives of the Recreation Club to discuss the position on November 28, and the club is to be asked to provide a figure census of the number of people using the facilities there.

OCTOBER 1961

It was reported in the Chronicle's sports pages that the Mid-Cheshire Lawn Tennis Association had suspended its activities for at least a season because it could not attract enough clubs to take part. At the league's AGM "Hartford Recreation Club were the first to stun the meeting when they said that they could not guarantee to be able to make up a mixed team, due to a shortage of lady players..." Only two of the original ten teams had come forward to take part in the next season. The league had been set up in 1948 and the first

season had been highly successful, it was reported at the first AGM, for which there was a large attendance. In 1950 Hartford were the league champions.

OCTOBER 1961

Will Hartford Recreation Club have to close? asked the *Chronicle*. *This question was discussed at the meeting of Hartford Parish Council on Monday. Mr W G Morris, the council's representative on the club's committee, said that at a recent meeting of the club it was reported that the finances were getting worse. Many subscriptions were unpaid and the club's income would be down by £50 this year. A loan of £120 from the Parish Council to the club had also been spent.*

Mr Morris continued: There are not enough senior tennis members at the club for them to pay expenses such as rates, lighting and groundsman's wages. The only way they can cut down on these is by closing the club in the winter. The club needs 50-100 new members if they are to keep going.

Mr T H Lumsden said, "The trouble is that tennis is on the way out. Young people's interests have changed. Nowadays they are more interested in high-speed motor cycles than tennis. The club was formed for summer games. I think the solution would be for it to close from September to April and allow other organisations to use the clubhouse, letting them take over expenses for that period."

Mr J H Lyon said, "Other villages are working their fingers to the bone trying to get facilities for their young people. And yet here we have a problem like this."

Mr W Birtwistle said, "I would not like to see the club close, but at the moment there seems to be no alternative."

FEBRUARY 1962

Hartford Parish Council came to the rescue of the Recreation Club which was in financial difficulties because of increasing overheads and diminishing membership. A club delegation told the council that a loss of £45 was predicted for the current financial year, and it was agreed that a grant of £100 would be made to tide the club over.

The delegation said that they were opposed to

the closure of the club in the winter months as an economy measure as it was in regular use by 10 old age pensioners and 20 teenagers and it was also used for weekly whist drives.

After the meeting the club chairman, Mr Sorton, stated they were grateful to the Parish Council for the grant and for previous concessions. "We are very happy to have this £100 because it means we can continue the job we have to do, which is to provide recreational facilities for all the residents of Hartford, young and old."

DECEMBER 1963

A suggestion that a roller skating rink might replace three hard tennis courts at Hartford Recreation Club was made at the Hartford Parish Council meeting. The council agreed to put the suggestion to officials of the club at a special meeting on January 4, 1964.

Mr W Morris, a former secretary of the club, said failing membership was causing serious financial worry and an increased rating burden this year would aggravate the situation.

Mrs R Beckett said a roller skating rink might attract new members, and the chairman, Mr T H Lumsden, said it was possible the hard courts could be adapted for very little costs.

AUGUST 1965

A new gas heater supplied by Birtwistle and Co of Hartford was installed at the Hartford Recreation Club.

DECEMBER 1965

Mr W G Morris told members of Hartford Parish Council at a meeting at Whitehall that unruly conduct and vandalism at Hartford Recreation Club had been stopped since evening activities there had been supervised.

"A member of the club, Mr J Leech and his wife, have started coming in on Fridays and keeping an eye on the younger element. This has had the effect of calming them down," said Mr Morris. As a result membership had increased, he said.

FEBRUARY 1969

Mr W G Morris told the Parish Council in an effort to arouse interest in the village recreation club a circular setting out its facilities was being prepared for circulation among newcomers to



*Competitors taking part in the first tennis tournament to be held at the B&TC for 15 years.
(Winsford Chronicle, 24 July 1969)*

the parish. They were to be invited to the annual meeting [of the club] on March 17.

JULY 1969

After an absence of nearly 15 years, competitive tennis returned to Hartford Recreation Club on Sunday.

The occasion was a tournament involving a total of 40 members of Hartford and Cuddington and Sandiway clubs, when the ladies teamed up with the men in a mixed doubles contest.

APRIL 1970

Giving a report on the Hartford Recreation Club annual meeting, Mr Noel Girdham told Hartford Parish Council on Monday that the club intended to change its name to "Hartford Bowls and Tennis Club" [B&TC].

He said: "This idea was suggested by the younger members of the club and was almost unanimously supported. It has been called the Recreation Club since it was founded in 1923."

JUNE 1970

Hartford B&TC were seeking the help of the village's Parish Council in raising £600 for the re-surfacing of their hard courts. Reporting to the council at their recent meeting, Mr W G Morris suggested the council should apply to the Playing Fields Association for a grant. This was agreed.

SEPTEMBER 1970

After hearing that the parish had been placed 16th in the Cheshire Community Council's Best Kept Village Competition, councillor Mr W G Morris questioned the six out of 10 marks given for tidiness of the surroundings of the village hall.

"The Recreation Club is the village hall, and the appearance of its surrounds is a credit to the village," he said. "It seems to me that the adjudicators may have mixed up the Church Hall with the Village Hall."



The hall and bowling green pictured in 1980

HARTFORD VILLAGE HALL IS MODERNISED AND EXTENDED

This section covers the period from 1973 onwards with the information mostly quoted direct from Hartford News reports of the Parish Council meetings. The month stated corresponds with the publication of Hartford News but usually the meeting was held in the middle of the previous month.

SUMMER 1973

The club celebrated its 50th anniversary with a week of special events, sadly marred by bad weather. These included a home match against old rivals, the Beach Tennis Club, a junior tennis tournament and a buffet dance. A bowls match against the Parish Council was cancelled and an "American" tournament was rained off but held later. There were more than 200 members in the tennis, bowls and junior sections.

OCTOBER 1973

A feature on the B&TC in the first issue of Hartford News stated: *The clubhouse was redecorated by members two years ago. The main part of it is divided into two rooms by a removable screen. One half is used for committee meetings (and for a playgroup during the week) and the other contains a billiard table. There are also toilets and changing facilities, a store-room and kitchen. A verandah runs the length of the building and looks out onto the Bowls Section's bowling green, which is bordered by attractive flowerbeds. A groundsman is employed part time to tend to the green and the courts, and Mr Geoff Barnes looks after the flowers.*

MARCH 1974

Members had no objection in principle to the setting up of a bar at the B&TC. Mrs M Rogers, one of the Parish Council representatives on the B&TC Committee, reported that Mr Scott would be prepared to apply for occasional licences for one night a week from 8-10.30pm in the summer months and would run the bar himself. There was a possibility that a permanent bar with a steward might be organised if the experiment was successful. The council also agreed to investigate the condition of the leaking roof at the club. The clerk was instructed to ask a tile firm to examine the roof, and Mr R Moore said he would inspect it.

Northwich RDC hoped to plant trees in its area to mark its demise following the reorganisation of local government. The RDC had suggested planting a group of 24 flowering cherries on B&TC land at the junction of Bradburns Lane and Chester Road, which would be marked with a commemorative plaque. Mrs Rogers stated that the club would prefer the trees to be planted individually in the hedge that runs along its boundary in Chester Road and Bradburns Lane. The council agreed to suggest this to the RDC. [This was done.]

APRIL 1974

Mr Moore said he could find nothing radically wrong with the hall roof, but he did find a down-pipe blocked with a mouth organ, tennis ball, leaves and tree seedlings, which had caused the water to leak back.

Mrs Rogers reported that the club had decided to allow the building to be used for jumble sales at a fee of £10.

MAY 1974

Local government had now been reorganised and the new Vale Royal District Council had come into being – with the old Northwich RDC – dating from 1894 - being abolished. The Parish Council meeting, which welcomed the new planning officer Mr R W Garrett, was being held at the B&TC (“Parish Hall”), under the chairmanship of Mrs Alty, and it was resolved by five votes to three to hold future meetings there - for a trial period - rather than at Whitehall, in view of the increased charges of hiring a room there. (The Parish Council stayed at the Parish Hall from that time onwards.)

The clerk was asked to make enquiries about the cost of refixing the flagpole at the B&TC.

JUNE 1974

Mr Moore still felt that the B&TC did not need re-roofing and that the building could not bear the weight of heavy roof tiles. He recommended a roofing specialist from Crewe to carry out repair work. The chairman and clerk were empowered to authorise the work.

JUNE 1974

The Parish Council learned that detailed plans were to be drawn up at county level for an indoor sports complex at Hartford Recreation Centre. Present estimates put the cost at about £900,000. Sketch plans have already been drawn up by County Council architects but a meeting of Cheshire Countryside and Recreation Committee last week gave the architects the go ahead to put more manpower into drawing more detailed proposals. [The grand scheme came to nothing in the end.]

AUGUST 1974

The council agreed to pay the rates of £169.19 on the Parish Hall.

AUGUST 1974

Mrs Rogers reported that the B&TC was concerned about vandalism especially on Friday and Saturday nights. To comply with fire regulations connected with their application for a club licence, special lift-up opening bars would be fitted to the two doors in the building.

NOVEMBER 1974

Mrs Rogers reported that the B&TC kitchen was to be redecorated. Tennis players should wear sports gear if they did not have “whites”.

DECEMBER 1974

A joint statement was read at the November Parish Council meeting: On October 28, 1974, the Hartford Parish Council Community Centre Working Party, accompanied by Mrs Rogers, the council's representative on the B&TC committee, met representatives of the B&TC to discuss liaison between the council and the club. No differences of opinion about future relations between the two bodies were apparent and the cooperation and goodwill which had existed for many years were stressed. The working party outlined ideas they had for the improvement of village facilities which could affect the club,

It was agreed that it would be to the benefit of both organisations to set up a joint management committee to run the facilities in the future. The working party agreed to recommend the setting up of this committee in its final report to the Parish Council.

The B&TC representatives wanted to see more use made of the present facilities during the winter. They were however concerned that the burden of preparing and cleaning up the room and moving the billiard table should not fall on the club committee. Suggestions on the better utilisation of the hall would be welcomed by Mrs B Bannister and Dr E J Loader.

MARCH 1975

The full report of Community Centre Working Party was published. It recommended that more community use should be made of the Parish Hall and that the B&TC premises should be run by a joint committee comprising equal numbers from the PC and the club.

At an appropriate time the Parish Council should consider refurbishing the main room of the Parish Hall to make it more attractive to potential hirers, and improving the cloakroom, changing and toilet facilities.

MAY 1975

Two tenders had been received for painting the outside of the Parish Hall, and the Parish Council sought another one.

The council agreed to erect a sign reading "Hartford Parish Hall" at the B&TC, with a noticeboard underneath. Members had drawn attention to the confusion between the Parish Hall (B&TC) and the Parish Church Hall.

JUNE 1975

A tender of £362 was approved for painting the outside of the Parish Hall.

SEPTEMBER 1975

An article on the acquisition of the public land in Hartford, detailing the arrangements for the Green Field, the Fountain Field and Grange Park, stated the following:

FOUNTAIN FIELD: Leased to the Parish Council of Hartford by Brunner Mond and Co Ltd from January 1, 1922, for 999 years at an annual rental of one shilling – area 3 acres – for the purpose of a recreation ground. One of the conditions of the lease was that the council was given until December 31, 1923 "to lay out a recreation ground for the use and enjoyment of the Parish of Hartford". Also within three years the council agreed to erect a clubhouse or recreation room at a cost of no less than £400. This figure had been previously fixed by the company at £1,000 but the council said that this sum "could not possibly be raised by voluntary subscription and did not feel justified in applying for a loan, which would be an extra burden on the ratepayers for the next 30 years." In the event the building cost £996, the expense being met by an interest-free loan of £600 made by the chairman of the council, Mr A E Powles, the balance coming from the War Memorial Committee. On May 7, 1923, a public meeting formed a Recreation Club and elected a committee of management. The council agreed to lease the Parish Hall to the committee to use as a club room at an annual rent of £1.

DECEMBER 1975

Notes forming the basis of a constitution for the Joint Management Committee of the Parish Hall were considered and approved. Mrs M Rogers, Mr G Beeley, Mr P J Craven and Dr B Rees were appointed to represent the council on the management Committee.

JANUARY 1976

The council discussed the Parish Hall Management Committee and the necessity of re-

decorating and refurbishing the interior of the building to make it attractive to hirers. It was agreed to donate £50 to start a bank account for the management committee, which took up its duties from January 1.

FEBRUARY 1976

A special article on "Hartford Parish Hall bookings" stated:

As many people will know, Hartford Parish Hall is now under new management. A committee consisting of members of the B&TC (who use the hall as a pavilion) and of the Parish Council, has taken over the running of the hall from January 1, 1976.

One of the objects of the new management is to open the hall to a wider selection of organisations than before; and to make it more attractive for letting, the billiard table has been removed! Over a period of time it is hoped that redecoration and improvement of facilities can be carried out.

In the meantime the committee invite all organisations or individuals who are looking for a place to hold a function or meeting, to consider the very good facilities offered by the Parish Hall and thereby help to make better use of a parish asset.

The hall will be let for periods as required between 8am and midnight. The fees will be: Hall 75p/hour. Small room, 50p/hour. Both rooms, 85p/hour.

Kitchen facilities and crockery are available. Please contact Mrs B Booth (manager).

Note: It had been agreed that the chairman of the Committee would be a Parish Councillor and have the casting vote. (This was belatedly reported upon in later minutes.)

APRIL 1976

Reporting on the Parish Hall Joint Management Committee activities, the chairman said that it had been decided that the hall would remain open in the afternoons for use by pensioners. A number of people were being contacted to get estimates for improving the hall. A member suggested that the hall should be re-named "Village Hall" because of confusion between the Parish Hall and the Parish

CHURCH Hall, but this was not favoured by the council.

MAY 1976

The Parish Council suggested that the Parish Hall Management Committee should be given a limit of £2,000 to spend on renovating the Parish Hall (B&TC building). The chairman, Mr P Craven, who is also chairman of the management Committee, said his committee would come back to the council with proposals.

JUNE 1976

Mr Craven, reporting on the Parish Hall Management Committee, said the books were continuing to balance and bookings were coming in. There had been a small problem with a group of teenagers who had hired the hall on Saturday nights, and certain conditions had had to be imposed on bookings by young people. A 50% rate relief had been obtained because of the changed status of the building (an increase from 30%). The committee were looking for estimates for the jobs they would like to have done to improve the hall. The priorities were: lighting, panelling the walls, central heating and insulation, the floor, and the provision of more chairs and tables.

JULY 1976

The council sanctioned spending of £285 for electrical work at the parish hall, and £592 for new central heating, at the request of the joint management Committee.

AUGUST 1976

A coffee bar for young people will be held in the Parish Hall every Saturday night from 8-10pm.

SEPTEMBER 1976

The council approved the decision by the Parish Hall Joint Management Committee to accept the lowest quotation for having the interior walls of the hall panelled. The chairman, Mr Craven, reported a seasonal drop in bookings and the Parish Council gave the committee £50 to tide it over until the autumn. The hall had been self-sufficient until this point and had paid its own rates bill.

OCTOBER 1976

On behalf of the Parish Hall management Committee Dr Rees asked for approval to be given to replacing lead piping by polythene in

the internal plumbing system, and to treating the floor with sanding machines. The approval was given. It was also reported that the fire protection system was in need of overhaul and the clerk was instructed to ask the Fire Prevention Officer to make a survey.

NOVEMBER 1976

Members expressed pleasure with the Parish Hall renovations which had taken place and it was decided to ask the management committee to complete the scheme by arranging for two door interiors in the main hall to be panelled and the ceiling and window frames to be painted.

DECEMBER 1976

The Parish Hall management committee was given permission to "finish the job" of renovation by having the ceiling and doors painted in the hall and by purchasing new tables and chairs. The cost of these last items took the bill slightly over the £2,000 limit originally suggested by the council, but this was felt to be worthwhile.

JANUARY 1977

Mr Craven said that the lock on the front door of the hall would be left so that B&TC members with keys could have access to the changing rooms. Locks would however be put on the doors to the main rooms and the kitchen so that only authorised people could enter them. A WI coffee evening in aid of the hall had raised £22.

MARCH 1977

The Parish Hall Management Committee was authorised to make purchases from its own resources. The Parish Council agreed to pay the rates on the building.

APRIL 1977

Annual parish meeting: Dr B H Rees reported that people still confused the Parish Hall with the Parish Church Hall and that it was necessary to write in Hartford News, "Parish Hall (Bowls & Tennis Club)" to avoid confusion. Mrs Beryl Booth of 255 Chester Road had been appointed manager of the hall. The rooms were 50% booked now, he said, and organisations using them included the Christian Science Society, a sewing class, the Business and Professional Women's Club, the toy library, the Philatelic Society, the Parish

Council, the Best-Kept Village Competition Committee and the Jubilee Committee.

MAY 1977

The chairman reported that the Parish Hall had been granted a licence for music and dancing subject to various safety considerations. Attendances will be limited to 100. The council agreed to look into ways of extending the hall's kitchen and changing room facilities.

MAY 1977

A planning application had been submitted to VRDC: Extension and alterations to changing rooms, toilet and kitchen area, Hartford Parish Hall, for Hartford Parish Council.

JULY 1977

The council heard that neighbours close to the Parish Hall were to oppose their application for extensions to the kitchen and changing facilities at the hall.

OCTOBER 1977

The clerk reported that work was due to start the following week on the extensions to the kitchen and changing facilities at the Parish Hall.

NOVEMBER 1977

Dr Loader suggested that the name of the Parish Hall should be changed to the Jubilee Hall as the extension work was being carried out in the Queen's silver jubilee year. The council did not accept the name but felt there might be grounds for changing the name.

JANUARY 1978

Since Hartford "Rec" became first the "B&TC" and then the "Parish Hall" there has been confusion in the minds of village residents. Many have gone to the Parish Church Hall in School Lane for meetings scheduled to take place at the Parish Hall (B&TC).

The Parish Council has therefore endorsed the hall management committee's resolution to change the name of the newly-renovated building to "Hartford VILLAGE HALL". It is hoped that, although the change will cause initial confusion, it will remedy problems in the long run.

The new name will be painted on the notice-board outside the hall and also on the building

itself. Some months ago it was suggested that the hall be renamed the "Jubilee Hall", since the building was being extended during Jubilee Year. This idea did not meet with approval, however. The new extension which will provide a larger kitchen and modern changing facilities, is to be financed by the Parish Council. Earlier this year the existing interior of the hall was modernised and redecorated, and new equipment purchased.

Also: The council agreed to pay £35, half the cost of a second-hand gas cooker, which the Luncheon Club wished to buy for the Village Hall kitchen. The club would pay the remainder. This would augment the existing one which was inadequate to cater for the number of elderly diners. The club had only been serving afternoon teas during the time the hall was being renovated.

MARCH 1978

The management committee of the Village Hall decided to increase hiring fees for the facilities in view of the fact that there had been no increase for 2½ years and the recent extensions had greatly improved the amenities. From July 1, the new fees would be:

Small room, 75p/hour; Large room, £1/hour; both rooms together, £1.50/hour. A minimum hiring fee equivalent to two hours' hire would be charged for each booking. Use of the kitchen and cloakroom was included where required.

About 30 parents attended the Parish Council meeting to protest about the council's endorsement of the Village Hall Management Committee's decision not to hire the hall to Mrs I Collins for her playgroup after March 31, 1978. They asked the council to reconsider the decision. However the council members did not change their minds but recommended that a meeting should be held between the management committee and the parents, and stressed that they were very much in favour of playgroups using the Village Hall.

APRIL 1978

Mr Craven reported that the hall was fully booked in the evenings from Monday to Thursday each week. Hirers included sequence dancers, stamp collectors and the Christian Science Society.

OCTOBER 1978

Mr J Pitts reported that he had been approached by Mrs G Kostromin who was disappointed that the Village Hall Management Committee had refused permission for her to hold her proposed youth group meetings in the building. Mr Craven, chairman of the management committee, explained that it was the committee's policy not to allow youth events in the hall, after spending £12,000 on renovating and refurnishing the building. As one of the founders of the Hartford and Greenbank Youth Club, he was well aware of the need for a youth club in the village, but he felt – in view of certain trouble which had happened with the former youth club – that the Village Hall was not the best place to hold meetings. After a long discussion the council agreed to subsidise the holding of a youth club in the ROSLA Building on the campus, provided that leaders would come forward to help run it. It was felt that those involved with the previous youth club would not wish to volunteer their services again.

NOVEMBER 1978

Reporting on the Village Hall Management Committee meeting, the chairman, Mr Craven, confirmed that elderly men of the village were free to use the hall in the afternoons.

FEBRUARY 1979

Hartford Village Hall will be open free of charge for pensioners during Monday and Wednesday afternoons each week from 3-5pm. At the moment the hall is used at these times by older members of the Bowls Club, as part of the agreement between the Joint Management Committee and the B&TC. In future any village pensioners are invited to use the room, which is heated, for playing cards, dominoes etc.

APRIL 1979

In his annual report Mr Craven, chairman of the Village Hall Management Committee, reported that the refurbishing and refurnishing of the Village Hall had been satisfactorily completed., together with a review of fire precautions by the Fire Officer. Estimates were being sought for painting the exterior of the building. The hall was used by many organisations, and children's parties were often held there on Saturday afternoons. An application had been made to hold a playgroup in the hall but

mutual agreement had been reached between the committee and the applicant that there was not sufficient storage space for her equipment. The hall was breaking even financially, with the rates being paid – as usual – by the Parish Council.

MAY 1979

The council accepted the lowest tender to paint the exterior of the Village Hall - excluding the back and side of the new extension.

JUNE 1979

The chairman of the Joint Management Committee, Mr Craven, reported that the committee had decided to let the hall to Mrs B Bannister for her playgroup. The problem of the lack of storage space for play equipment had been solved when Mrs Bannister offered to rebuild the lean-to on the bowlers' hut at her own expense. Mr Craven stated that if the letting had not been negotiated, Mrs Bannister would have had to move her playgroup out of the village. It was at present run from her home.

The group was later taken over by Mrs A Haffenden who ran it during the 1980s.

JULY 1979

Mr Craven, chairman of the Village Hall Management Committee reported that the structure of the letting fees had been altered because of the difficulty of raising and lowering the partition in the hall, and that in future hirers would pay a flat rate for the hire of the entire Village Hall of £1.50 an hour.

DECEMBER 1979

Mr Craven said that new curtains had been purchased for the hall at a cost of £270.

FEBRUARY 1980

Mr Craven reported that Mrs P Barber had given a piano for the hall in response to the appeal in the January issue of Hartford News.

Discussing a letter about grant aid for village halls, members heard that there had been 13,000 individual attendances at the Village Hall over the past year.

JULY 1980

Mr Craven, chairman of the Village Hall joint management committee, reported that the rates for the hire of the hall were to be in-

creased from £1.50 to £1.75 per hour. Hire of the kitchen, for money-making events only, £3. Hire of the hall for discos and dances, minimum £10 per letting; hire of the hall for commercial daytime use, e.g. commercial exhibitions, £25 per letting.

DECEMBER 1980

A warm air hand dryer would be installed in the ladies' cloakroom, and if this proved popular one would be put in the men's cloakroom.

AUGUST 1981

Mr Craven reported that the hire fees of the hall had been raised. They would now be £1.90 per hour for normal lettings of the hall (+15p). Rates for the playgroup, Over 60s Club and Luncheon Club would also go up by 10%.

DECEMBER 1981

It was reported that the Village Hall Management Committee was being asked to pay "trade" rates for having the hall dustbins emptied. The Parish Council chairman, Dr Loader, said he would approach the VRBC Environmental Health Committee to ask if village halls could be exempted from this charge. The chairman of the management committee Mr Craven, said the hall was already paying £200 in rates each year and the extra levy seemed excessive.

The committee was planning to have emergency lighting installed, and a hot air hand dryer in the men's toilets. After some discussion, the management committee was asked by the Parish Council to reconsider its decision not to allow the holding of jumble sales in the hall.

OCTOBER 1982

It was reported that the management committee had spent much of the hall's funds paying for parts of the Village Hall to be redecorated, so the Parish Council paid the rates bill.

A meeting was to be held with the B&TC to discuss whether or not three new all-weather courts could be provided at the club for an approximate cost of £20,000. Club members had been circulated with the suggestion that they might care to donate £50 per family towards the provision of the amenity. Parish councillors were concerned that these might be on the site where they hoped one day to have a village library.

DECEMBER 1982

At its November meeting the council discussed the all-weather courts proposal and agreed to guarantee an interest-free loan – if required - up to a maximum of £5,000. The council also agreed to ask ICI for permission to offer a 28-years lease on an "L" shaped piece of land to include the bowling green, the present hard courts and the proposed site of the new courts, if the proposal ever came to fruition. It was also agreed that the Parish Council would give a grant of £200 towards the cost of the new courts. The council had been told that the club would approach the NW Sports Council in January for a grant of £10,000 and an interest-free loan. If the scheme goes ahead, the council stipulated that the existing hard courts must be maintained and not be allowed to fall into disrepair, that there must be adequate insurance and that the new all-weather courts must be guaranteed by the manufacturers.

At an informal meeting earlier in the month, representatives of the Tennis Section had told councillors that the present hard courts were nearing the end of their useful life. It would cost the club as much to resurface them as it would to provide new all-weather courts, since the latter were eligible for grant aid.

JANUARY 1983

The council heard that the B&TC now wished to build only two new all-weather court instead of the three already negotiated for. After lengthy discussion it was agreed that if the Sports Council decided to provide sufficient funds to make the project viable, the Parish Council would offer a 21-years lease on a reduced plot of land, would guarantee an interest-free loan up to £4,000, would grant the club £200, and would require that five courts be kept in good condition.

FEBRUARY 1983

The clerk reported that since the last meeting she had written to the B&TC, about their project to build two all-weather tennis courts, stating the reduction in the length of the lease needed, and in the interest-free loan guarantee. She had also written to ICI, owners of the land, enclosing the terms agreed for a proposed sub-lease between the council and the club. ICI had asked for a plan of the land to be sub-let and said that they hoped to come

Hartford scenes by Patricia Kelsall



The Village Hall, Chester Road

This drawing appeared in Hartford News, December 1983

back with their comments by mid-January. A further letter had been received from the club stating that they had approached the NatWest Bank about a loan, should they be unsuccessful in obtaining an interest-free loan from the Sports Council. The £4,000 loan had been offered at an interest rate of 8%, repayable over five years. Should it be necessary for the club to take advantage of this offer, the council agreed in principle to act as guarantor, provided that members were satisfied with the terms of the loan and the method of repayment requested by the bank. However in the event of the NatWest offer being taken up, the council would have to add certain clauses to the sub-lease: (a) the guarantee to a maximum loan of £4,000 at 8% interest repayable over five years would be on condition of a 50% grant to the club by the Sports Council, and (b) if the club defaulted on repayments of the loan, the club assets would be taken over immediately by the council.

MARCH 1983

The council agreed unanimously to accept an offer by the ICI Estates Department to sell the Fountain Field at the crossroads, on which the B&TC stands, for £25 plus legal expenses. The council had previously leased the land from the company.

APRIL 1983

The Bowls Club celebrated its diamond (60th) jubilee this year.

MAY 1983

A letter was received from the B&TC committee. They had been informed that the Parish Council was to buy the Fountain Field, on which the club is situated, from ICI for a nominal sum. An annual rent of £1 would be charged by the council for the club's tenancy. The Committee asked to be kept informed about any possible future uses of the land, and the clerk was asked to reassure the members that the council had no intention of making any changes without consultation.

JUNE 1983

After receiving a petition signed by 52 objectors, Hartford Parish Council recommended refusal of planning permission for an application by the B&TC for five floodlights (not exceeding 10 metres and 2000 watts per post) to illuminate the bowling green. The lights would be used at the beginning and end of the bowls season and would not be illuminated after 10pm. The council meeting was attended by around 30 objectors.

Their arguments included: the lights would be situated in a conservation area; would lower the aesthetic standard of the region; would destroy the village image; would be a possible traffic hazard on a busy "A" road; would clash with hirers of the Village Hall for car parking and noise when floodlit competitions were in progress; was not a unanimous decision of the Bowl and Tennis Club; many club supporters were not resident in Hartford.

Note: The application was refused by VRDC a few weeks later.

SEPTEMBER 1983

It was reported that Hartford B&TC had been granted £8,000 by the Sports Council towards the construction of two all-weather tennis courts. The Parish Council approved a grant of £200 towards the cost of the courts. The club had asked the Parish Council to guarantee a bank loan to help pay for the courts, but a decision was deferred on this until the club had provided a detailed balance sheet.

OCTOBER 1983

A draft lease between the B&TC and the Parish Council, whereby the club would lease land for a bowling green and tennis courts, for 21 years, was agreed. The annual rent, payable in advance, would be £1. The clerk was asked to take the draft document to the council's solicitor to be drawn up officially.

JANUARY 1984

It was reported that at the December meeting of the Parish Council, the chairman (Mrs A Loader) and vice chairman (Mrs G Knight) signed the lease for Hartford B&TC for the tennis courts and bowling green at the Fountain Field. The lease was necessary for the club to obtain its grant from the Sports Council for the construction of the new all-weather tennis courts.

FEBRUARY 1984

The clerk reported that the lease of part of the Fountain Field to the B&TC had been executed and a copy had been sent to the Sports Council in London. It was resolved that Mrs Loader and Mrs B Alexander should sign the loan guarantee in the presence of the council's solicitor.

MARCH 1984

The clerk reported that complications had arisen over one of the terms of the lease granted to the B&TC for the Fountain Field – the Sports Council in London was unhappy with the council's wish to be able to use part of the land, after a year's notice, for – say – a public library extension to the Village Hall. The clerk was instructed to consult the Sports Council and the council's solicitor on the matter, and, if necessary, to call a special meeting to discuss the matter so that the handover of

the Sports Council grant to the club should not be delayed longer than necessary.

MAY 1984

The clerk reported that Hartford B&TC had received confirmation of their grant from the Sports Council towards the club's all-weather courts. It was resolved that Mrs S Harris should be appointed as the Parish Council's representative on the B&TC Committee.

JULY 1984

It was reported that the Tennis Section of the B&TC had 150 junior members, and that it was hoped that the bank loan to pay towards the new tennis courts would be paid off this year. A groundsman had been appointed. En Tous Cas had accepted full responsibility for the poor surfacing of the new courts, and would re-do them, probably in September. The courts would be out of action for four to six weeks.

SEPTEMBER 1984

The B&TC was delighted to announce that the two new all-weather courts had received their final lick of paint and would be opened officially on Sunday, September 23, when Hartford would be host to the South and Mid-Cheshire Tennis League Champions v The Rest tournament. The new courts would however be open to members for play from August Bank Holiday Monday.

MAY 1985

It was reported that the Village Hall had been broken into and minor damage done. The Parish Council had accepted a quote from Vale Royal DC for £220 for up to 10 cuts of the grass around the Village Hall.

JULY 1985

Mr Craven, chairman of the Village Hall Management Committee reported that the letting fees for the Village Hall had been increased by 5% with effect from 1 September 1985. Hire of the hall would be £2.40 per hour and the use of the kitchen would cost up to £4.

FEBRUARY 1986

The management committee of the Village Hall apologised to users of the hall who were inconvenienced by its unavailability from New Year's Eve until January 20. This was caused by seven burst water pipes which occurred on

New Year's Eve. Fortunately the leaks were spotted early on and thanks to prompt action by the Parish Council clerk and her husband, damage was slight. The hall was unavailable because of the need for the building to dry out and for a safety check on the electrics. Action had been taken to minimise the likelihood of a recurrence.

MARCH 1986

The clerk told the council that the cost of repairing the flood damage to the Village Hall was some £300.

NOVEMBER 1987

The clerk reported that a quotation of £3,100 had been received for the cost of erecting a building on land behind the Village Hall. This would be used to store Parish Council property as well as property for the B&TC. It was agreed to go ahead with the building which would be 10m x 4m. When plans are available, a copy would be forwarded to the B&TC for comment.

The Village Hall Management Committee wished to dispose of the piano. A note in Hartford News said: *"It is not very good but what do you expect for nothing? You collect. Anyone interested should contact Mrs Booth."*

JUNE 1988

The council has agreed to fit new locks to the rear door and selected windows, together with security lighting, to the Village Hall, in keeping with the recommendation of the Police crime prevention officer.

FEBRUARY 1989

The council agreed to erect a disabled access at the Village Hall at a cost of some £800. The design meets the regulations in terms of gradient and safety and will fit in with the existing design of the building.

JANUARY 1990

On November 29, County Councillor Bob Woodhouse planted an oak tree – a gift from Cheshire County Council – at the Village Hall to mark the one hundredth anniversary of the establishment of the county council.

JANUARY 1990

The B&TC submitted a planning application to VRBC for an all-weather tennis court.

MARCH 1990

It was agreed by a majority decision that smoking should not be allowed in the Village Hall at future Parish Council meetings. "No smoking" signs would be made available to organisations holding meetings in the hall who also wanted to ban smoking. [A legal ban on smoking in public spaces was introduced in 2007.]

APRIL 1990

The council agreed to fund half the cost of a new cooker at the Village Hall on behalf of the Luncheon Club.

NOVEMBER 1991

A new flag pole is to be considered for the Village Hall. During the summer the Union Jack flag was stolen from the lower of the two flag poles. The French tricolour on the high pole at the top of the gable was not taken. Estimates are to be obtained for a triple pole to be installed on the gable. The Union Jack will, of course, be replaced.

The Village Hall has been booked by the Parish Council for the evening of December 31 1991 for celebrations to mark the start of the EC Single Market - Beacon Europe.

MARCH 1992

Cross hatching is to be painted on the Village Hall car park to stop people restricting the access to the overflow car park.

JUNE 1992

There had been many complaints about the library service to the village. A vehicle containing books to be borrowed stopped each week in Hartford in various places including the Village Hall car park, but villagers really wanted a proper library building like those in Weaverham, Sandiway and Barnton. They had been warned numerous times that this would be too expensive to provide.

The Parish Council was addressed by Mr Cockcroft of the County Library Service accompanied by Ms Taylor, the Area Librarian, and County Cllr R Woodhouse. Mr Cockcroft said that the use of the library in the village had increased by 20% since the downgraded trailer library [much disliked for its poor stock of books] had been replaced by the original mobile library. However the bulk of users

were at the Riddings Lane stop which, being for only 45 minutes, was very busy, while far fewer people were using the Village Hall stop which was of three hours or an hour and a half duration, depending on the week.

He proposed that the Riddings Lane stop be increased by 10 or 15 minutes at the expense of a reduction in the Village Hall stop. He also suggested an additional stop in week one (the afternoon week) probably at Hartford Business Centre, this also to be at the expense of time taken from the Village Hall stop. The Parish Council agreed to these changes. The new schedule will be published in Hartford News as well as on notice boards well before the changes take effect.

MAY 1993

Mr Armstrong from the Bowls Section of the B&TC addressed the Parish Council before the meeting on the subject of the proposed scoring hut. In a change from the previous intention to build a hut onto the end of the Village Hall, they now wished to erect a wooden building obtained from a garden centre in a space dug out from the bank behind the north west corner of the hall. They had already obtained planning permission and now requested permission from the Parish Council. The view of the councillors was generally sympathetic but it was decided that a formal written request from the B&TC should be awaited.

JULY 1993

The new scoring hut for the B&TC was in situ for the June meeting of the Parish Council. The club is to be asked to paint it black and white so that it matches the other buildings.

AUGUST 1993

Parking spaces at the Village Hall are to be marked out with white lines.

DECEMBER 1993

A quotation has been obtained for extending the monobloc car parking at the Village Hall with an area of crushed limestone and it has been decided to proceed with this work.

JANUARY 1994

Following the decision by the Parish Council in November to extend the Village Hall car park towards the tennis courts with an area of crushed limestone, the B&TC have expressed

a wish to fund a further extension in the same material beside the tennis courts. The Parish Council has agreed to this.

MARCH 1994

The meeting was addressed by Mr Novotny of the B&TC in support of a letter the club had sent to the Parish Council requesting their permission as landlords to erect a pavilion near the main tennis courts. An ex-school classroom mobile building had become available at no cost other than that of dismantling, moving and re-erection. The council gave the club the go-ahead to erect the building, subject to it being given planning permission by Vale Royal Borough Council.

New timings for the mobile library attendance in Week 1 of the two-week cycle were given to the Parish Council by Cheshire County Council. The stop at the Village Hall would be reduced from 4-7pm to 5-7pm, and two new stops had been added, using the time saved.

APRIL 1994

The B&TC showed the Parish Council the plans which they intended to submit to VRBC for planning permission for the erection of the pavilion near the tennis courts. The building would be sited parallel with Bradburns Lane adjacent to the end of the northern row of tennis courts. The councillors agreed to the siting but insisted that details requested previously should be provided in writing before planning permission was sought. [This was done at the May meeting, and approval was recommended.]

AUGUST 1994

In order that the Village Hall may keep its music and dancing licence, the curtains must be fireproofed. This can be done for about £150 by a process of "dunking" the curtains in a suitable solution. However this treatment would have to be repeated every time the curtains were dry-cleaned. Estimates are to be obtained for the cost of new fireproof curtains or vertical blinds in case this would be a cheaper solution.

SEPTEMBER 1994

Quotes had been obtained for the replacement of the curtains in the Village Hall by new fireproof curtains or by fireproof vertical blinds. The cost of either of these options was

so high that it was resolved that the existing curtains should be treated at a cost of about £155.

The Parish Council is to purchase a small machine for painting white lines and will use it in the first instance to mark out parking spaces at the Village Hall.

The new village noticeboard purchased to celebrate the centenary of the Parish Council, is due to be delivered imminently. It will be installed on the present noticeboard site by the Post Office and the old notice board will be refurbished and installed outside the Village Hall.

NOVEMBER 1994

The Village Hall is to become a no-smoking area. Consideration is being given to replacing the tables in the hall. They are in a bad state but they have already been refurbished once and would need complete replacement this time. This would inevitably lead to an increase in the letting fees.

DECEMBER 1994

The B&TC brought along their tree consultant to explain why he had recommended a considerable reduction in height of the trees overlooking the tennis courts. VRBC's tree expert had agreed with him about the felling of two dead trees but was otherwise in favour of much less drastic pruning. Later in the meeting, it was agreed that the Vale Royal report on the trees should be accepted and that the work should be done at the Parish Council's expense.

JANUARY 1995

Before the meeting the Parish Council was addressed by a representative of the B&TC. Following last month's report of the decision to prune the trees near the tennis courts, the B&TC had been approached by the British Legion and informed that the trees were the property of the British Legion. The pruning has now been put on holiday pending clarification of the ownership of the land and the trees.

FEBRUARY 1995

It has been established that the trees on the boundary between the B&TC and the British Legion belong to the British Legion. The B&TC are therefore to approach the Legion about

felling the two dead silver birches and pruning various others.

SEPTEMBER 1995

The refurbishment of the Village Hall kitchen is almost complete. Replacement of the tops of the square table in the hall itself has commenced and the result is exceptionally good considering the low price charged.

OCTOBER 1995

The refurbishment of the Village Hall kitchen and replacement of new tops on the hall's tables have now been completed.

Questionnaires were to be circulated round the village asking if residents wished to have a new community centre, as suggested by resident Mrs Hartwell – and whether they would commit to the work required to run it. [This was reminiscent of the efforts of the Community Centre Working Party in the 1970s, after which it was decided to upgrade the Village Hall rather than provide new premises.]

FEBRUARY 1996

The results of the Community Centre survey showed that 240 families would use it and 41 people would be willing to help raise money and do whatever else was needed to get the project off the ground. These people would be contacted shortly.

APRIL 1996

It was announced that there would be a meeting in the Village Hall on June 3 to discuss the first moves in building a community centre for Hartford. It was intended to form a steering committee to undertake the planning and fund-raising which would be necessary for the venture. Mrs Hartwell was anxious that the Parish Council should apply for Millennium Commission funding under the "opening up land for community purposes" fund.

JUNE 1996

Before the meeting Mr Horwill of the Hartford B&TC addressed the Parish Council on the subject of vandalism at the Village Hall. Youths had smashed milk bottles and strewn broken glass over the car park and bowling green, and had torn down notices from the notice board and set them on fire. Mr Horwill felt more security lighting was needed. The councillors agreed, although it was felt that this

requirement could be met by simply installing additional sensors. There was already security lighting but it only came on automatically if the hall was approached from the back. PC Bowden was present and assured the meeting that the police had measures in hand to deal with vandalism in Hartford and neighbouring villages.

JULY 1996

A short report was received on the meeting to set up a steering committee to assess the feasibility of providing a community centre in the village. In a lively and constructive meeting a committee had been elected, chaired by Mr D Cooney, with Mr R Finnis, Cllr K Musgrave, Mrs Hartwell and Mrs G Jones as members.

JANUARY 1998

Before the meeting, the council was addressed separately by the Bowls Section and the Tennis Section of the B&TC. Each section wished to erect floodlights and was asking permission of the Parish Council as landlord before submitting a planning application. The Bowls Section would need four masts to a height of about 20ft, each carrying two 400 and 500 watt lights. The direction of the lighting would be parallel to Chester Road so as to reduce the impact on neighbours. The lighting would be used for 15-20 nights a year at the start and end of the season. Without the lights, the club would be unable to remain in the league.

The Tennis Section plan is less advanced but more ambitious. This would require eight posts, 26ft in height. As with the bowls plan the lighting would be parallel to Chester Road. There would be baffles to prevent light over-spill into Chester Road. This would allow tennis to be played all year and would enable the junior section to provide coaching after school all year. It would also make it possible for the club to become affiliated to the Lawn Tennis Association.

The council decided in principle to support the two floodlighting schemes but would wait until the planning applications came before it to decide on whether or not to support the proposals officially.

MARCH 1998

Before the meeting, representatives of the

B&TC explained their plans for supplying electricity to their proposed council's meter in the Village Hall and run this to the new meter in the boiler house. The Parish Council would read the new meter and bill the club for the electricity it had consumed.

In the meeting the Parish Council, as landlord and local authority, considered the proposals. There was no objection on either count and the proposal regarding the supply of electricity was also accepted, with the proviso that the club should bear any additional cost due to unforeseen requirements on the part of the electricity supply authority.

MAY 1998

The ash tree by the Village Hall is to be felled. This is necessary because of deep-seated decay. It was realised some years ago that several of the trees around the Village Hall and the B&TC were of limited life and new trees were planted in readiness for the eventual removal of the old ones as it became necessary.

SEPTEMBER 1998

Mr Horwill of the B&TC asked permission to erect leaning posts around the bowling green. This was agreed. He also informed the Parish Council of council documents, some dating back nearly 100 years, which had been discovered when clearing out a store room. The Chairman thanked him.

FEBRUARY 1999

The main editorial in Hartford News stated: "Many years ago the Parish Council booked the Village Hall for the evening of 31st December 1999, but as yet no plans have been made for its use..." Ideas were sought to celebrate the new millennium..

Before the meeting, the Parish Council was addressed by Mr Horwill of the B&TC on the subject of vandalism. A ramp made from a panel taken from the exterior wall of the Village Hall had been used to take bicycles onto the bowling green. Damage to the green had had to be repaired at some expense. Mr Horwill felt that it was difficult to get police support to combat this type of activity.

MAY 1999

A wooden bench, a security light and a bowl-

ing green at Hartford Bowls and Tennis Club, Chester Road, Hartford, were vandalised causing £500 worth of damage. Items were thrown on to the green between 3pm on Saturday and 10am on Sunday. (Northwich Chronicle, Wed 12 May 1999)

JANUARY 2000

Hartford Bowls Club was awarded the Sefton Shield for the most improved bowling green in the Mid-Cheshire area.

FEBRUARY 2000

The parish clerk appealed in Hartford News on behalf of the Village Hall for anyone with surplus trestle tables to donate them to replace the "old and broken ones" now being used.

APRIL 2000

The clerk outlined improvements made to the lighting of the Village Hall to deter vandals.

MAY 2000

The recent major break-in and vandalism led the Parish Council meeting to ask for costings for effective security measures.

DECEMBER 2000

Vandalism had become an increasing problem in the village during 2000. At the December Parish Council meeting the clerk reported that there had been 14 windows broken in the Village Hall, the noticeboard had been shredded and someone had tried to set fire to the hall.

FEBRUARY 2001

The B&TC requested that CCTV cameras should be fitted to try to stop the vandalism around the bowling green and tennis courts. A new seat and litter bin were to be provided on the Fountain land.

NOVEMBER 2001

Cllr Keith Musgrave reported that he had secured £8,000 from an environmental grant for improvements to the Fountain land.

MAY 2002

It was reported that the lease on the tennis section of the B&TC had just three years to run. [Renewal of the lease was ongoing, it was reported in 2003.]

OCTOBER 2002

Concern was shown at the Parish Council

meeting by a resident concerning the security of the bowling green now that the trees and bushes had been cut down between the tennis courts and the Royal British Legion Social Club. The Parish Council accepted that this now opened a short cut and shared concerns about security. Mrs Hollens assured the resident that talks were planned with the tennis section to resolve the problem as soon as possible.

Problems were identified with the roof of the Village Hall and the clerk was requested to organise immediate repairs. [It was later made watertight by removing the leaking skylight and in-filling with timbers, slates and flashings. However, although watertight, the whole roof still needed an overhaul.]

FEBRUARY 2003

By **Trish Parker**, published in Hartford News:

Hartford B&TC started in 1923. It had a bowling green, tennis courts and a snooker table in the pavilion. In the 1960s the club got into difficulties and the Parish Council took over the running of the pavilion which became the Village Hall. Membership was also very low with no tennis members at all. Around 35 years ago notes were put through doors to suggest restarting the club. A meeting was held and those who turned up found themselves on the committee. The first funds raised were used to buy fertiliser for the bowling green!

The old courts, nets and netting were in a very bad condition, as was the bowling green. The grass was mown by volunteers (mainly Malcolm Sargeant of Woodlands Rad). Geoffrey Barnes looked after the gardens, made flower beds and maintained the flowers within. The volunteers spent years fund-raising with bring and buy sales, Christmas fairs and a huge jumble sale, to which the bowlers made a great contribution. This raised over £1,000 – a massive amount for the 1960s. The bowling green was restored first, then the tennis courts and nets. A professional tennis coach, Mrs Applewhaite, was engaged to encourage junior membership.

Today the picture is very different. The bowling green, grass courts and grass around are maintained by professional landscape gardeners. The club is thriving, with an immaculate

bowling green with floodlights, six hard tennis court and three grass courts. Both sections have a full calendar of league matches. The tennis section has engaged another full-time coach, John Walsh.

Throughout the summer there are club evenings for social play – mainly mixed doubles – on Mondays and Wednesdays – and Sunday mornings are available for social play throughout the year.

The current membership includes 140 juniors, whose own club evening is on Fridays throughout the season. They too have plenty of opportunities for competitive tennis, both in the national and Mid-Cheshire leagues.

The bowling club has many teams that do extremely well in league matches as well as at county level. There are Hartford teams in both the Mid-Cheshire and Norley and District Leagues. Throughout the season, which begins in April through to September, they also hold several competitions for single players and pairs.

MAY 2003

Work was due to be started shortly to remedy the security worries caused by the fence between the British Legion and the tennis courts not having been replaced yet.

The B&TC lease was due for renewal in 2004. The council discussed in depth all aspects of the present and future conditions of a new lease which would be presented to the new Parish Council.

The clerk reported that the cost of the proposed gate and path giving access from the B&TC to the Social Club was in the region of £1,500. It was agreed that all six beneficiaries of the improvements should be consulted to share the cost.

MAY 2004

The editor of Hartford News resigned in protest over the proposed rent increase in the B&TC's new lease.

FEBRUARY 2005

An extension to the existing lease to the B&TC was given to enable the formalisation of the new lease to be completed.

APRIL 2005

The annual Parish Council report for 2004-5 stated that the Village Hall had been re-roofed.

MAY 2005

The rapid response in overcoming the recent water supply problems in the Village Hall, ensuring minimum disruption to hall users, was recognised and appreciated.

JUNE 2005

The Village Hall has now been painted and this, together with last year's re-roofing, has resulted in its significantly enhanced appearance, which is now worthy of the village.

OCTOBER 2005

Following repeated delays the solicitors drawing up the lease with the B&TC promised that it would be available before the end of September.

Proposals to provide an additional meeting room, information centre and disabled toilet facilities are being developed for costing by the Village Hall Committee.

The new Village Hall Committee reviewed hall rates and proposals for the development of the hall at its first meeting. A Rural Grant bid has been made to extend and enhance the facilities.

FEBRUARY 2006

Hartford B&TC is delighted to announce that the long-awaited project to install floodlights on three courts has now been achieved, with the help of a grant from VRBC. This enables members to continue playing throughout the winter after sunset.

MARCH 2006

VRBC had advised that a rural grant for the Village Hall would be considered for Lottery funding in the summer.

Hartford Tennis Club held a grand opening ceremony on March 15 to celebrate the installation of the new floodlights on the three upper courts. Members and invited guests were entertained with a display of fireworks, and food and wine was laid on for those attending. Mr John Grimshaw was present on behalf of VRBC, whose generous grant of £15,000 through their Rural Development Fund was a



A delegation from Hartford's French twin town, Mornant, visited in 2005 and was entertained at the Village Hall. They are pictured here with their hosts.

key factor in enabling the club to acquire its long-awaited floodlights. Mr David Paterson also attended to represent the Lawn Tennis Association, who contributed £1,000 and Mr David Cooney was present both as a member of the club and Hartford Parish Council which had given full support to the venture.

JUNE 2006

It was reported that preliminary architect's drawings of the Village Hall proposals have been supplied and the application continues to be processed through the Rural Delivery Programme.

JULY 2006

Revised plans for the extension to the Village Hall have been received and were referred to the Village Hall Committee for approval. The grant application is awaiting consideration.

SEPTEMBER 2006

The Rural Development Grant Committee asked for a revised submission of all grant applications associated with village/community halls due to the high level of this type of application which has exceeded funding.

OCTOBER 2006

A meeting of the Village Hall Committee approved the proposed extension plans however the estimated cost has risen and constraints on the ability of the rural delivery grant funds

are now putting the project in jeopardy. The grant application will be reviewed in the next phase.

DECEMBER 2006

It is expected that the grant will not meet the anticipated cost of the proposed Village Hall improvements and in the short term a new scheme will have to be considered, restricted to provision of disabled and externally accessible toilets.

FEBRUARY 2007

During December the parish clerk met with members of the VRBC Rural Grants Committee to consider the grant request to refurbish the Village Hall. The clerk has subsequently been informed that a grant of £60,000 has been recommended by the Steering Group and can now pass to Stage 2 to be further considered by the Executive Group.

MARCH 2007

During a meeting of members of the Village Hall Management Committee the provisional costing for the Village Hall extension was agreed, along with information for the grant application, and a Village Hall Constitution. It was noted that the accounts for the hall are still incomplete. It was further resolved that the money for the gate on the entrance to the Village Hall would come from the Management Committee current account.

SEPTEMBER 2007

The Parish Council heard at its July meeting that the lease for the B&TC has now been signed. No decision has yet been made as to whether the council will agree to leasing a further patch of land for a proposed "Kids' Zone". Further advice is currently being sought and a decision will be made at the next meeting of the council.

MAY 2008

At the April meeting of the Parish Council, the clerk reported that VRBC had requested that work starts immediately on the Village Hall or the grant offer will be withdrawn. Following consultations with both architects and surveyors a budget cost has been estimated at £233,000 which excludes VAT and professional fees. The sum set aside for works is £60,000 with additional £60,000 grant funding which falls short of the suggested figure of £233,000. Both the architect and the surveyor felt that the £60,000 would be better spent making improvements to the existing building and that it would be wise to turn down the grant offer at this stage as it is clearly not going to be possible to do the works associated with the grant with the amount of money available. Following discussion it was agreed that the clerk would contact VRBC to reject the grant offer.

CHRISTMAS 2008

It was reported at the October meeting of the Parish Council that the built-in cupboards have been completed and create a considerable amount of storage room, and the same contractor is in the process of removing and replacing the rotten wood on the front of the building. Quotations for replacement windows should be available for the next meeting, in December.

A letter had been received from the Tennis Club requesting permission to turn two of the grass courts into hard courts as tennis club membership was at an all-time high and there was considerable pressure on the number of courts available. There were concerns about car parking. A decision would be made later by the full council, after hearing recommendations from councillors Haffenden and Tasker.

MARCH 2009

Following discussion it was agreed that where

the council is dealing with a large project, such as the Village Hall refurbishment, it would be useful to have a single project team to push the project through within a reasonable timescale. It was agreed that councillors Gibb and Haffenden, together with the clerk, will meet to discuss the way forward for the Village Hall.

OCTOBER 2009

John Walsh attended the Parish Council meeting from the Tennis Club to update members. He said that over the past ten years the club has spent over £200,000 on facilities including floodlights and all weather pitches while membership has risen from 230 to 563 (including 350 juniors).

This year the Club was nominated as Sports Club of the Year and achieved the Club Mark for tennis. The club is now being run as a business, with a large turnover, an official committee and audited accounts. There is more demand on court time and car parking provision. The council was asked to consider extending the car park beyond the kids' zone, and to extend the one year lease on the grass courts behind the Village Hall to twenty-one years, so that the club can apply for grant funding to convert these courts to all weather pitches.

Cllr Haffenden explained that the land is owned by the Parish Council and is there for the whole of the parish: to extend the lease would preclude the land from being put to any other use. It was suggested that should a lease be agreed then at certain times the courts should be available for use by the general public. It was agreed that the council would require full documentation from the club before considering the requests.

DECEMBER 2009

The clerk is to contact tennis club to offer a 21-year lease for the two grass courts at a cost of £200 per year, all costs incurred in drawing up the lease, for the Tennis Club only, to be paid by the Tennis Club. Written confirmation to be requested from the club to confirm their contribution of £5,000 towards the cost of improving car parking.

MAY 2010

It was noted that the architect is ready to submit plans for the Village Hall to Cheshire West

and Chester Council and Cllr Hollens and the clerk agreed to investigate the extent of work required to upgrade the car park and repair the drains.

JUNE 2010

The Parish Plan identified the inadequacy of the Village Hall. Subsequently, asbestos was found in parts of the building making refurbishment essential. Councillors soon realised that, despite a lack of grant aid, they had to update the building, with disabled facilities and a kitchen to modern standards. New windows and blinds have been installed in the main hall, which has also been decorated and re-equipped, with new chairs and tables. Plans for an extension to provide a committee room and refurbish the toilets and kitchen are being considered by CWAC and it is hoped that work to the hall and car park will be carried out later this year.

SEPTEMBER 2010

The planning application for improvements to the hall has received approval with an amendment that the disabled toilet window faces the front of the building and not the side.

NOVEMBER 2010

The Village Hall has served Hartford since 1923 but concerns have grown in relation to its state of repair. Last year we modernised the part of the building unaffected by asbestos and installed more storage space, a prime concern of users. The Parish Council has built up funds for a major refurbishment, including the removal of asbestos, provision of a meeting room for the use of smaller groups within the community, disabled facilities and an upgrade of general toilets and kitchen. At the Parish Council meeting on Monday 11 October a contract was awarded to Dave McCoy Building Contractors, who will be starting work on the Village Hall on December 13. This work is expected to last between ten and twelve weeks and the building will be unavailable during this period.

Councillors are concerned that groups and organisations that use the hall regularly will have to relocate for this time. In particular the Parish Council has been keen to support the play group which meets four days a week with ten children on roll. The council has been actively involved in advising on alternatives,

making personal contact with potential venues that would be suitable for the play group to be temporarily located and have secured two options. The play group will be able to re-open at a new location at the start of January. The Parish Council is extremely grateful to other venues within Hartford that have offered facilities to hirers of the Village Hall. If there are groups which have not been able to find other accommodation, please contact the clerk.

DECEMBER 2010

The Village Hall will be closed, for approximately twelve weeks, starting Saturday 11 December, while essential works and refurbishment are undertaken. Details at www.hartfordparishcouncil.org.uk.

FEBRUARY 2011

Work is progressing. Building Regulations require deeper footings, due to the presence of the large oak trees. Cllr Gibb has been granted authority to make decisions regarding the build on behalf of the Parish Council, in his capacity as clerk of Works.

MARCH 2011

Cllrs Haffenden and Gibb reported that they have visited the site on numerous occasions and are impressed with the quality and speed of work being carried out by the contractors.

JUNE 2011

From the chairman's annual report: Our aim in recent years has been to refurbish and extend the dated Village Hall. It did not meet health and safety regulations and recent acts for public buildings. Work began in December and will be completed by the end of May. The new extension has a meeting room, with separate entrance and toilet facilities (including disabled). It will provide accommodation for meetings and activities held by smaller groups, and will serve as an office for the clerk, making her available to residents, at specific times, for help and advice.

JULY-AUGUST 2011

A ceremony to mark the re-opening of the Village Hall is to be held during July. It was closed earlier in the year for extensive renovations, groups have been moving back into the Hall and enjoying the new facilities on offer.

The most visible and substantial part of this is

the extension, which will provide office accommodation, enabling the clerk to be available to residents at specific times for help and advice, as well as providing space for smaller groups holding meetings and activities.

Less obvious are modifications made to bring the existing Hall up to modern standards. These have included the removal of asbestos, upgrades to toilet and kitchen facilities, and provision of new storage. With extensive redecoration, and the purchase of new furniture and fittings, the Village Hall is a building of which Hartford can be proud.

The extension provides a meeting room, with separate entrance and toilet facilities, and an office for the clerk.

FEBRUARY 2012

It is likely that, if funds allow, the Civic Society will provide a pull-down projector screen for the Village Hall.

APRIL 2012

Hartford Village Hall now has its own website, where you can enquire about making a booking, or find out what events are already due to take place. Go to www.hartfordvillagehall.co.uk; alternatively, contact the clerk, Jo O'Donoghue.

JUNE 2012

Cllr John Gibb, annual report: The past year has been a busy one for the Parish Council. Refurbishment of the village hall and building of the small office extension was celebrated in July at the official opening attended by Cllr Keith Musgrave. The office has proved to be a valuable asset, providing a place of work for the clerk to the council as well as a meeting room available for small groups.

JULY 2012

A few years ago, the Civic Society provided a projector for the Village Hall. This year it has installed a large pull-down screen to replace the small, free-standing one, making the Village Hall an ideal place for groups to meet.

MARCH 2013

Hard core has been added to the car park and the access point levelled. The situation will be continually monitored prior to the commencement of further drainage works.

SEPTEMBER 2013

The restoration and refurbishment of the telephone box is proving more difficult than expected. It is in a poor state, and the first artisan we asked to carry out the work decided not to take on the contract. We are now obtaining further estimates. (Hartford Civic Society document)

OCTOBER 2013

Hartford's last traditional red telephone box moved home during September. The box, which had stood near the junction of Hodge Lane and Weaverham Road for over half a century, now stands proudly outside Hartford Village Hall.

The box, a Mark 2 K6 type, was bought from British Telecom, by Hartford Parish Council, for the princely sum of £1 (although moving and installing a beast that weighs three-quarters of a ton costs considerably more!)

Under the BT "Adopt A Kiosk" scheme, more than thirty Cheshire villages have preserved their traditional telephone boxes. Several have found new uses, for example as cashpoints or book exchanges. One village even proposed that the door of its box be sealed, so the box could be filled with water and used as an aquarium!

Hartford's box is to become an information point. Hartford Civic Society has agreed to restore it to its former glory before the Parish Council takes it on for its new use. There are no plans to restore telephone equipment to the newly relocated box. Only one public telephone kiosk remains in the village, near Hartford Station. The advent of the mobile telephone has significantly reduced the demand for fixed boxes. In the year before the equipment was removed from it, just six calls were made using the Hodge Lane box.

FEBRUARY 2014

The K6 telephone box, which is now sited outside the Village Hall, is to be restored for use as a place for locating information leaflets. The work required, and approved, includes:

- Removal of plastic windows;
- Sanding down of the structure;
- Repair of the structure as necessary, including replacement of a missing cast iron window bar;

- Purchase and application of special paint to a recognised standard;
 - Purchase and installation of glass windows;
 - Installation of shelving;
 - Removal of nearby vegetation if necessary.
- The estimated cost of labour and materials is to be met by £2,000 from Parish Council funds, with a further contingency of £500, provided by Hartford Civic Society. The timescale is dependent on finding people to do the job, and weather conditions.

MARCH 2014

A defibrillator is to be installed in the Hartford telephone box, at an estimated cost of £1,500; a full proposal will be provided at the next Parish Council meeting.

APRIL 2014

The clerk wrote in Hartford News: *"On 20 February the clerk and Caretaker carried out a routine check of the Village Hall grounds, where they found evidence of marijuana use and removed a bong (a crude device made for inhaling drugs) from the veranda. There had also been a futile attempt to set fire to Hartford Bowls Club notice-boards. PCSO John Lee has since started a patrol of the area and youths have been spotted running down the track which runs alongside the Hall and exits onto Beach Road. There have also been complaints from regular users of the Village Hall, to the effect that they cannot open the windows because of the pungent smell coming from the veranda, just outside the main hall.*

"Also this month, the clerk and caretaker spent a very unpleasant hour or so unblocking the toilets in the Village Hall. The blockage had been caused by soiled nappies which had been flushed (sic) down the toilet. Please note that the Village Hall toilets cannot cope with this kind of abuse. Neither can the clerk or caretaker... The message is that if you can't, or don't, do it at home, then don't do it at Hartford Village Hall either.

JUNE 2014

Professional advice and a quotation is to be obtained about restoration of the K6 telephone kiosk at the Village Hall.

SEPT 2014

The clerk had met with representatives of Hartford Bowls Club and director of Beaver

Log Cabins, to discuss installation of a fully insulated and double glazed shed, with water and electrics, behind the existing shed on the raised bank. The Parish Council has already agreed to provide grant funding of £5,000, to be matched by the Bowls Club. The shed will be black and white, in keeping with the Village Hall, with a roof of black bitumen, made to resemble tiles.

FEBRUARY 2015

There was evidence of drug use on the veranda of the Village Hall, which was reported to the PCSO; a window on the veranda had been smashed and been dealt with by the PCSO and caretaker. Two homeless men gained entrance to the hall, left peacefully when confronted by the caretaker and were later arrested in Northwich Town Centre.

Following recent incidents, the clerk met with S Swift (electrical contractor) to consider options. The clerk and Cllr Hollens, chair of Hartford Village Hall Committee, had met with PCSO Stevens to discuss improved security procedures, which have now been approved.

MARCH 2015

Due to recent mindless vandalism at the Village Hall, increased security measures have been installed. Youths are gathering beneath the veranda to smoke cannabis and drink alcohol and the PCSO has been asked to increase patrols in this area. Residents are asked to be vigilant.

JUNE 2015

This descriptive piece was published in Hartford News to encourage new hirers:

Hartford Village Hall is available for hire and is suitable for most functions, including business meetings, exhibitions and conferences. It can seat up to seventy people. A small meeting room, seating up to eight, is also available, for business and private functions. The Hall has well-equipped and modern kitchen facilities.

Activities held at the hall include:

Baby Yoga: *Gentle movement and relaxation classes for babies, mums, dads or carers.*

Blissful Living: *Stretch your body, still your mind, soothe your soul*

Brownies: *7-10 year-olds*

Bridge

Dancing for children

Crazy Craft: Arts and craft for children

Hartford Civic Society

Knots & Needles

Yoga: several sessions and dates available

Rhythm time: Exciting toddler classes and stimulating multi-sensory baby classes

Tai Chi

U3A History

Hourly hire rates at Hartford Village Hall are as follows: main hall £6, meeting room £5. Please contact its administrator, Vikki Herbert, for more details or to make a booking: vikki.herbert@lineone.net
07714 908571

SEPTEMBER 2015

The AED (Automated External Defibrillator) is now fully operational at the Village Hall. It is located at the far end of the veranda at the side of the hall, by the bowling green, in a coded box. In an emergency, when a person has collapsed, the ambulance service would prefer someone to dial 999 while with the casualty. The ambulance operator will assess whether an AED would help and will give the caller the code to open the box, so that the AED can be removed and taken to the casualty. If possible, one person should stay with the casualty, while someone else goes for the AED. As soon as the lid of the AED device is opened, verbal instructions are given which are very easy to follow. Hopefully there will never be cause to use the AED, but it is reassuring that there will be 24-hour access to this equipment in an emergency.

FEBRUARY 2016

Another article to encourage hirers. The previous one has brought in some new groups:

Hartford Village Hall hosts a number of organisations and events and there's sure to be something for you in the wide range of activities held there.

Hartford Village Hall is run by a management committee. It aims to provide facilities for educational, recreational and other leisure-time occupations for the residents of Hartford. Vikki Herbert is the Village Hall's Administrator (to whom enquiries should be addressed), while the Management Committee is chaired by Councillor Rita Hollens.

If you are looking for a venue, the Village Hall, which was extended and refurbished to a very high standard in 2011, now provides excellent facilities. The main hall is welcoming, flexible, and suitable for a wide range of events and activities. Lighting has been designed to provide a clear and bright light. A ceiling mounted digital overhead projector and mounted screen are also available for use by those hiring the room.

The small meeting room is ideal for small gatherings or meetings. A well-equipped modern kitchen is situated between the hall and the meeting room. Both the hall and meeting room are centrally heated, with the hall having a traditionally polished wooden floor. Furniture (tables and chairs, etc) are provided to suit users' needs, and included within the hire fee. There are modern toilets that include facilities for the disabled. All parts of the building are fitted with smoke detectors. The building is accessible to wheelchair users.

Vacancy: Hartford Village Hall Management Committee has a vacancy for a self-employed caretaker to assist in providing support in the provision of this important community facility. The role involves the opening and closing of the hall for hirers and small routine maintenance jobs that ensure the hall is kept to a high standard. The hours are flexible, with a maximum of 43 hours per month that dovetail into opening and closing times of hirers, and any routine maintenance requirements for the month.

Finished the books that you were given for Christmas? Why not take them to Hartford Parish Council's Book Exchange, housed in the former K6 telephone kiosk located outside the Village Hall? All we ask is that you leave a book when you take one, and that books are in a readable condition.

Current hirers are:

Ageless Ukes (ukulele classes)

Baby Postnatal Yoga Classes

Bollywood Dance Class

3rd Hartford Brownies

Bridge

Dainty Dancers Pre-School Classes

Hartford Civic Society

Italian Classes

Knots and Needles (craft group)

Pilates
Rhythm Time (baby and child classes)
The Stroke Association
Tai Chi
U3A History
Hatha Flow Yoga
Yoga for All

APRIL 2016

Hartford Tennis Club by Trish Parker
Our Club has come a long, long way since the 1920s, when ICI kindly gifted the area for the original Recreation Club in Hartford! Situated close to the centre of the village, we have some of the best and newest facilities in the county, including:

*Six floodlit artificial grass courts;
Two tarmac courts;
A mini-tennis court;
Two full-time coaches.*

Hartford Tennis Club's season begins with a junior Tennis Camp, from Monday 4 to Friday 8 April, between 9:00am and 3:30pm each day. This is organised by Head Coach, John Walsh, with six assistant coaches and 25 Mini Tennis Leaders, so all levels are catered for, with stroke play, tournaments and fun and games for all, including prizes, certificates and a free tee-shirt.

Also after Easter, a course of six sessions of 'Tennis for the Terrified' will be run for those wishing to get back into tennis again, as well as Friday morning Ladies' Coaching sessions and plenty of opportunities to take part in social tennis.

For match players, the new season of the Mid and South Cheshire Tennis League begins in April, with both senior and junior teams taking part. Prospective new members are very welcome to visit the Club to find out more information and arrange a taster play session. The club's open day will be on Sunday 15 May when, as part of the Great British Tennis Weekend, young and old can have a play on the courts, and have the opportunity to become a member without paying the usual joining fee.

Everyone at the club loves their tennis on different levels and the committee works hard to maintain Hartford's position as one of the best

clubs in Cheshire. Whether you are a budding junior champion, or an older player who takes their sport a little less seriously, Hartford Tennis Club has something for you.

MAY 2016

Visitors and members of the B&TC are reminded that the area of the car park reserved for users of the Village Hall should only be used by patrons of the Hall itself. Now that bookings for the Hall are on the increase it is particularly important that the area remains available for its users.

JUNE 2016

Hartford Village Hall Meeting Room: Maximize your meetings for only £5 an hour. Our meeting room can accommodate up to twelve people, at a competitive hourly rate. Benefits include wi-fi, wipe board, refreshment facilities and car park.

NOVEMBER 2016

Essential drain works at the Village Hall were identified between meetings which urgently required action. In consultation with councillors, the works were instructed by the clerk, the total cost of the works being £9,850. To date, three sections have been excavated in the car park area (not the tarmacked area) and some pipework replaced. One quarter of the full length is lined, but there is still the remainder to reline and a section of the tarmacked area to excavate and replace.

FEBRUARY 2017

Following the unfortunate incident with the fire escape, additional safety measures need to be put in place and a full fire risk assessment needs to be carried out. It was unanimously resolved to:

- * install handrails along the ramps leading down from the exit doors;
- * paint the ramp with non-slip paint along with a white painted trailing edge; obtain a quote for the provision of a passive infra red sensor (or micro switch on the door jamb) that will switch on a light above the emergency exit when opened;
- * replace the bulb above the door with a brighter one;
- * carry out a full fire risk assessment;
- * arrange visit from Cheshire Fire and Rescue to carry out a full audit.

JUNE 2017

Annual report by Cllr Rita Hollens: The end of year financial report [on the Village Hall] will be provided at the Parish Council meeting, to be held in June.

Safety improvements are to be made to the kitchen exit, to provide more light and to install a metal railing, at a cost of approximately £1,000. Hatch marking of the Village Hall car park, closest to the bowling green, is to be completed, at a cost of £314. Decking and seating at the Village Hall is also in need of refurbishment.

JULY 2017

Councillor Phil Herbert: Improvements need to be made to pedestrian access to the Village Hall from Chester Road. Separate pedestrian access is to be created. It was also noted that the hedges are in urgent need of cutting back to improve visibility for vehicles entering and exiting the car park. Arrangements will be made for remedial work to be undertaken.

SEPTEMBER 2017

It was agreed to consider installation of a flag pole at the village hall, and that details and a quotation would be provided at the Council's meeting in September. The council also approved, in principle, the installation of an independent pedestrian access, which would necessitate removal of a section of hedge, and the installation of a gate and Cheshire railings.

DECEMBER 2017

Two quotations have been received for improving visibility at the entrance to the Village Hall, and it was agreed to appoint Sudden-strike to undertake this, at a cost of £3184.60. plus VAT.

MARCH 2018

The Parish Council is considering measures, including the installation of CCTV, to mitigate issues with anti-social behaviour near the Village Hall.

JUNE 2018

Purchased with the council chair's allowance, the erection of a flagpole is the latest of several enhancements, made to the front of the Village Hall premises. It follows the changes made to the gateway, that have improved visibility for cars and pedestrians entering and

leaving the site, and the installation of CCTV at the Hall which, it is hoped, will help to prevent some of the anti-social issues experienced at the site, particularly over the winter months.

APRIL 2019

Additional white railing fencing is to be added, to improve visibility when leaving the car park.

JULY 2020

The pandemic has had a devastating effect on local businesses, who have had to shut temporarily and furlough their staff. Shops in Hartford supplying essential services have stayed open during this crisis and we are grateful for all their much needed help and support. Other shops are now open. It is very important to realise that our local shops and businesses lie at the heart of our community and, over the years, have supported village activities in many ways.

If they are to survive, we need to support them at this difficult time. If we don't use them, we will lose them, to the detriment of everyone.

Hartford Parish Council has continued to function and is, at present, holding virtual monthly meetings using video conferencing software. Members of the public are welcome to raise concerns at the start of each meeting, and our Parish clerk will be very happy to provide information about joining one of our meetings online.

In line with advice from the Government, the Village Hall remains closed indefinitely, as do the play areas owned by the Parish Council (at Grange Park and Parker Avenue). At the time of writing there is no indication when these can re-open. You can obtain the latest information from the Parish Council's website.

SEPT 2020

The Council and the Village Hall Management Group are liaising over when and how to re-open the Village Hall (which has been closed since March) in line with Government guidance. Current restrictions on numbers of people and activities that would be allowed in the hall, and safety measures which would be required mean it can't yet be re-opened. A further review will take place at the beginning of October.

NOVEMBER 2020

Parish Council play areas, on Grange Park and at Leese Park (Parker Avenue), were re-opened to the public on Saturday 4 July. Hartford Village Hall remains closed indefinitely. For the latest information, including rules associated with visiting and using our play areas, and participation in virtual meetings of Council, visit our website. At the time of writing, all of Cheshire has been placed into Tier 2 of coronavirus restrictions for England; in addition to national restrictions, people in Tier 2 must not mix indoors with people from other households.

JANUARY, FEBRUARY, APRIL & MAY 2021

Parish Council play areas on Grange Park and at Leese Park (Parker Avenue), are open to the public, but the Village Hall remains closed indefinitely. All meetings of Hartford Parish Council are held virtually. For rules associated with visiting and using our play areas, and details of how to participate in virtual meetings of Council, please visit the Parish Council's website. hartfordparishcouncil.org.uk

JUNE 2021

Parish Council play areas on Grange Park and at Leese Park (Parker Avenue), are open to the public. It is hoped that the Village Hall can reopen on Monday 21 June, but this remains subject to prevailing coronavirus restrictions. In common with those of all councils, meetings of Hartford Parish Council can no longer be held "virtually"; the date of June's Ordinary Meeting has been chosen in the hope that it can be held, in person, inside the Village Hall. Please visit our website for confirmation of arrangements. hartfordparishcouncil.org.uk

[The Parish council meeting was postponed.]

JULY 2021

Village Hall still closed under prevailing Covid restrictions – Parish Council hoped to meet on July 21 which was the day of proposed easing of lockdown. It didn't happen.

The council invested in special screens to help prevent the spread of Covid-19 at meetings.

AUGUST 2021

Parish council meeting held in Village Hall on 9 August. for the first time in ages.

SEPTEMBER 2021

Parish council meeting in Village Hall, 13 September

OCTOBER 2021

Parish council meeting in Hall, 11 October - things back to a semblance of normality.

FEBRUARY 2022

Shirley Bentley, Village Hall cleaner, retired after more than 40 years. She was presented with a cheque and plant by Cllr Rita Hollens.

An advert for a new cleaner at the hall was placed in Hartford News.

MARCH 2022

Equipment is to be purchased which will allow members of the public to attend meetings of Hartford Parish Council virtually, and to speak during the public open forum.

Four 'Sweet Libbet' apple trees, named in honour of the Queen in her Platinum Jubilee Year, have been purchased by the Parish Council. It is hoped to plant one in each of the Green Field, the Grange Field, Leese Park and in the grounds of the Village Hall, on Thursday 10 March which, weather permitting, is the National Association of Civic Officers' Tree Planting Day.

JUNE 2022

As part of our celebrations for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, the Village Hall is to be bedecked with bunting, created by a team of enthusiastic crafters. Everyone can join in! During the Jubilee weekend, the Parish Council is encouraging residents to adorn their homes for the occasion. The creators of the most eye-catching decorations will be awarded commemorative prizes. We would also love to publish pictures of your Jubilee decorations and celebrations, so please do email them to us!

SEPTEMBER 2022

Hartford Village Hall is just one of the Parish Council's assets, as described in a Hartford News article:

You may have noticed during the recent spell of bright, sunny weather, that the Village Hall was looking particularly resplendent, in its shiny new coat of black and white paint.

The hall is administered by the Village Hall Management Group. The Group looks after the interior of the Hall, including decoration, fixtures and fittings, and the Village Hall Administrator deals with bookings. The exterior of the building, however, is cared for by the Parish Council which owns the Hall and takes responsibility for structural issues, and maintaining its exterior.

The Village Hall appears on the Parish Council's Asset Register, unsurprisingly being the most valuable item that is listed there. It is one of three buildings on the Register, the others being the former football pavilion on the Green Field (which the Parish Council is currently in the process of restoring to use) and the cricket pavilion off Bradburns Lane.

There are several open spaces on the Register, including the Green Field, play areas at Leese Park and Bradburns Lane, and some areas of woodland and gardens.

In total, the Asset Register lists items whose total value is in excess of £1 million, for which the Parish Council is ultimately responsible. Many of the items on the Register are comparatively small such as office equipment, litter bins, seats and benches, and signage in various locations across the village. Also of note are three 'bus stops, the former K6 telephone kiosk (and the defibrillator therein) and the decorative mosaic at the junction of School Lane and Chester Road. The Asset Register was reviewed and agreed by Council in April, a process that takes place annually.

FEBRUARY 2023

Hartford Village Hall is 100 years old this year. Opened on 23 July 1923, the Hall is at the centre of the village and continues to host a wide variety of events and activities. We will be celebrating its centenary during the first half of 2023, in the lead-up to the date of the anniversary in July.

For our logo, we have chosen a drawing made by Pat Kelsall, who was well known in Hartford for her pictures of the village before she moved away in 2021. This image dates from 1984, so depicts the Hall in largely original condition, in particular without the extension that was added to the building in 2011. We would love to hear about your recollections of Hartford Village Hall. Perhaps you have some special memory of an event there. We would also love to see any pictures you have.

JULY 2023

Hartford Parish Council is installing a new pétanque court at the rear of the Village Hall. The aim is to encourage people of all ages to take part in social activities. Although the new court will be funded by the council they will be looking for a Pétanque Club to be established which will take on the organisation and management of the space with the support of the Parish Council.

The space being allocated is a quiet area at the rear of the Village Hall by the tennis courts and the tree-lined lane. The Parish Council will assist in developing the facility with the Pétanque Club once it is formed.

HARTFORD NEWS - HISTORY OF VILLAGE HALL EVOLUTION

STANDFIRST:

THE THREE-ACRE Fountain Field at the crossroads in the centre of Hartford was leased to the Parish Council by Brunner Mond and Co Ltd from January 1, 1922, for 999 years at an annual rental of one shilling, for the purpose of creating a recreation ground.

One of the conditions of the lease was that the council was given until December 31, 1923 "to lay out a recreation ground for the use and enjoyment of the Parish of Hartford". Also within three years the council agreed to erect a clubhouse or recreation room at a cost of no less than £400. This figure had been previously fixed by the company at £1,000 but the council said that this sum "could not possibly be raised by voluntary subscription and did not feel justified in applying for a loan, which would be an extra burden on the ratepayers for the next 30 years."

In the event the building cost £996, the expense being met by an interest-free loan of £600 made by the chairman of the council, Mr A E Powles, the balance coming from the War Memorial Committee and various donations. On May 7, 1923, a public meeting formed a Recreation Club and elected a management committee. The council agreed to lease the hall to the committee to use as a club room at an annual rent of £1.

MAIN ARTICLE:

HARTFORD Village Hall, which celebrates its centenary this month, had simple beginnings. It started life as two timber Army huts joined together, covered with metal lathing and stucco, and roofed with asbestos slates. The field which surrounded it – where cattle had earlier been grazed to eat away the grass – was converted into a bowling green and tennis courts with a covering of "suitable turf" from Vale Royal Park, donated free and laid by volunteers.

A wooden verandah overlooking the bowling green took up one side of the building, and is still one of its main features. It was from there on 23 July 1923 that Lady Jarmay, wife of Brunner Mond's eminent chemist Sir John Jarmay, formally opened the building as Hartford's Recreation Club. The couple lived at what is now Whitehall in School Lane. Her husband donated his billiard table to the cause and it remained in

one of the two rooms in the 'Rec' as an asset (and later a bone of contention) for the next 50 years.

Originally intended as a First World War memorial project to provide recreational facilities for all ages, the club evolved over time to take on several new roles – and several different names. Confused would-be users often complained that they went to the wrong hall for events.

Delving into the history of the building has involved looking up "Village Club", "Recreation Club", "Rec", "Parish Hall", "Bowls and Tennis Club" and "Village Hall", to mention but a few search terms. A neutral suggestion in 1977 that it should be renamed the "Jubilee Hall" in honour of the Queen's Silver Jubilee was not taken up.

It was not until 1978 that the parish council grasped the nettle and agreed that it should be Hartford's official Village Hall. In this article we will just call it "the hall".

Like all those celebrating their hundredth birthday it has experienced its share of ups and downs, which have been recorded in various documents, newspapers and Hartford News.

The leather-bound ledger containing the council's minutes from 1918-1934 recorded numerous mentions of the progress of the recreation club project between 1920 and 1923 but these ceased as soon as it was handed over to a management committee just before the launch.

In addition to bowls and tennis the club offered indoor amusements such as billiards, snooker, cards and darts, as well as convivial surroundings for village men to meet and chat. It was a venue for social events and during the winter there were lectures, too. Membership was open to those over 15 years of age, with most youngsters joining in order to play tennis.

These activities went so well that in December 1938 the club had about 280 members and asked the parish council for increased accommodation. The demand for darts was such that people were leaving because they couldn't get a game. This request for a hall extension was later postponed "because of the unsettled state of the country".

The war brought new people to the locality

and in October 1940 members of HM Forces stationed in the parish were allowed to use part of the hall during the week. In 1946 two soldiers from a camp at Sandiway broke into the premises, stole some petty items and were eventually sent to prison – as an example to other unruly servicemen.

After experiencing understandable wartime problems, the recreation club worked hard to get back on its feet and in 1947 the treasurer reported that in spite of spending an unprecedentedly large amount of money, members could congratulate themselves on ending the year in a solvent position.

For the next few years a clash of generations caused rumbles under the surface. Scores of boisterous teenagers joined the club and rifts appeared between them and the senior members, who wanted to relax in peace. There was also a decline in the popularity of tennis and membership was dropping at a worrying rate.

In October 1961 the parish council heard that there were not enough senior members to pay expenses such as rates, lighting and groundsman's wages; 50-100 new members were needed. It was feared that the recreation club would have to close. In early 1962 the parish council gave the club a grant of £100 to tide it over. Eventually there were no tennis members at all and the council took over the running of the hall, which had been used as a pavilion.

In around 1968, notes were put through doors in the village to suggest restarting the club. A meeting was held and those who turned up found themselves on the committee. The first funds raised were used to buy fertiliser for the bowling green!

The old courts, nets and netting were in a very bad condition, as was the bowling green. The grass was mown by volunteers - mainly Malcolm Sargeant of Woodlands Road. Geoffrey Barnes looked after the gardens, made flower beds and maintained the flowers within. The volunteers spent years fund-raising with bring and buy sales, Christmas fairs and a huge jumble sale, to which the bowlers made a great contribution. This raised over £1,000 – a massive amount for the 1960s. The bowling green was restored first, then the tennis courts and nets. A professional tennis coach was engaged to encourage junior membership.

By 1970 things had improved enough for the club – now calling itself the Bowls and Tennis Club (B&TC) - to ask the Playing Fields Association for a grant towards the £600 cost of

re-surfacing the hard courts.

In 1973 the following description of the facilities was published in Hartford News: "The clubhouse was redecorated by members two years ago. The main part of it is divided into two rooms by a removable screen. One half is used for committee meetings (and for a playgroup during the week) and the other contains a billiard table. There are also toilets and changing facilities, a store-room and kitchen. A verandah runs the length of the building and looks out onto the Bowls Section's bowling green, which is bordered by attractive flowerbeds. A groundsman is employed part time to tend to the green and the courts."

The following year, to mark its demise following the reorganisation of local government, Northwich Rural District Council planted 24 flowering cherries in the hedge that runs along the B&TC boundary in Chester Road and Bradburns Lane. Fifty years later their blossom still makes a glorious sight each Spring.

In 1974 the parish council set up a Community Centre Working Party to look at leisure provision in the village. In November they held a meeting with the B&TC, whose representatives wanted to see more use of the hall during the winter but were concerned that the burden of preparing and cleaning up the room, and moving the heavy billiard table, should not fall on the club committee.

In February 1975 the working party recommended that the B&TC premises should be run by a joint Committee comprising equal numbers from the council and the club. At an appropriate time the parish council should consider refurbishing the main room of the hall to make it more attractive to potential hirers, and improving the cloakroom, changing and toilet facilities.

Three months later, a tender of £362 was accepted for painting the outside of the hall.

At the December 1975 meeting councillors discussed the necessity of giving the interior of the hall a thorough make-over. The joint management committee was formally set up and took up its duties from January 1, 1976 with Mrs M Rogers, Mr G Beeley, Mr P J Craven and Dr B Rees appointed to represent the parish council. It was stipulated that the chairman should be a councillor. It was agreed to donate £50 to start a bank account for the committee.

Under its keen new management, the year 1976 was a pivotal time in the history of the hall. The billiard table was removed to free up more space and the hall was left open in the

afternoons for pensioners to use. A coffee bar for young people was held every Saturday from 8-10pm. Bookings improved.

Given a budget of around £2,000 to renovate the building, work was carried out on decorating, plumbing, lighting, panelling the walls, central heating and insulation, sanding the floor and the provision of more chairs and tables. A 50% relief was obtained on the rates.

Organisations using the hall included the Christian Science Society, a sewing class, the Business and Professional Women's Club, the toy library, the Philatelic Society, the Parish Council, the Best-Kept Village Competition Committee and the Jubilee Committee.

In April 1977 a licence for music and dancing was granted and, in a major move over several months, the kitchen, toilets and changing facilities were extended and altered at a cost of about £12,000.

In 1979, following difficulties raising and lowering the partition between the two halves of the main hall it was decided to charge a flat rate for the whole room. New curtains were bought at a cost of £270. There had been 13,000 attendances during the year.

A piano was donated in early 1980.

In 1982-3 the main topic of concern was the B&TC project to build two all-weather tennis courts, which was supported by the parish council. This involved getting permission from the landowners, ICI, and obtaining a loan which the council would guarantee if required. A simple solution was found whereby the council agreed unanimously to accept an offer by the ICI Estates Department to sell them the Fountain Field for £25 plus legal expenses. An annual fee of £1 would be charged by the council for the club's tenancy of the land for a bowling green and tennis courts, for 21 years.

In October 1987 the council accepted a quotation for £3,100 to erect a 10m x 4m storage building on land behind the hall.

On November 29, 1990 county councillor Bob Woodhouse planted an oak tree in the grounds - a gift from Cheshire County Council - to mark the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the county council.

In June 1993 a new scoring hut belonging to the Bowls Section of the club was put up. It was painted black and white to match the other buildings. In 1994 the club was given permission to erect a pavilion near the tennis courts. In November of that year the hall became a no-smoking area.

In 1998 the bowls and tennis sections addressed the parish council separately asking to put in planning applications for floodlights.

During 1999 and the early 2000s - and sporadically ever since - the hall and grounds have been plagued with expensive and mindless vandalism.

The B&TC lease was due for renewal in 2004. For a considerable time there had been a bitter dispute between the club and the council, who wished to raise the existing annual peppercorn rent. The lease was finally signed in the summer of 2007, following repeated delays.

In 2005 the hall was re-roofed and in 2006 there was a grand opening ceremony to celebrate the installation of the floodlights on three tennis courts.

In November 2010 an article in Hartford News said that the council had built up funds for a major refurbishment of the hall and work would start on 13 December. In May 2011 the council chairman reported: "Our aim in recent years has been to refurbish and extend the dated Village Hall. It did not meet health and safety regulations and recent acts for public buildings. Work will be completed by the end of May. The new extension has a meeting room, with a separate entrance and toilet facilities (including disabled). It will provide accommodation for meetings and activities held by smaller groups, and will serve as an office for the Clerk, making her available to residents, at specific times, for help and advice."

In 2012 the hall boasted its own website, www.hartfordvillagehall.co.uk (it is now www.hartfordvillagehall.org.uk).

In September 2013 Hartford's last traditional red telephone box, which had stood near the junction of Hodge Lane and Weaverham Road for over half a century, was moved to be outside the hall. It had been bought from British Telecom by the parish council for £1 - though a further £2,000 was earmarked for transporting and refurbishing it!

In 2014 the council agreed to grant £5,000 to the bowls section - who would match this sum - to install a black and white fully insulated and double-glazed shed, with water and electrics, behind the existing shed on the raised bank.

In 2015, a hall administrator was appointed. A defibrillator was installed at the far end of the verandah. The following year work was carried out to improve the drains and fire safety measures, and in 2018 CCTV was put in to help prevent more anti-social issues.

In March 2020, along with other venues and local businesses, the hall was badly hit by the Covid-19 pandemic. The building was closed in line with Government guidelines until the end of July 2021. Parish council meetings in the meantime were held via video-conferencing software.

In 2022, the black and white hall was given a shiny new coat of paint, emphasising as always its roots as a typical Cheshire “magpie” construction. It was festooned with hand-crafted bunting to celebrate the late Queen’s Platinum Jubilee.

This month, the decorations will mark its own vital role in the heart of Hartford over the past 100 years. Alongside a host of events in the grounds and at various other venues across the village, inside the main building there will be an exhibition featuring the more unusual aspects of its long life, including an account of the day in 1960 when a real hart grazed on the club’s grass tennis courts...

(Published in July 2023 issue of Hartford News)

RESEARCH NOTES ON KEY FIGURES AND RELEVANT VILLAGE PROJECTS

HARTFORD WAR MEMORIAL

THE Recreation Club was partly funded by money left over from the village campaign to erect a war memorial.

FURTHER INFORMATION

PARISH CHURCH WEBSITE

A VESTRY meeting held on 14 October 1920 agreed to erect a war memorial which was placed near the main entrance, and was dedicated by the Bishop of Chester on 27 November 1920. In 1954 a tablet was added with the names of the fallen in the Second World War.

CIVIC SOCIETY - LISTED BUILDINGS

THE WAR memorial stands in the centre of a path in the churchyard of St John's Church. It is in stone, and consists of a decorated lantern cross surmounted by a Latin cross, on a grooved octagonal shaft.

The shaft stands on an octagonal plinth on a base of three steps. On the front of the plinth is a carved inscription and on the other faces are the names of those lost in the First World War.

The steps carry another inscription and the names of those lost in the Second World War.

2017 - WAR MEMORIAL RECOGNISED

HARTFORD War Memorial has been successfully recognised as a Grade II listed site.

The memorial, which is based in St John the Baptist church yard, was submitted to Historic England in 2016 by Phil Herbert, chairman of Hartford Parish Council.

Cllr Herbert is the council's 'Heritage Champion', and is tasked with ensuring all of the town's heritage sites are protected.

The War Memorial in Hartford has been a mainstay in the village since 1920.

Cllr Herbert said: "It was originally installed

for the First World War. It was done by public subscriptions, raising funds through public donations. In a way it belongs to the people of Hartford.

"Historic England want to get these things listed. War memorials can get moved around. If there aren't any surviving relatives in the area these things can get forgotten."

While the War memorial is not at risk, Cllr Herbert said the application was a sort of 'insurance policy' against any future developments.

He said having it recognised as a Grade II listed building underlines the recognition the residents of Hartford give to those who made the ultimate sacrifice in the two world wars.

"It is not under any threat but it is handy to have these things listed because they are conservation areas," he said.

"If any applications came in Hartford Council could say, 'well we have a Grade II listed monument.'"

Hartford War Memorial is among hundreds to be listed over the last year through Historic England's pledge to protect 2,500 memorials by 2018, marking the centenary of the First World War.

A Historic England spokesman said: "Over a million Britons lost their lives in the First World War.

"It's important that their sacrifice is not forgotten – and that the lessons learnt during that time are as resonant now as they were then.

"War memorials are a valued part of our heritage and it is absolutely fitting that we cherish and preserve them for future generations."

"The centenary programme aims to bring us together more closely as a nation to honour the lives and bravery of all those who served.

(Northwich Guardian 18 February 2017)

THOMAS ARTHUR JOHNSON

EXHIBITION TEXT

THE IDEA of a clubhouse in Hartford was not new, though it was perhaps envisaged for a slightly different clientele. In October 1909, Mr Thomas Arthur Johnson, manager of Brunner Mond's Lostock Works, county councillor, magistrate and County Allotments Committee member, offered to give a "piece of land formerly occupied by the Pinfold for the purpose of the erection of a workmen's clubhouse for the benefit of the village of Hartford." (Note: This is now known as The Green Field.)

The idea was discussed at a parish meeting the following month, when Mr Johnson promised that any conditions he laid down would be reasonable. He lived at Abbey Lane Cottage, which bordered the field. When he died suddenly in 1927 it was said that "his generosity was proverbial".

The council resolved to accept his kind offer and a committee was appointed to go into the matter.

Mr Johnson was determined to give the land for a philanthropic purpose and in the end he gifted it for allotments as a memorial to men from Hartford killed in the First World War.



T A Johnson (from obituary)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

OCTOBER 1909 - OFFER OF PINFOLD LAND FOR WORKMEN'S CLUB

Workmen's Clubroom: The Chairman submitted a letter he had received from Mr T A Johnson saying he was willing to give the piece of land formerly occupied by the Pinfold for the purpose of the erection of a workmen's clubhouse for the benefit of the village of Hartford. (*Northwich Guardian*, 16 Oct 1909)

NOVEMBER 1909 - OFFER OF "PINFOLD" LAND TO PARISH MEETING

Parish meeting: Proposed village clubhouse - There was a good attendance at the annual parish meeting which was held in the Schoolroom, Hartford. Mr H Hatt-Cook presided.

The chairman introduced the question of the proposed village clubhouse and read a letter to the Parish Council from Mr T A Johnson in which he stated that he was willing to give the land forming the site of the old Pinfold for the purpose of a village club house.

Mr Johnson, who was present, explained the conditions upon which he would give the land, and these included the erection of a suitable building and he would of course require a substantial boundary wall separating his property. He could not enter into conditions but he would promise that the conditions he laid down would be such as as would meet with the acceptance of the committee.

Several gentlemen spoke on the subject.... On the proposition of Mr J Moore, seconded by Mr T Birtwisle, it was unanimously resolved to accept Mr Johnson's offer and he was heartily thanked for his kindness. The following committee was appointed to go into the matter... (*Northwich Guardian*, 20 November 1909)

1916 - MEMORIAL TO SOLDIERS

It was announced today that Mr Thomas Arthur Johnson, manager of the Lostock works of Brunner, Mond & Co, has offered to give through the Hartford Parish Council of which he is chairman, three acres of land in memory of Cheshire men who have fallen in the war.

Mr Johnson has intimated that he wishes the conditions to be as simple as possible, but

desires that the land should be cultivated this year as allotments. The gift has been accepted with thanks.

Mr Johnson's son, Lieutenant Cuthbert Johnson, has lost a leg in the war and is now employed under the Ministry of Munitions. (*Liverpool Echo*, 15 March 1916)

1927 - DEATH OF COUNTY COUNCILLOR

We regret to learn that the death took place suddenly, on Monday, of Mr Thomas Arthur Johnson (68), of Hartford, the Northwich Division's representative on the Cheshire County Council.

He was a magistrate and a former chairman of the Northwich Guardians and Rural Council, a member of the Education Authority, the Pensions Committee, the County Allotments Committee, and other bodies.

For 35 years he was on the staff of Brunner, Mond and Co, and did good work as manager in the production of explosives at the Lostock Works. (*Cheshire Observer*, 5 February 1927)

1927 - REMARKABLE CAREER

Mr Johnson was always of a robust and active nature... He spent his life in helping every

good and worthy cause. He worked hard for the benefit of other people, sacrificing himself and giving of his best and of his means and substance - a straight, honourable Englishman.

An outstanding characteristic of Mr Johnson was his transparent honesty. There was no subtlety in his composition, he was frank and outspoken, somewhat impulsive, open to conviction and singularly disingenuous. The readiness with which he changed his views in the face of argument disarmed criticism and he scorned to take a mean advantage of an opponent. He was essentially a practical man rather than a theorist, and he often found it difficult to express himself as he would have liked. The men who worked under him at Winnington and Lostock knew that they could always expect a square deal from "Thomas Arthur". He was free from "side" and affectation, was likeable and approachable, and flung himself into every work for social amelioration with whole-hearted enthusiasm. ... He was a man with a big heart, a sympathetic nature and a generous disposition. (*A small part of a long article with many tributes to Mr Johnson. Northwich Guardian*, 5 February 1927)

ALFRED EVERY POWLES

EXHIBITION TEXT PLUS EXTRAS

WITHOUT the interest-free mortgage of £600 (worth about £29,200 today) from the Parish Council Chairman, Mr Alfred Every Powles FRIB, the Recreation Club scheme could not have gone ahead in 1923. It was to be paid back at £15 a half-year over a period of 20 years.

Mr Powles was born in Hartford in 1863 and practised as an architect in Winnington Street, Northwich. He lived at Manor Cottage, Chester Road and was appointed unopposed to the Parish Council in 1917. He used his professional skills as well as his money for the benefit of the community - and is mentioned several times in the Parish Council minutes as having done rough plans for the Recreation Room without charging any fees. He was for a time president of the club.

He was also a churchwarden at St John's Church and designed a new choir vestry and the church's original black and white hall in School Lane, drawing up the plans in 1927. This was designed to be built in three phases, as the money was raised for its construction. It was opened in 1929.

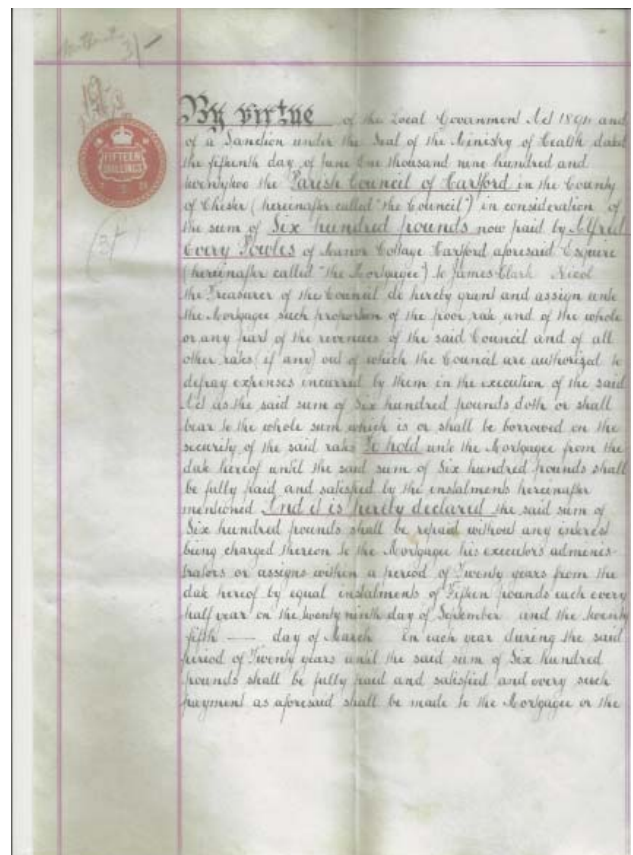
He is perhaps best known for having designed the current Brunner Public Library in Witton Street, Northwich. His Elizabethan half-timbered style building was constructed in three distinct sections which could be lifted independently. It replaced an earlier library donated by Sir John Brunner in 1885, which after standing for 30 years, had been irrevocably damaged by subsidence and had to be demolished.

He died on 7 November 1938 and his effects were valued at £14,244 2s 7d. He did not marry. For the 1911 census he was living with Eleanor Sercombe, 44, housekeeper, at Manor Cottage, at the entrance to the long drive to Hartford Manor.

His mother was widowed and in 1881 he was living with her at Bridge Place, Chester as an 18-yr-old articled pupil to an architect. He had two sisters and a brother, His mother ran a boarding house with six boarders, a cook, housemaid and footman.

In 1891 he and his brother were living together at 31 Bold Square, Chester. He was an architect and his brother was a cotton salesman.

1901 he was living at 106 Chester Road,



Hartford, with Emma (74) and Mary Forster (33), but he is described as the head of his own (single) household, an architect and estate agent. He is given at this address in the 1902 Kelly's Directory.

TEXT OF CUTTINGS AND DOCUMENTS

1863 - BIRTH

Name: Alfred Every Powles. Gender: Male.
Record type: Christening. Baptism date: 27 March 1863. Baptism place: Hartford, Cheshire, England. Residence place: Hartford, Cheshire, England. Father: Alfred Powles. Mother Caroline Powles. (*Cheshire, England, Parish Registers 1538-1909*)

1902 - KELLYS DIRECTORY

Powles Alfd. Every, 106 Chester rd, Nthwh

1903 - PROPERTY ADVERT

At the bottom of a list of building plots for sale, those interested are asked to get plans and particulars from Mr A E Powles, architect, Winnington-street, Northwich.... Messrs Trafford and Cook, Solicitors, Northwich.

1914 - NEW VICAR'S WARDEN

The new Vicar, the Rev H H Pitts, in his first letter to parishioners, says that the vicar's warden, Mr Turnbull, has been appointed to a more senior job on the L and N W Railway and is leaving the parish. He wishes him "god speed."

He then continues: "Mr A E Powles has very kindly acceded to my request to become vicar's warden, and no better man could be found. I am glad to know that the appointment meets with so much approval from the parishioners, and that we all have confidence in our new warden." (*Chester Chronicle*, 7 November 1914)

NOTE: Wikipedia describes a vicar's warden's role thus: "They are expected to lead the parishioners by setting a good example and encouraging unity and peace. They have a duty to maintain order and peace in the church and churchyard at all times, and especially during services, although this task tends to be devolved to sidesmen." In Mr Powles' case it also seems that he deputised for the vicar at events such as funerals which he could not attend, and was his "right-hand man".

Churchwardens also oversee the taking and recording of collections, provide bread/wine under direction of priest, welcome visiting clergy/arrange for necessary clergy cover in co-operation with priest. ensure that the parish financial obligations are met, oversee the taking and recording of collections, provide bread/wine under direction of priest. welcome visiting clergy/arrange for necessary clergy cover in co-operation with priest. ensure that the parish financial obligations are met. (Various sources)

1916 - "PLATOON COMMANDER"

Described in list of attendees as "Platoon Commander A E Powles (Hartford)", at the unveiling of an alabaster tablet memorial in Davenham Church for Commander Cecil France-Hayhurst, Royal Navy, who had died aged 40 from acute pneumonia after being on the bridge for 24 hours at a stretch in drenching rain and bitter cold while in command of the armed liner, HMS Patuca. (*Chester Chronicle*, 6 May 1916)

1916 - MEMORIAL WINDOW FOR LADY MARSHALL -

A memorial window to the late Lady Marshall,

wife of Colonel Sir Thomas Marshall, was unveiled at St John's Church, Hartford, during the morning service on Sunday. There was a large congregation which included Sir Thomas Marshall, Mrs R L Anderson (daughter), The Rev C C Marshall, vicar of St Chad's, Far Headingley, Leeds (son), Mr and Mrs Hatt-Cook, and Mr A E Powles.

The service was conducted by the Vicar, the Rev H H Pitts.....

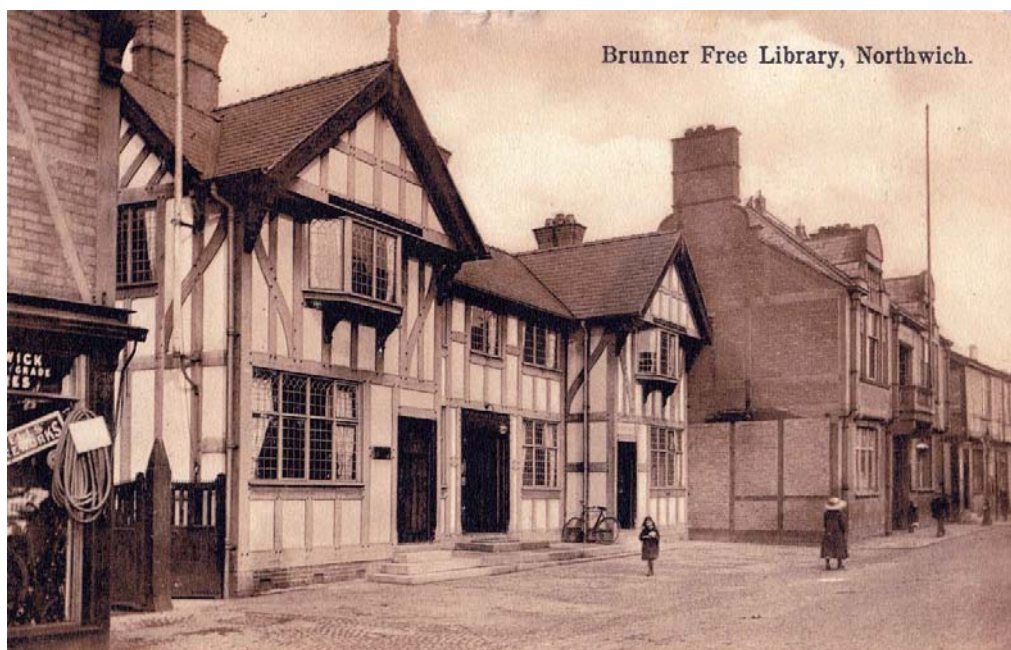
After the second lesson, the Vicar, accompanied by the churchwardens, Mr A E Powles and Mr W Miles Bratt, proceeded to the south aisle, and the Vicar, addressing Mr Powles, said: "As a lifelong friend of the Marshall family, it is their wish that you should unveil the window in memory of Lady Marshall and I therefore ask you to do so." (*Nantwich Guardian*, 28 November 1916)

1927 - PROPOSED CHURCH INSTITUTE

At a meeting of the sub committee held recently it was resolved that Mr Powles should draw up a rough plan of a building, similar in material and appearance to the Recreation Club, to be erected in sections as the money required for each section is forthcoming. The whole scheme embraces a large room, with seating accommodation for 250 people, which can be partitioned off in three parts, and kitchen, offices &c, Mr Powles kindly promised to make the plan required. As the parish is growing rapidly it is felt to be wise to take a long view of the matter and to plan with an eye on future needs. (*Northwich Guardian*, 9 April 1927)



St John's church hall



Brunner Library, Northwich - designed by Mr Powles

1927 - NEW CHOIR VESTRY ON EAST WALL

The Vicar says in the parish magazine: "The new addition to our fine little church is one for which we are devoutly thankful and of which we can be rightly proud. In the first place it supplies a longfelt want and makes for decency and orderliness which were impossible when clergy and choir had to robe in one small vestry. And in the second place, it fits into and harmonises with the church as a whole, wonderfully well. It is a splendid piece of work, both in design and execution. We, as a congregation, are greatly indebted to our

vicar's warden, Mr A E Powles, for the tasteful skill and loving care which he has expended on the design and the minutest detail of the new building. We also warmly commend Mr Forster, the builder, for a piece of work excellently carried through."

1939 - PROBATE

POWLES Alfred Every of Manor Cottage Hartford Chester died 7 November 1938 Probate London 26 January 1939 to Kenneth Powles cotton broker and Alfred William Chambers solicitor, Effects £14,244 2s 7d.

DAME LADY CHARLOTTE JARMAY OBE

TEXT FOR EXHIBITION

WHEN the indomitable Lady Jarmay officially opened the Recreation Club it was not a question of her husband sending an inferior substitute to do this on his behalf.

Ironically they had both received honours after WW1 for serving their country in very different ways. Lady Jarmay was made a Dame Grand Cross of the Order of the British Empire ("Dame" being the female equivalent of "Sir") for her major role in caring for wounded servicemen, while Sir John was knighted for organising the production of deadly munitions.

Lady Jarmay was said to have been a woman of great charm who made their house at Hartford Lodge the social centre of the Brunner Mond staff. She was a doctor's daughter and became very involved medical and nursing matters, including the Victoria Infirmary, where she was on the board. During the war she was co-commander of the auxiliary military hospital at The Leys, Winnington, .

Sir John was a keen huntsman with the Cheshire Hounds and Lady Jarmay accompanied him. They both rode to hounds in their seventies. She died in 1938.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Charlotte played a notable part in WW1. She became a VAD (Voluntary Aid Detachment) nurse... and created a working depot at Hartford Lodge, where all hospital clothing and provisions made by local working parties could be gathered together and then forwarded to the local auxiliary hospitals.

She also became the co-commandant of the Leys Auxiliary Hospital based on Brunner Mond property at Winnington - in control of all aspects of the hospital except the actual medical and nursing service. In 1918 New Years Honours list she was awarded the Dame Grand Cross of the Order of the British Empire OBE. Her husband was Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire.

For years before and after the war she did great work for the Victoria Infirmary and was a member of the board of management.

(General information)

1881 CENSUS

22 Nottingham Place, Marylebone: John S Wyman, head, unmarried, 35 years, wholesale

druggist, born Alcester, Warwickshire. Charlotte E Wyman, unmarried, sister, 22 years, no occupation, born Alcester, Warwickshire. Plus housemaid and cook.

1882 - MARRIAGE

Marriage solemnised at the parish church in the parish of St Marylebone in the county of Middlesex. No 420. 2nd June 1882 between Gustav Jarmay, of full age, bachelor, manufacturing chemist of Northwich Cheshire, son of Gustav Jarmay, manufacturing chemist, and Charlotte Elizabeth Wyman, of full age, spinster, of 22 Nottingham Place, St Marylebone, daughter of George Wyman, surgeon. Married by licence, by R A England, curate.

1901 CENSUS

Hartford Lodge, Davenham Road, Gustav Jarmay, head, married, age 44, chemicals manufacturer, employer, born in Hungary. Charlotte E Jarmay, wife, married, age 42, no occupation, born Alcester, Warwickshire. E???? Jarmay, nephew, single, age 22, ??? University, born in Hungary. Plus cook, parlourmaid, ladysmaid, housemaid. Hartford Lodge Cottage: gardener and his wife.

1911 CENSUS

Hartford Lodge: Gustav Jarmay, head, aged 56, married, chemical manufacturer, employer, born in Hungary. Charlotte Elizabeth Jarmay, wife, aged 53, one child, born at Alcester, Warwickshire. Plus cook, kitchenmaid, parlourmaid, housemaid, under housemaid, ladies' maid. House has 18 rooms.

1918 - COMMENDATION IN NEWSPAPER FOR HUSBAND'S KNIGHTHOOD

As everyone in Mid-Cheshire knows, Lady Jarman has been a most enthusiastic and energetic war worker. She has laboured incessantly on behalf of the Red Cross Society, and her good work in this direction has gained the admiration of all sections of the community.

As a vice-president of the county organisation Lady Jarmay is at the head of the Red Cross movement in the Northwich District, and the VAD hospital The Ley, Winnington, has been under her personal superintendence since it was opened over three years ago. Patriotic objects of every kind

have received the most generous support from her and Northwich is deeply indebted to Lady Jarmay for the splendid lead which she has given in these matters, and especially for all she has done in the interests of the Red Cross Society. (*Nantwich Guardian*, 11 January 1918)

1918 - REPORT OF LOCAL RED CROSS EVENT

...Lady Jarmay [her title was very new at this point], who had a very cordial reception, said she was exceedingly pleased to be asked to open the sale because she wanted to thank them all for the good work the Castle Branch had done since the war began. With Mrs Saner's valuable help they had sent in a large number of hospital requisites, and all were very well made. Unfortunately there was a great demand for these things constantly going on, and she was receiving requests from headquarters almost weekly that more and more and still more should be sent.

There was an idea that a lot of things supplied by the Red Cross branches were never sent out to the front, but were hoarded up in warehouses. Notices were received monthly from headquarters as to the number of stores and garments sent out both abroad and to the English hospitals, and it would interest them to hear that last month over 11,000 garments were forwarded to English hospitals and 36,000 garments were sent to different theatres of war on the Western and Eastern fronts.

Everybody seemed to be most pleased with the work and were very grateful to all who were helping in this way. The work from the Northwich district was carefully examined, and only last month she had a notice from headquarters that the work had been examined by Lady Sophie Scott, and had been pronounced excellent. (*Hear, hear!*)

They would be proud to know that Cheshire had done so well in working for the Red Cross Society, and that Northwich stood very high amongst the Cheshire districts. (*Applause*) They in Northwich had done remarkably well but they wanted to do still better. (*Runcorn Guardian*, 15 February 1918)

1918 - THE WORK OF THE RED CROSS

Report of a major Red Cross Open Day at Belmont Hall in late July 1918, residence of Roscoe Brunner. The speaker was the Viscountess Massereene and Ferrand (née

Jean Barbara Ainsworth, pictured right), commandant of the Women's Legion canteen section, under Lady Londonderry. The event was attended by the Jarmays.

The Viscountess said that in other countries the Red Cross was a section of Government organisation, under Government control, and part of the military system. In this country it was the voluntary part taken up by the people themselves in carrying on the nation's war. It was the effort of those unable by circumstances to fight for themselves, to look after those



Viscountess Massereene and Ferrand

who had gone to fight their battle for them.

It was to the everlasting credit of Napoleon I that he was the first man to organise a system of field hospitals. Up to the end of the 18th century the wounded were left where they fell, and it was seldom, if ever that a man had his wounds attended to until he had been lying out for at least 24 hours, so that his chances of recovery were far less than the were today. In 1792 the first flying field hospitals were introduced in the French army and were adopted for giving the necessary first aid in surgical treatment, and for removing the wounded from the battlefield. But 700 years before these hospitals for the sick and wounded had been founded, the Knights of St John of Jerusalem founded hospitals for the sick and wounded in Jerusalem in 1050, and some of those returning to England with the Crusaders founded a hospital at Clerkenwell, London in 1101, and there to his day were still the headquarters of the Order of St John, which was now working hand in hand with the Red Cross to assuage the horrors of war.

Napoleon brought his system of field hospitals to a very high state of efficiency in his

grand army, but after his final defeat the whole system was allowed to lapse, and for half a century nothing was done.

Then the Press became powerful in shaping public opinion, and the disclosures of the terrible sufferings that were being undergone by the troops in the Crimean War in 1853 and the Italian War in 1859 so convulsed the country, and aroused horror and indignation throughout Europe, that a conference was summoned at Geneva in 1863, at which delegates were present from every great country, and there it was decided that every nation should have its own organisation to aid the sick and wounded in time of war.

It was also decided that this aid should be organised in time of peace, so as to be ready in a time of war.

It was from that historic conference that the British Red Cross started, and representatives of the Order of St John had all along sat on the Council of the British Red Cross, and since the war the two societies had joined hands and had a joint War Committee at 83 Pall Mall, London, where they were using their combined strength to try to minimise the sufferings of the sick and wounded. (*Applause*)

The Viscountess went on to say that it was startling to remember that even in this present war there was a time when not one of the provisions we now looked upon as necessities were in existence. In France they had only open trucks, without brakes, in which to carry the wounded, and they were jolted along or held up for hours by traffic. There were also very few doctors and fewer nurses, no motor ambulances, and at first no motor transport.

Then it was that the Red Cross stepped in and changed the whole situation. On October 2nd, 1914. an appeal was made for motor ambulances at a cost of £400 each, and in three weeks enough had been subscribed to provide 500.

Today there were at work for the relief of their own sick and wounded 1,000 motor ambulances, cars, lorries, repair wagons and motor soup kitchens, also supplied by the British Red Cross.

They had also sent hundreds of motor ambulances to their Allies in France, Belgium, Russia and Serbia, but those all had to be kept up at a cost of thousands a month,

She therefore asked all to support their local Red Cross movement to the utmost of their ability and induce their friends to do the same.

(*Runcorn Guardian*, 2 August 1918)

DESCRIPTION OF CHARLOTTE IN NORTHWICH A-Z BOOK

In a chapter on the couple, the authors write: Gustav married Charlotte Wyman, the daughter of a Northamptonshire doctor, in 1881 [sic]. This in itself must have helped Gustav's rise to the top of his profession, because Charlotte was the cousin of Sir John Brunner's second wife, Jane Wyman. The relationship between Jane and Charlotte must have been a close one - more like sisters than cousins - because Jane was actually brought up by Charlotte's father, George Wyman. Charlotte herself played a notable role during the First World War.

She became a VAD (Voluntary Aid Detachment) nurse, but more importantly she registered her home at Hartford Lodge as the base for a hospital Working Party, staffed by volunteers, during the course of the war. The Hartford Lodge Working Party was one of a number set up in Hartford and throughout Northwich, where volunteers made bandages, splints, blankets and hospital clothing for the local auxiliary hospitals caring for wounded soldiers.

The great and the good of the area, including members of the Brunner family at The Hollies in Hartford, the Hatt-Cooks at Hartford Hall, and the Dempsters of Vale Royal Abbey, all registered their houses as Working Party bases.

Charlotte Jarmay however did much more than this. She also created a Working Depot at Hartford Lodge where all the hospital clothing and provisions made by the local Working Parties could be gathered together and then forwarded on to other local auxiliary hospitals.

Even this wasn't enough for the energetic, middle-aged Charlotte Jarmay, because she also became the co-commandant of The Ley Auxiliary Hospital, pictured above right, based on Brunner Mond property at Winnington (demolished to make way for Brunner House). As the commandant of an auxiliary hospital, Charlotte would have been in control of all aspects of the hospital, except for the actual provision of medicine and nursing services to the recovering soldiers.

The wife of one of Brunner Mond's principal directors had given herself a prodigious war-time workload, and in 1919 her efforts were recognised by the award of an OBE. (*A-Z of Northwich & Around by Adrian L Bridge and*



The Ley auxiliary hospital, Winnington (above left). The large house was owned by Brunner Mond, and was eventually demolished to make way for Brunner House (above right).

Dawn Preece)

1927 - COLLECTING SILVER PAPER

A hospital board meeting was reported in the press. Lady Jarmay said that the ladies' committee were strongly in favour of inaugurating a scheme for the collection of silver paper, tin foil, metal stoppers on bottles, &c, which could be disposed of for the benefit of the Infirmary. Several schools already had collecting schemes in operation, and it was hoped that all the schools within the Infirmary district would join up in a collecting campaign. The secretary said much could be done by approaching the golf and social clubs, and after discussion, the ladies' committee were asked to launch the scheme. (*Northwich Chronicle*, 8 October 1927)

1929-31 - HUNTING WITH THE CHESHIRE HOUNDS

The Jarmays were very keen on fox-hunting and were frequently listed as participating in hunts described in the local newspapers. These include those at Nantwich (*Cheshire Observer*, 23 March 1929) and Ravensmoor (*Cheshire Observer*, 7 March 1931)

1938 - LADY JARMAY'S DEATH

"Sir John Jarmay bereaved" is the headline on a couple of paragraphs in the *Liverpool Echo* on 9 September 1938. "Lady Jarmay, wife of Sir John G Jarmay, the chemist and inventor of processes used in several industries in England and abroad, has died suddenly at Bulkeley Hall, Malpas, it is announced today. Lady Jarmay was formerly Miss Charlotte Elizabeth Wyman, daughter of the late Mr [Dr?] George Wyman. She married in 1882."

DEATH - OBITUARY

With deep regret we record the death which

occurred suddenly, on Wednesday night, at Bulkeley Hall, Malpas, of Lady Jarmay OBE, wife of Sir John Jarmay. Before her marriage in 1882 Lady Jarmay was Miss Charlotte Elizabeth Wyman and was the daughter of the late Dr Wyman.

Sir John and Lady Jarmay resided at Sandiway, but each year spent the winter on the Riviera. At the time of her death they were on a visit to their only son, Capt I B Jarmay at Bulkeley Hall.

During the war Lady Jarmay did notable work, and was chief of the military hospital at The Ley, Winnington, and for her work in this direction she was awarded the OBE.

For years both before and after the war she did great work for the Victoria Infirmary at Northwich, and in addition to being the secretary of the ladies' committee was a member of the board of management. On her departure from the district about nine years ago a bed was dedicated in the women's ward in her honour.

She was president for many years of the Mid-Cheshire Orthopaedic Clinic in Verdin Park, and took a deep interest in the nursing associations in the Northwich area, being president of her own association at Hartford.

Lady Jarmay was 80 years old. (*Cheshire Observer*, 10 September 1938)

1938 - FURTHER TRIBUTE

Sir John and Lady Jarmay were on a visit to her son and daughter-in-law, Capt and Mrs I B Jarmay, at the time of her death. Lady Jarmay will always be remembered with affection in Cheshire for her outstanding hospital work during the war years and for which she was awarded the OBE.

Sir John and Lady Jarmay lived for many years at Hartford in the mansion which is now

the offices of the Northwich RDC. They also resided at Pettypool, Sandiway. During her long residence in the district, Lady Jarmay took a deep and practical interest in hospital and nursing work. She did wonderful work during the war as chief of the military hospital at The Ley, Winnington. She was the inspiration of the nursing staff and of the hundreds of wounded soldiers who passed through this auxiliary hospital.

For years before and after the war she did invaluable work for the Victoria Hospital at Northwich. In addition to being a member of the management committee she was secretary of the ladies' committee for a long period. Hospital work was her great interest and in doing it she was the personification of thoroughness, patience and cheerfulness. When she left the district about eight years ago on account of Sir John's health, her colleagues on the management committee took the exceptional course of paying tribute to her services by dedicating a bed in the women's ward in her name.

Lady Jarmay was also president of the old Mid-Cheshire Orthopaedic Clinic in Verdin Park, playing a leading part in its inception and management. She was at all times a generous supporter of the Nursing Associations in and around Northwich, and was president of the Hartford Association.

Since leaving Hartford, Sir John and Lady Jarmay have been in the habit of wintering in the Riviera, returning to this country for the summer.

Borne on a heather-covered farm lorry, the remains of Lady Jarmay were conveyed on Saturday from Bulkeley Hall to Bickerton, where a service was conducted by the Rev T G Tykes. The grave in the adjoining churchyard was lined with heather and members of the staff from the hall acted as bearers. (*Cheshire Chronicle*, 10 September 1938)

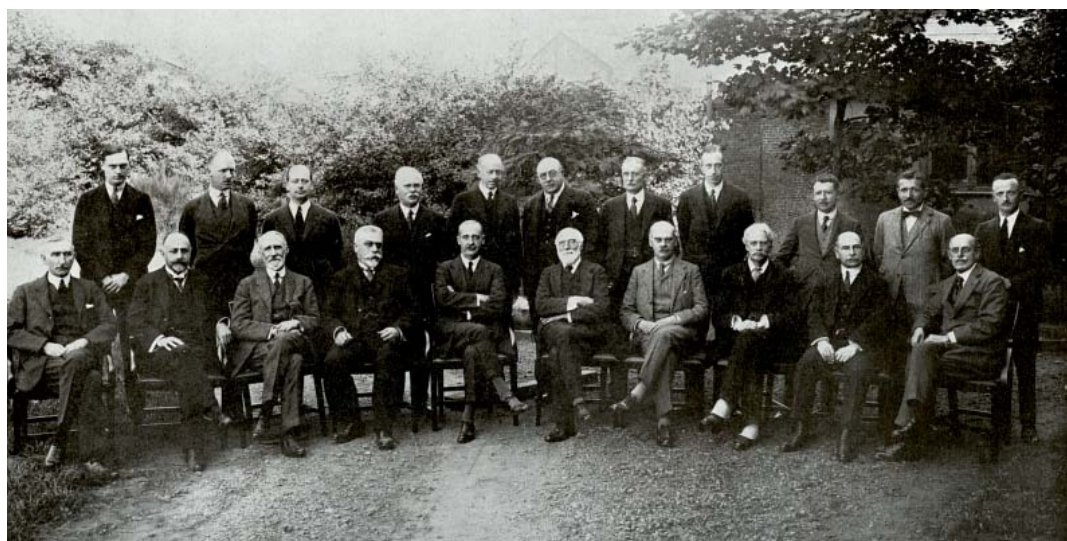
1944 - FROM GUSTAV JARMAY ARTICLE

Gustav Jarmay was married in 1882 to Charlotte Elizabeth Wyman, a lady of great charm, who was of the utmost assistance to him. She made their house at Hartford Lodge the social centre of the Brunner Mond staff. Jarmay the man looked an aristocrat to the fingertips. He hunted a good deal and was known for his immaculate appearance in the hunting field. Locally he was affectionately known as "The Squire". (*Nature*: Sept 30, 1944, p422 Vol 154)

1948 - PROBATE

JARMAY dame Charlotte Elizabeth of Bulkeley Hall Malpas Cheshire (wife of sir John Gustav Jarmay knight) administration London 23 March to John Leslie Jarmay farmer. Effects £1405 18s.

BRUNNER, MOND & CO LTD



Directors of Brunner Mond & Co Ltd, 1921

Back row: A Colegate, Col G P Pollitt, J H Gold, J J Harper, A T Hawes, A T Smith, C F Poole, J G Nicholson, A W Tangye, Louis Solvay, D Marsh (Secretary). Front row: H Glendinning, R L Mond, Sir John Jarmay, Armand Solvay, Roscoe Brunner (Chm), Sir Hugh Bell, Sir John Brunner, Gerald Balfour, E S Mond, J I Watts.

TEXT FOR EXHIBITION

BRUNNER MOND and Co Ltd celebrated its 50th anniversary in 1923, the year the Recreation Club project was completed. It was in 1920 that the directors (pictured above) had first responded favourably to a request from certain Hartford residents to present "the field by the Fountain" to the Parish Council as the site for a village club, tennis courts and bowling green.

The company had bought a considerable amount of land in Hartford where prestigious houses for its senior management had been constructed in what became The Crescent, The Grange and Walnut Lane.

In case of emergencies these managers were obliged to live within a ten-minute ride by horse from the Winnington works. Hartford not only fitted the bill, it was also upwind of the pollution generated by the works. Directors like Sir John Jarmay owned large homes there and Hartford had almost become a "company town".

The so-called Fountain Field had been acquired as part of the sale of the estate of Major Henry Stapylton Marshall (a regular Army officer and traveller who had inherited it from his father, Sir Thomas Horatio Marshall), and Brunner Mond had no need for it other than for the mineral rights.

The company was very enlightened for the times and led the way in looking after its employees, their families and the communities in which they lived. Hundreds of good quality

houses were built for workers, schools and colleges were established and excellent recreation facilities were provided such as the grand "Winnington Rec" (subscriptions from 3s 6d a year for basic access up to 12s 6d for membership of all sections). Its outdoor provision included a cricket pitch, tennis courts and a football field. Indoors were a billiard room, reading room, library, dressing rooms and baths, kitchen and bar. Works at Lostock, Sandbach and Middlewich also had their own scaled-down versions.

In 1978, the former Hartford Recreation Club was officially named the Village Hall, and in 1983 ICI Mond Division, the successors to Brunner Mond & Co, sold the Fountain Field to the Parish Council for £25 plus legal expenses - thus cutting the link with the chemical giant after 60 years.

Hartford's own "Rec" was just a minor footnote on the busy Brunner Mond directors' agenda, but it is still playing its role as a focal point in the village, a century later.



Winnington Recreation Club

THE MARSHALL CONNECTION

Note: Col Sir Thomas Horatio Marshall owned the Fountain Field, which he left to his son as part of his real estate in the village. He died in 1917.

COLONEL SIR THOMAS MARSHALL - LANDOWNER IN HARTFORD

1917 - FUNERAL AT HARTFORD

The fact that the late Colonel Sir Thomas Marshall had a unique connection with Mid-Cheshire accounted for the remarkable and representative character of the funeral which took place at the Hartford Parish Church on Tuesday afternoon. He was the founder and doyen of the Northwich Company of Volunteers, an extensive landowner, a magistrate for the district, the patron of Hartford Church, the oldest school manager, &c.

The remains were conveyed by train from Bangor to Hartford on Monday night, reaching Hartford Station at 10.32. The coffin was placed on the wheel bier and taken to the church, Mr A E Powles being in charge.

At the church the opening sentences of the burial service were read by the Rev H H Pitts (vicar), and the casket was deposited in the chancel, where it remained until the burial ceremony the following day. (*Chester Chronicle*, 7 April 1917)

MAJOR HENRY STAPYLTON MARSHALL

The following are references to Major Henry Stapylton Marshall, son of Sir Thomas Horatio Marshall CB, who inherited the Fountain Field and seems to have gone against his father's wishes by selling it to Brunner Mond.

He was a career soldier and lived in Hartford during his childhood.

1917 - PART OF HIS FATHER'S WILL

Sir Thomas Horatio Marshall CB, father of the Rev C Marshall, Vicar of St Chad's, Far Headingley, Leeds, and late of Hartford Beach, Cheshire, and of Bangor. Left all his real estate to his son Henry Stapylton Marshall for life, with the remainder to his grandson, Thomas R Stapylton Marshall charged with £1,000 for the benefit of the Hartford National Schools and £50 a year to the Vicar of Hartford. (*Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer*, 2 Aug 1917)

1942 - HIS OWN OBITUARY

At Hartford Parish Church on Tuesday the interment took place of Major Henry Stapylton Marshall, eldest son of the late Sir Thomas Horatio Marshall CB, of Hartford. A service had also been held at Roehampton.

Major Marshall, who was 83, died on Thursday at Roehampton, where he had lived since his London home at Sloane Gardens was damaged in air raids. Not until his home became untenable could he be persuaded to leave the Metropolis.

Major Marshall's early youth was spent at Hartford where his father was a landowner. He was granted a commission in the Cheshire Regiment, in which he served throughout the South African Campaign.

He was a great traveller interested in all forms of sport and games - he had fished and shot in all the European countries.

His clubs included the Naval and Military Club and the Fly Fishers Club, and he was a member of the Zoological Society.

Major Marshall married twice and there are two sons and two daughters. The sons are Canon C C Marshall (Leeds) and Major Thomas Marshall (Bangor), and the daughters are Mrs Sydney Platt (Pau in occupied France) and Mrs Anderson (Scotland). (*Chester Chronicle*, 23 May 1942)

FROM READING ROOM TO PARISH CLUB

RESEARCHING the history of Hartford Village Hall sometimes leads to mentions in local newspapers of the Hartford Reading Room, which is documented from about 1860-70, and to suggestions in the parish council minutes some 35 years later that a reading room should be provided again.

The word "Room" in this case seems to cover both a physical place and the organisation which met there.

Where was this Room? The Hartford Civic Society blue plaque outside Thorn(e) Cottage on Chester Road states: *Thomas Marshall enclosed the common land which covered the area between Chester Road, Bradburns Lane and Beach Road, thus depriving the villagers of their ancient rights, but provided a large, square reading room for them where he gave 'penny readings'. It still exists inside this property.*

Some social historians believe that Victorian and Edwardian reading rooms, providing newspapers, books and a venue for improving talks, were the forerunner of the village hall in community life, in that they accommodated gatherings of a cross-section of the population. Others feel that they were originally imposed upon the workers by the church and local landowners, reflected contemporary attitudes to philanthropy, recreation and self-help and confirmed the great class divide.

Which of these applied to Hartford? Perhaps the answer is "a bit of both". Newspaper cuttings of the 1860s seem to indicate that in addition to accessing printed reading material (which is actually rarely mentioned) the working class members of Hartford Reading Room were also treated to readings of prose and poetry, and renditions of popular songs, performed with relish by their betters during the winter season.

According to "The Rise and Decline of Village Reading Rooms" by C King (Cambridge University Press, 2009) these rooms were very common and offered a much-needed alternative to the public house for the working classes, though they tended to appeal more to the lower middle classes, and membership was mostly restricted to men. They played an important part in village life.

Thomas Marshall was early off the mark with his reading room in Hartford. They were mostly provided in the second half of the 19th century by rich landowners and industrialists whose



There is every reason to believe that the well-to-do performers enjoyed themselves too.

workers' hours were being reduced, thus giving them a little leisure time to themselves. There were several such rooms in Mid-Cheshire - for instance at Bostock (in what is now the Hayhurst Arms) - as well as in the various Recreation Clubs associated with Brunner Mond at the turn of the century.

The following is the first report I have found relating to Hartford, carried in the *Cheshire Observer* on 5 January 1861. It is interesting that the venue is described as Mrs Jane Phoebe Marshall's reading room - presumably because it had been gifted by her family. The Reading Room was across the road from her home. At the time she was a 51-year-old widow, living with her widowed son Captain Marshall and his two-year-old son Henry.

HARTFORD READING ROOM TEA PARTY

The members of this Institution and their friends, by the invitation of Mrs Marshall of Hartford Beach, met at her Reading Room, on Thursday evening week to partake of tea, at which that lady presided assisted by Miss E Stapylton. After tea, Mr George Henry Cromack, the talented blind organist of Hartford Church, who had kindly lent the pianoforte for the occasion, assisted by the church choir, entertained the company with a variety of glees, songs &c. In the intervals of the singing, Captain Marshall, Mrs Marshall and the secretary read selections from "Heart Music" and "Self Help".

As an indication of her wealth, when the 1861 census was taken three months later on 7 April 1861, Mrs Marshall's household had nine live-in servants: a housekeeper, ladies' maid, nurse, upper housemaid, kitchen maid, under housemaid, butler, coachman and page.

Her family were the major landowners in Hartford.

The next available mention of the Reading Room is in the *Northwich Guardian* of 18 January 1862.

LECTURE AT HARTFORD

On Monday evening last a lecture was delivered in the Hartford Reading Room, by Mr Horner, from the Wilberforce Institution for the Blind, at York. The subject (a rather peculiar one for a blind person) was "The British Soldier at home and abroad", in treating which the lecturer exhibited remarkable powers of memory and a capability of delivering his ideas in a very popular and striking manner..."

After a long description of the lecture, the village correspondent continues: *Captain Marshall then rose and said it was evident from the great attention given to the interesting lecture that all those present thoroughly appreciated the subject. He proposed a vote of thanks to the speaker for his delivery which was seconded by the Rev J Sheffield and carried by approbation.*

Two months later, on 26 March 1862, the *Chester Courant* reported in this short filler:

LECTURE AT HARTFORD

On Wednesday last, a lecture was delivered in the Hartford Reading Room, for the benefit of that Institution by the Rev Henry Sandwith MA, incumbent of Norley, on "Life in Constantinople".

On 21 January 1865, the *Northwich Guardian* reported:

THE HARTFORD READING ROOM

On Tuesday readings were given when the Rev Eddowes presided. F H Firth, Esq read "A mother's last words", LI Lloyd, Esq read "Aylmus Field", Mr T Ledsham read from "Heart Music" and also part of "Besom Ben" by Waugh. The music and singing were given by Messrs Jukes, Long and Hurst. The room was crowded and the audience highly delighted.

On 23 December 1865 the Christmas gathering seems to have contained lots of popular, and often sentimental, songs and readings to amuse their unsophisticated audience. The *Northwich Guardian* stated:

HARTFORD READING ROOM

On Wednesday the third public reading for this season was held in the School Room, Hartford [an interesting change of venue]. The following was the programme for the evening:- Miss Marshall presided at the pianoforte, and played several pieces during the entertainment. Mr Lloyd read "The cane bottom'd Chair" and "Mr Cox in the Hunting Field", by Thackeray. Mr Grey read "Paradise and the Peri" by Thomas Moore. Mr Weston, of Northwich, gave the "Bells" by Edgar Poe; and Mr Ledsham "The Hazel Clough Boggart" and "A Countryman's description of a Turkish Bath". Mr Norris sang "The Old Arm Chair" and Mr Claydon "The underground railway and "Two o'clock in the morning", after which the Rev E Eddowes, chairman, moved a vote of thanks to the readers, singers &c and the meeting separated.

A month later, on 20 January 1866, the *Northwich Guardian* published the following advertisement. Note that the event is once again being held at the School. George Grossmith was a well-known comedian, writer, composer, actor, and singer and the organisers

HARTFORD READING ROOM

The Committee of the Public Readings have much pleasure in announcing that they have entered into an agreement with the Celebrated Humorous & Dramatic Lecturer, **GEO GROSSMITH, Esq.**, Lecturer to the Russell Institute, London, the Edinburgh Philosophical Institute &c. &c, to give his new entertainment, consisting of **SKETCHES OF LIFE & CHARACTER** &c on Saturday, the 27th instant, in the School Room, Hartford.

Admission: Reserved Seats, numbered 2s 6d, Second Seats 1s, Back Seats, 6d. The Evening's Entertainment will commence at eight o'clock precisely, doors open at half-past seven, and carriages to be in waiting at 9.30.

Tickets may be had at Mr Burgess's, Northwich; Miss Dean's, Post Office, Hartford; or Mr Ledsham, Secretary to the Reading Room, Hartford.

obviously thought they needed a large venue. (His son, also named George, followed in his footsteps with a performing career spanning four decades and many years later, with his brother Weedon, he wrote "The Diary of a Nobody".)

We get more background information in the next report in the *Northwich Guardian*, published on 10 February 1866:

HARTFORD READING ROOM

The usual fortnightly readings in connection with this institution took place on Wednesday last, the Rev E Eddowes in the chair. The following were the readers: Col Marshall, who read "Virginia" from Macauley's "Lays of Ancient Rome", F H Firth Esq, who gave Hood's "Bridge of Sighs" and "Hubert and Arthur" from Shakespeare's "King John"; C Green Esq read "A Packet of Seeds, saved by an Old Gardener"; and G Grey Esq who gave a humorous description of a country circus, with illustrations drawn by himself. Mr Twiss conducted the musical arrangements, assisted by Mr S E W Woods, of Delamere; and the following were the singers: LI Lloyd Esq, gave the song "Goodbye sweetheart, goodbye"; Mr Norris, the "English Volunteers"; and Mr Ledsham, the "Lass of Richmond Hill". At the close of the meeting the chairman made a few appropriate remarks, thanking the readers and singers for their services.

In the 7 July 1866 *Northwich Guardian*, there is an intriguing advertisement. Given that singing seemed to play an important part in the group's meetings, why were they selling the piano? Was it the one lent by the blind organist five years previously?

AN EXCELLENT 6½ octaves
(second hand) GRAND HORIZONTAL
PIANOFORTE, by Broadwood, to be sold for
£15. It is in a handsome case with morocco
cover, and in first-rate condition. May be
seen at the Hartford Reading Room.

By December 1866 the musical situation must have been sorted out as the programme included lots of singing and some new singers, still under the direction of Mr Twiss:

HARTFORD READING ROOM

A public reading in connection with this institution was given on Tuesday evening last, G Grey Esq of Hartford, chairman.

There was a good attendance and all seemed highly pleased with the entertainment. The following were the readers: F H Firth Esq, LI Lloyd Esq, Messrs Knowles and Ledsham; and the following gentlemen took part in the musical arrangements which were under the able management of Mr Twiss. Mr Cromack gave the song of the "Charming Woman" in which he was encored and then sang "The Little Gay Deceiver". Messrs Cowap of Davenham sang "Massa's in the cold ground" as a trio and chorus. Mr Norris, the "Death of Nelson" and Mr Lowe "A Motto for every Man" in which he was encored and gave "Have you seen her lately?"

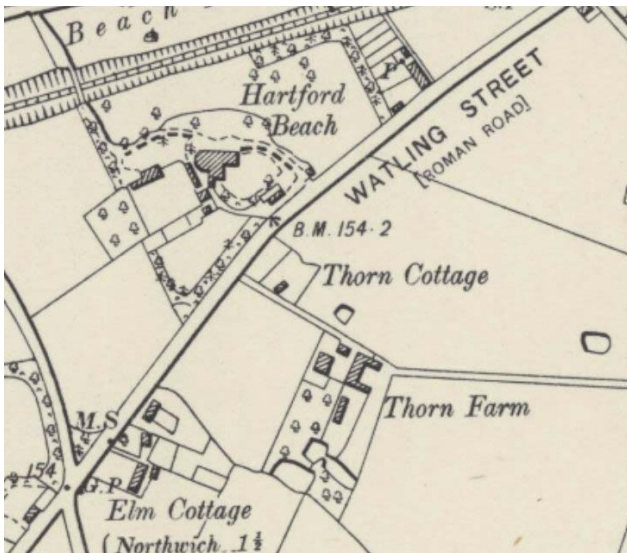
On 24 December 1867, speaking at a lavish Christmas entertainment treat laid on for the 150+ workers of Hartford builder, Mr Richard Beckett, Mr Twiss (who had taken part in the music) said he "would press upon the notice of the numerous body of working men present the claims of the Hartford Reading Room, established for their especial benefit, where they might have all the advantages of a good supply of newspapers, books, games &c, at a mere nominal charge."

A *Chester Courant* report of 18 March 1868 under the heading **HARTFORD READING ROOM** stated that the last public reading for the season had been given the previous Wednesday evening. There was a crowded house, and among those present were Lady Garvock and party, plus a number of Hartford 'society' names. The report takes up so much space with a list of familiar and new readers and singers, and the names of the works they performed, that we will not quote them. Indeed one wonders how long the programme took to present! However the report reflects a flourishing organisation.

It is therefore a real shock to read the next and last cutting currently available. A *Northwich Guardian* advert for 19 March 1870 reads:

Saturday, March Twenty-sixth
SALE at Hartford Reading Room, of the
entire library of BOOKS and FURNITURE.
Particulars next week. T. Capper, Auctioneer.

Frustratingly, the following week's short advert was exactly the same wording and there was no editorial report on the success or otherwise of the auction, or why it had taken place.



*The Reading Room is now inside Thorn(e) Cottage
(OS map 1897)*

The Reading Room then disappears from sight. What happened to the members? Did the local pubs start providing newspapers that their regulars could read whilst enjoying a glass of beer and not being patronised by the toffs? The idea of catering for the residents' educational and recreational needs did not die, however.

Elected parish and town councils were first established by the Local Government Act of 1894 and Hartford Parish Council duly came into existence, holding its first meeting on 17 December 1894. The purpose of the Act was to reinvigorate local communities and give them a voice, and it was only six months before the newly-elected councillors turned to the question of providing "a Village Club and Reading Room which would be a nice-looking building".

They hoped it might go on the site of the Old Pinfold "at the junction of the old Roman Road to Chester and of the main road to the Abbey of Vale Royal at the part where the two roads meet", but there were long legal wrangles over this and the idea fell through.

On 11 November 1895 there was another long discussion over the legal position of the Pinfold land, and the desirability of providing a Recreation Ground in the parish. It was agreed unanimously that "something should be done" and various suggestions were made. "After consideration it was ultimately decided that a sub committee should be appointed and together with the clerk they would be authorised to apply to various landowners in the parish to ask them upon what terms they would be prepared to lease a piece of land for a Recreation Ground in the village."

On 9 December 1895, under the heading "Recreation Ground and Reading Room" it was reported that "the following replies to enquiries for the necessary land for a Recreation Ground were read, viz: Mrs Todd Naylor, Exors of Mr Coward and Mr Wrench, who wrote saying that they had no land to offer for that purpose, also from Mr Littledale who expressed his willingness to let the Council a piece of land called the Whalebone Field now let to Beckett and Co as yearly tenants...."

"The question of a Recreation and Reading Room was discussed at considerable length and the feeling of the council was that a part of Coward's property, that adjoining the Post Office, Beckett's premises and the field offered by Mr Littledale were the most suitable for the purpose, but no definite steps were taken on the matter."

At the next meeting, on 11 January 1896, "the Recreation Ground question was again under consideration and it was decided to write to Mr Coward asking if he would be willing to sell the field (or house and field) adjoining the post office for the use of the Parish. Mr Littledale undertook to interview Mr Wood (Messrs Beckett & Co) respecting the notice they would require to give up possession of the Whalebone Field in the event of the Council purchasing it. The Chairman was requested to prepare a report of the proceedings for the newspapers."

Unfortunately the Council's approaches produced disappointing results. Mr Coward replied "that he could not entertain the proposed purchase of the house and field adjoining the Post Office." And Mr Littledale reported that Mr Wood did not want to give up the Whalebone Field unless he (Mr Littledale) insisted upon it. "It was ultimately decided that the question of the Recreation Ground and Club be postponed to the forthcoming Parish Meeting [on 9 March]." The proceedings of this public meeting were not recorded in the council Minute Book.

At the council meeting on 15 April 1896, "the proposed Recreation Ground was brought forward and Mr Done intimated that he would give a definite notice of motion for the next meeting."

Pursuant to this motion, in May, "Mr Done moved that negotiations be commenced for the purchase of the Whalebone Field for a Recreation Ground and that a sub-committee be appointed to deal with the matter. He explained his views at length and a discussion took place, and Mr Littledale, the owner of the

field, intimated that he was quite prepared to go into the matter with the Council. The matter was carried unanimously and a sub committee of the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Messrs Done and Pierce was appointed to go on with the matter."

When the sub committee met on 22 May the members "agreed to write to Mr Littledale and ask him to put a price on the field, and at the same time enquire if he was disposed to lease the field, and if so for what period and at what sum."

The sub committee got together again on 8 June and it was recorded: "A letter received from Mr Littledale was read and considered and it was unanimously agreed to report to the Council that we are of the opinion that it would be advisable to acquire the Whalebone Field for a Recreation Ground on a 14 years lease at £15 a year, but that before doing so we consider it well to call a Parish Meeting and lay the matter before the parishioners and take a vote upon it, and in the meantime to obtain from Messrs Beckett & Co the terms on which they are prepared to give up their tenancy of the field."

At the next meeting of the full council "the report of the sub committee on the proposed recreation ground was submitted in the terms of their Resolution and on the proposition of Mr Done seconded by Mr Cookson unanimously approved - the Parish Meeting being fixed for Monday evening the 13th July at 8pm after the monthly council meeting. Notices of such a meeting to be printed and distributed throughout the village."

The minutes of the council meeting held before the public meeting state that the letter

from Messrs Beckett & Co with regard to the Whalebone Field was read and discussed. It was decided that the Clerk acknowledge the letter and send with it a copy of any Resolution which may be passed at the Parish Meeting to be held at 8 o'clock.

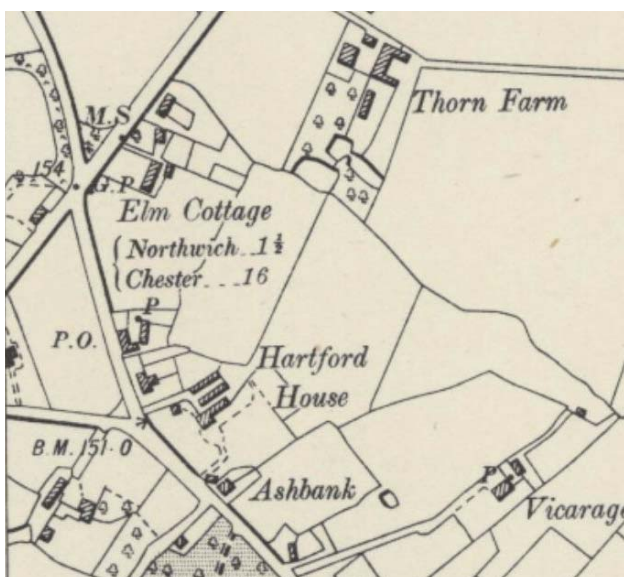
The proceedings of the Parish Meeting are not noted in the council Minute Book. Presumably the sub committee was beaver away in the background. There is no mention at all of the Recreation Ground or Reading Room until 10 May 1897.

Under heading "Playground", the Clerk reported: "That the Church field Trustees could not agree to let off the field or a part of it for a playground. The matter was fully discussed and Mr Littledale said he was still prepared to consent to the Whalebone Field being let for the purpose subject to arranging with the tenants it was resolved that the best thanks of the Meeting be given to Mr Littledale for his renewed offer and that a sub-committee consisting of the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Mr Done be appointed to deal with the matter."

On 14 June 1897 the chairman reported "that the enquiries of the sub committee on the playground and explained that the matter was practically where it was 12 months ago - nobody seemed to know or be anxious about it and it was for the Council to say whether anything further was to be done or not. It was proposed by Dr Moreton, seconded by Mr F B Moreton and carried unanimously that the matter stand over until the next Parish Meeting."

The next mention is at the council meeting held on 11 October 1897. "The question of a Reading Room was discussed and it was resolved that a notice be put in the paper for the next meeting." On 11 November, "a notice of motion by Mr Done was read that the Parish be provided with a Reading Room and also be lighted with lamps during the winter months. The Reading Room was fully discussed and adjourned until the next meeting, enquiries to be made in the meantime."

On 9 November, councillors left the subject of the Reading Room to the next meeting. The same decision was made at the first meeting of 1898 and Mr Pierce was asked to "make full enquiries". The council seemed to be heartily bored by now and much more interested in their exciting and pioneering project to light the village by electricity - via five 25 candle-power lamp-posts. Hartford was the first village in the country to be lit this way and there were many



A field next to the Post Office in what is now School Lane was suggested (OS Map 1897)

teething problems with the scheme..

In February 1898, the chairman Mr Hatt-Cook wrote the minutes himself, as the usual clerk, Mr Harry Mason, with his beautiful copperplate handwriting, had been sent away for a time to work outside the district by his employer. He noted that Mr Pierce had reported back about the proposed Reading Room and the council had decided unanimously *"that the whole question be laid before the Parish Meeting."*

There followed a period of silence in which the Reading Room and Recreation Ground were not mentioned in the minutes for the next four years, though doubtless there may have been fruitless talks about sites and land ownership occurring in the background. However, there may have been another reason why the need for a Reading Room (in which to actually read) was not so urgent.

Under the heading "Library" in the minutes for 10 March 1902 the clerk wrote: *"A letter was read from the Clerk to the Northwich Library Committee, suggesting that Hartford should join the Library District. Mr Pierce informed the council that the old Parish Library was much used by the schoolchildren and by those attending the evening classes and suggested that new books be obtained so that the library could be opened to the public. The council favoured this course and on the proposition of Mr Starkey seconded by Mr Mercer it was unanimously resolved that the Clerk send out circulars appealing for books or subscriptions towards the purchase of new ones."*

At the 21 April 1902 meeting the Clerk reported that in reply to a circular letter appealing for subscriptions and books for the library he had received £3 from Mr Cyril Dewhurst and £1 from Colonel Tait. A letter was read from Mr Milner stating that he would pay the fee of one and a half guineas for the use of books issued by the Cheshire and Lancashire Institutes.

"Correspondence between the Vicar and Mr Milner was also read and it was unanimously resolved that the matter be now left in the hands of the Vicar and Mr Pierce to carry out, and Mr Pierce promised to write to Mr Milner."

At the meeting on 14 November 1902, the Clerk wrote: *"A letter was read from the Rev E Eddowes stating that the Library was now opened to the public and they had joined the union of Lancashire and Cheshire Institutes' Travelling Library whereby they would obtain 50 volumes each quarter at an annual cost of £1 1s. Messrs M Pierce and H Booth with the Vicar*

were appointed a Committee and the Clerk was directed to pay the above £1 1s 0d out of funds collected for the Library."

Praiseworthy as this initiative was, the need for a communal facility in the village had not gone away. The whole subject was resurrected on 11 January 1904, when the parish council minutes stated, under the new heading "Parish Room":

"The Chairman [Mr Hatt-Cook] brought forward the question of a Parish Room, one was badly needed in the Parish. He had no doubt that a suitable site could be obtained and suggested the formation of a limited company. Several members spoke in favour of the proposal and on the motion of Mr Booth, seconded by Mr Done, it was unanimously resolved: "That the chairman placed the matter on the agenda of the Ratepayers' Meeting to be held in March next."

The ratepayers must have been in favour, but in June 1904, councillors heard that their colleague Mr Moore had had an interview with Mr T P Wrench, *"who declined to entertain any idea of the use of his land for a recreation ground."*

So after nearly ten years, the council was now back to Square One...

There was a false dawn in 1909 as described in the "Jottings" editorial section of the *Northwich Guardian* on 20 November: *"The members of the Hartford Parish Council are anxious to become possessed of a meeting place for the residents in that charming locality, to be called the Parish Club House. Mr T A Johnson has been kind enough to offer a free site known as 'The Old Pinfold', and at the annual parish meeting on Saturday evening this offer was accepted with the utmost alacrity, and he was heartily thanked for his generosity."*

"The meeting also appointed a committee to go into the matter and obtain particulars as to the cost of the building &c."

"Mr Hatt-Cook has for a number of years endeavoured to establish a recreation room in the village, but, unfortunately he has not received from the inhabitants generally that amount of encouragement and support which might reasonably have been expected."

The plan fell through...

If only the members had known then that the very best of solutions would be found to Hartford's recreation problems, but not for a long time and only after some of the money to pay for it became available following a calamitous and bloody World War.

QUOTES FROM 1927 LECTURE SERIES

TEXT FOR EXHIBITION WITH ADDITIONS

NEARLY a century ago a series of improving lectures was held each winter in the new hall under the auspices of the Hartford Recreation Club - just the sort of thing of which the Hartford Reading Room group would have approved.

The following three short extracts from long reports in the local *Chronicle* give a real flavour of the contemporary mindset.

There were two lectures in November 1927. In the first, Mrs E M Oliver, wife of the Vicar of Hartford, gave a talk entitled "**The Modern Novel**" – though one is not sure of her qualifications for so doing.

She said that novel reading was her relaxation and all she proposed to offer were some casual reflections which had grown in her own mind as to the character of the modern novel and contrasts between it and the novels of the great Victorians such as Scott, Dickens, Thackeray, Mrs Gaskell and George Eliot.

The comparison might be rather unfair, for while people read only the great ones of the Victorian age they today read all sorts of novels, good, bad and indifferent.

However, she emphasised, "Money judiciously applied in advertisements, could make a brilliant popular success out of the crudest balderdash – provided only that the said balderdash was sufficiently improper!"

She foretold that it would not be possible till perhaps another 100 years had passed to estimate

who were the really great novelists of today.

On 22 November, Col J A Saner VD delivered an instructive address on the vast subject of "**The Sun, Moon and Stars**". Materially adding to the scope of this subject matter, wrote the reporter, by an exhibition of specially prepared lantern slides. He also briefly touched upon the kindred topics of attraction by gravity and the theory of relativity.

The lecturer stated that the study of astronomy probably dated as far back as the first emergence of man as an intellectual being, whether accepting Darwinian evolution, the theory of special creation in our present form, or that of anthropoid ape invested with a soul placing him in a position far advanced of the animal kingdom...

Talking about the sun, Col Saner said that it would take an aeroplane nearly two and a half years to fly round it, and ninety years to fly from the earth to the sun.

In early December the Rev G S Payne MA, Rector of Delamere talked about another huge subject, "**The Cathedrals and Chateaux of Northern France**".

He was of the opinion that "the French planned their cities and towns with the idea of beauty and proportion ever before them, while this was probably the last thing which an English Urban Council thought about."

He added "while one felt, for various reasons, that England was the better country, one could not but admire the many attractions which France afforded in the world of art."

SOLDIERS JAILED FOR BURGLARY

IT SEEMS extraordinary that a Scotland Yard fingerprint expert was called in to help solve a burglary case where the thieves' haul was only 24 packs of cards, a key and two small knives, worth a total of £3 18s.

However two young soldiers who broke into the Recreation Club in 1946 had been absent without leave on several occasions and were of "poor" character, so it appears that the custodial sentences handed down to them at the Quarter Sessions were intended to be an example to other ill-disciplined men stationed at military camps in the area.

Two cuttings from the local paper tell the story. The first covers the committal proceedings at the Police Court:

DECEMBER 1946 - NORTHWICH

DETECTIVE-INSPECTOR Oates, of the Fingerprint Branch of New Scotland Yard, gave evidence at Northwich Police Court on Friday, when Martin Lynch and Ronald Lifford, Pioneer Corps privates, were committed for trial at Chester Assizes for breaking and entering Hartford Recreation Club on the night of October 24-25 and stealing 24 packs of cards and a door-key, of the total value of £2 10s 6d, the property of the Club, and a pruning knife and clasp-knife, of the total value of £1 7s 6d, the property of the Club groundsman, Ewart Tinker.

Defendants pleaded "Guilty".

It was stated that entrance was effected by the breaking of windows in the table tennis room and pantry.

Photographs of fingermarks found on the inside of the pantry window and the fingerprints of the accused, Lynch, were then sent to New Scotland Yard, where they were examined by Detective-Inspector Oates, who, it was alleged, found they were identical.

An application by Mr G E Stelfox on behalf of the accused, for bail, was refused.

(Winsford Chronicle, 28 December 1946)

About a fortnight later the men appeared before the Quarter Sessions:

JANUARY 1947 - CHESTER

TWO SOLDIERS stationed at Cuddington Camp who pleaded "Guilty" to breaking and entering Hartford Recreation Club on October 24th and stealing 24 packs of playing cards and other articles, appeared before Lt-Col J Dallas Waters at Chester Quarter Sessions on Tuesday.

They were Ronald Lifford (20), sheet metal worker, Frogmore House, Putney Bridge, London, and Martin Lynch (20), said to be a native of Galway.

Mr J P Elsdon said the club was locked up on October 24th. When the caretaker arrived next morning he found that a window had been broken open and that knives which he had left in his jacket pocket had been stolen.

Detective-Sgt Jones photographed some finger prints on a window ledge, and these were sent to Scotland Yard. The following day Lynch was seen and admitted the offence, and then Lifford was seen and he also admitted the offence.

Both men had previous convictions. Lynch had been absent without leave on seven occasions. His general character was said to be poor.

Lifford had been absent without leave on four occasions and his general character was also described as poor.

Detective-Constable Austin, replying to the Chairman, said they got a lot of trouble with young soldiers stationed at Cuddington and Oulton Park. Capt W Anderson said the men had good military characters.

Mr [unreadable] said the accused realised they had done wrong and would have to be punished, but they had made up their minds to go straight.

It was stated that Lifford only came out of prison on October 9th after serving a nine months sentence.

Lynch was sentenced to six months' imprisonment and Lifford to 15 months' imprisonment.

(Winsford Chronicle, 11 January 1947)

PROFILES OF 'REC' CLUB CHARACTERS

A SEARCH of the British Newspaper Archive for "Hartford Recreation Club" brings up a treasure trove of news and obituaries of past members, showing a rounded picture of the diverse characters who got together to enjoy their sports. Here are some of those whose names appear in reports published during the club's first 50 years:

1926 - BERT HOWARD HARTFORD GROUNDSMAN

A serious motorcycle accident, attributed to a skid, befell **Bert Howard** (34) the groundsman at **Hartford Recreation Club**, on the road from Whitegate to Northwich last night.

He was seen proceeding steadily along by a motorist, Mr C C Williamson, of Altrincham, and a few minutes later Mr Williamson discovered him lying on the roadside, with the motorcycle on top of him.

He was unconscious, and, seen by a doctor, was removed to the Victoria Infirmary, Northwich, where he was found to be suffering from a fracture to the base of the skull.

He regained consciousness this morning, but his condition is regarded as grave.

(Liverpool Echo, 18 March 1926)

1942 - ALEXANDER DUNCAN ELLIS FORMER FOOTBALL OFFICIAL

Alexander Duncan Ellis, aged 64, of Rookery Cottages, Chester Road, Hartford, was a member of an old Northwich family and a prominent figure in the sporting life of the district.

He had been on the clerical staff of ICI (Alkali) Ltd at Winnington and had lived in retirement for a few years. About 35 years ago he played for Winnington Park and Northwich Victoria football Clubs and later became a Junior League referee.

For some years he was secretary of Northwich and District Football Association. His long official association with football terminated with a period as secretary of Northwich Victoria FC Ltd.

Like his brother Mr J C Ellis, who died about a fortnight ago, Mr Alec Ellis played cricket with the Winnington Park Club in the old days and later he took a keen interest in bowls, playing at **Hartford Recreation Club**. He was a Freemason of the "Semper Fidelis" Lodge and Chapter and held provincial rank. Mr Ellis is survived by a widow and one brother.

(Winsford Chronicle, 11 July 1942)

1947 - JAMES MOORE CHORISTER AND BELL-RINGER

A forty years' connection with Hartford Parish Church ended with the death, after a long illness, of **James Moore**, The Nook, Beach Grove.

Mr Moore, who was 50, was a member of one of the oldest Hartford families and, like his father before him, he had actively associated himself with the church and the social life of the parish.

For forty years a member of the church choir, he was a soloist at the early age of nine, later a Sunday School teacher, and for 22 years a bell-ringer.

For a number of years he acted as secretary of the **Hartford Recreation Club** and more recently was a member of the Cuddington Bowling Club. During the First World War Mr Moore was in the Volunteers, while in the last war he served in the Home Guard. For 14 years he had been employed by the Mid-Cheshire Electricity Supply Co.

(Winsford Chronicle, 28 March 1947)

1949 - LAURA FORSTER ORGANISED TENNIS TOURNAMENTS

Laura Forster, aged 47, of Gwalia, Chester Road, Hartford, was the wife of Mr Reginald Forster (see page 46), partner in the firm of Messrs William Forster and Sons, Castle, and was the second daughter of Mr and Mrs H Marsland, 4 Victoria Road, formerly in business as clothiers at 109 Witton Street.

Before her marriage, Mrs Forster was head tailoress at Madam Owen Ltd., Castle, where she was employed for 14 years.

A former Sunday School teacher and member of the choir at the Central Methodist Church, Mrs Forster was well-known in the Witton district before she went to Hartford.

She was a member of the **Hartford Recreation Club** Tennis section and played regularly in the tennis team.

She also organised tennis tournaments for the NSPCC and other charities.

(Winsford Chronicle, 22 January 1949)

1949 - SAMUEL RENTON

WORKED WITH LUDWIG MOND

Samuel S Renton, of Chester Road, Hartford, died suddenly at **Hartford Recreation Club** after he had won a game of bowls. He had spent the whole of his career with Messrs Brunner, Mond and Co at ICI (Alkali) Division.

He was educated at the old Witton Grammar School and began work in the bleach laboratory at Winnington in 1896 under Dr Ludwig Mond and Mr Robert Mond on the electrolytic zinc process.

Later he joined Mr Norris in the early days of research work under the Brunner-Mond regime and subsequently became personal assistant to Mr A M Sturges in the analytical section of the laboratory. He eventually became a member of staff at the new research laboratory.

He was a prominent Freemason, first in membership of the "Sincerity Lodge" and he was also a founder and past master of the "Sinceritas" Chapter. He was a keen player of bowls, golf and billiards.

Mr Renton was in his 69th year.

(Winsford Chronicle, 16 July 1949)

1951 - JOSEPH HULSE

LEFT £1,000 FOR 'REC' GROUNDS

Joseph Hulse, aged 78, of Hartford near Northwich, Cheshire, builder, left £52,021 gross (£50,847 nett). Duty paid was £15,230.

His bequests included: £3,000 to Victoria Infirmary, Northwich, to endow two beds, one in his own name and the other in the name of his wife Ann Hulse; £2,000 to Sir John Deane's Grammar School, Northwich, to found a scholarship in his name; £1,000 to Hartford Parish Church for the upkeep of the churchyard; and £1,000 to Hartford Parish Council to be spent on maintenance and improvement of **Hartford Recreation ground**.

(Manchester Evening News, 18 July 1951)

1953 - GEORGE SKEATH

METHODIST AND KEEN SPORTSMAN

George Skeath, of Garwood, Chester Road, died at the age of 87.

A native of St Helens, came to Northwich in 1888 to work as an analytical chemist for Messrs Brunner, Mond and Co. In his early days he was keenly interested in sport. He was a tennis player and a member of Northwich Rowing Club, Sandiway Golf Club and **Hartford Recreation Club**. He was also a

member of Northwich Amateur Dramatic Society, in his later years he took up bowling. Mr Skeath attended the Methodist Church.

(Winsford Chronicle, 11 April 1953)

1959 - GEORGE ARTHUR DUNN

RAILWAY SIGNALMAN

George Arthur Dunn, aged 77, of Thorn Lane, Hartford, had been employed for about 48 years as a railway signalman at Sandbach Junction and Northwich Station. He was a member of **Hartford Recreation Club** and Winnington House Veterans' Club.

(Winsford Chronicle, 3 January 1959)

1960 - ENOCH WOOD

FORMER CAPTAIN OF I.C.I STEAM SHIPS

Enoch Wood, a member of an old Barnton family of watermen, died at the home of his daughter in Rugby.

Aged 81 years, Mr Wood was captain of several ICI river steamers during his working career, the last being the SS Francis Poole. He lived for many years in Beach Road, Hartford, and was a popular member of **Hartford Recreation Club**.

(Winsford Chronicle, 25 June 1960)

1961 - THOMAS ASHLEY

BUSINESSMAN AND SPORTSMAN

While checking his homing pigeons from the Nantes race, **Thomas Ashley** collapsed and died - and Mid and South Cheshire lost one of its most prominent sportsmen and respected businessmen.

Mr Ashley, of Thorn Cottage, Chester Road, Hartford, was the founder of the firm of public works contractors which bore his name, and which had earned a high reputation up and down the country for its skill at road making and other large scale construction work.

Recent contracts carried out by the company included the by-pass road and bridge at Stamford Bridge and the western section of the Northwich by-pass.

Mr Ashley, who was 56, was born at Moulton. He set up business on his own account, at Brigg, Lincolnshire in 1941.

Two years later he and his wife Dorothy moved back to Northwich and the company headquarters were re-established where they remain today, in Chester Road, Old Hartford.

Mr Ashley was for many years a director of Northwich Victoria FC and club chairman in the memorable 1956-7 season when Vics won

the Cheshire League championship. Latterly his official connection had been with Crewe Alexandra FC as a director and ex-chairman - but his old love, Vics, still attracted him back to the Drill Field frequently.

As a pigeon fancier, no one was better known in the whole of Cheshire than Mr Ashley, who had to his credit a long list of successes in the big races of the calendar.

He also enjoyed a game of bowls at **Hartford Recreation Club**, of which he was a highly esteemed President.

As a Freemason he was a past master of Weaver Lodge and a member of "Semper Fidelis" Chapter.

(Crewe Chronicle, 15 July 1961)

1963 - CHARLES RICHARD CRAWFORD DECORATED SOLDIER AND RAILWAYMAN

Charles Richard Crawford, aged 71, of 20 King Street, Hartford, was a member of an old Hartford family, being the second son of the late Mr and Mrs W Crawford. He had been employed by the Cheshire Lines Committee and British Rail for over 50 years.

During the First World War, he joined the Royal Engineers and served in France and Italy. He was awarded the Military Medal and Bar.

Mr Crawford took an active part in the social life of Hartford. He was chairman, secretary, treasurer and committee member of the **Recreation Club**, and for many years he organised the weekly whist drives. He was a founder member of the branch of the British Legion and also of the Hartford Area Committee of the Northwich and District Social Service.

(Winsford Chronicle, 21 December 1963)

1964 - MARIA MOORE ENJOYED THE WHIST DRIVES

Maria Moore, aged 93, of Brentwood, Beach Grove, Hartford, was a native of Burton-on-Trent but had lived in this district for about 70 years. She was the widow of Mr Thomas Moore who was formerly a postman and a noted bee-keeper, and for many years organist at Whitegate Church.

Mrs Moore was very active for her age and had many friends in the district, especially at the whist drives at **Hartford Recreation Club**.

(Winsford Chronicle, 24 October 1964)

1967 - PERCY DOUGLAS PRESTON POPULAR NEWSAGENT

Hartford lost one of its most popular personali-

ties by the death of **Percy Douglas Preston**, 279 Chester Road, at the age of 66.

A native of the district, Mr Preston had been in business in Chester Road as a newsagent for 42 years.

He belonged to **Hartford Recreation Club** and was a keen member of the bowling section, playing with considerable success for the club team in the local leagues.

During the last war, he served with the Army abroad and he was a member of the Hartford Branch of the British Legion. He leaves a widow and three sons.

(Winsford Chronicle, 23 November 1967)

1968 - REGINALD FORSTER FORMER CHAIRMAN AND PRESIDENT

A host of friends and associates in the building trade heard with regret of the death of **Reginald Forster**, aged 69, of 188 Chester Road, Hartford.

Mr Forster was a partner in the old-established building firm of Messrs W Forster and Sons Ltd, and was a member and ex-president of the Mid-Cheshire branch of the National Federation of Building Trades Employers.

Educated at Winnington Park School and Sir John Deane's Grammar School, he joined his father and brother in the family firm after serving in the Royal Welch Fusiliers during the First World War and working for a time for Messrs Brunner, Mond and Co.

Mr Forster played football, cricket and tennis in his younger days and had a long and active association with **Hartford Recreation Club** of which he was a former chairman and president at the time of his death.

His wife Laura died in 1949 (see page 44).

(Winsford Chronicle, 4 January 1968)

1968 - HARRY WALKER ROCK SALT MINER

Harry Walker, aged 73, of 51 Huxley Street, Northwich spent his entire working career as a rock salt miner at the ICI Meadowbank mine. He had been a sidesman and bellringer at Hartford Church for over 50 years.

He played bowls with **Hartford Recreation Club** and in his younger days, played football for Marston Old Boys and Witton Albion.

During the First World War he was wounded while serving with the Machine Gun Corps in France.

(Winsford Chronicle, 8 August 1968)

1969 - CHARLES GILBERT

ALL-ROUND SPORTSMAN

Before his retirement in 1962, **Charles Gilbert**, aged 67, of Woodlands Road, Hartford was employed by MANWEB. He was a founder member of Northwich Rowing Club, and for several years treasurer of Northwich Victoria FC. He was also a member of the Bowling Section of **Hartford Recreation Club** and the British Legion Club.

(Winsford Chronicle, 6 March 1969)

1969 - GEORGE MILLS FRYER

BANK MANAGER AND CHURCH TRUSTEE

George Mills Fryer, aged 80, of 44 Beach Road, Hartford was for many years a member of the **Hartford Recreation Club**

Mr Fryer, well-known in Northwich Methodist and Freemasonry circles, retired 14 years ago after 49 years' service as manager of

the Northwich branch of the Trustee Savings Bank, Winnington Street.

He was a Past Master and treasurer for 20 years of the "Sincerity" Lodge of Freemasons. A lifelong Methodist he served the Northwich circuit as treasurer and the Hartford Church as a trustee.

(Winsford Chronicle, 8 May 1969)

1970 - HARRY STANLEY PARKIN

KEEN BOWLER

Retired chemist **Harry Stanley Parkin**, aged 74, of 20 Abbey Way, Hartford, came to Northwich in 1960. A keen bowler at **Hartford Recreation Club**, he was an active member of the Methodist Church. He was a Past Master of the St Nicholas Lodge of Freemasons at Thorne, and was a member of the Walter de Hereford Mark Lodge.

(Winsford Chronicle, 10 December 1970)

HART GRAZES ON TENNIS COURT

THE VILLAGE HALL and its recreation ground has been a major feature of Hartford life for a hundred years, and has occasionally made the news for reasons entirely unconnected with its role as a venue for community or sporting events. It seems very appropriate that one of these occasions actually involved a real "hart" - or stag. On 29 October 1960 it was reported:

THE RED STAG that has been roaming Mid-Cheshire for the past three weeks was seen for a time in the Hartford and Winnington districts on Friday – and stopped traffic, nearly got run down by a lorry, walked up a garden path and galloped round the ICI works.

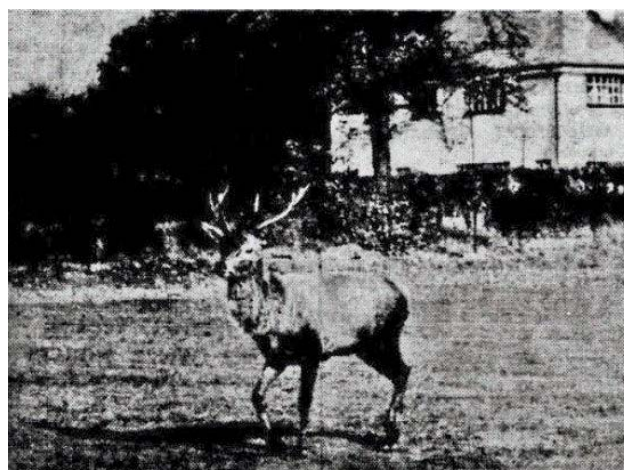
When news that the stag was in School Lane, Hartford, reached the Chronicle, a reporter and photographer set out on its trail. As they approached Hartford crossroads, the stag was grazing on the grass tennis courts of Hartford Recreation Club.

Mr Thomas Rogerson, of 290 Chester-road, Hartford, saw the stag come from the direction of Hartford parish church. "It stopped the traffic as it made its way to Hartford Rec," he said.

It then jumped the four-foot fence surrounding the grounds, into Bradburns-lane, where it was almost hit by a lorry.

The stag crossed the bridge over the railway and trotted out into Beach-road, where it sedately walked up the garden path to the front door of a nearby house and then ran out into the road when the household's dog barked.

The stag next wandered into the grounds of the Mid and South East Cheshire Water Board. It picked its way between piles of pipes and passed



*The stag on the Hartford Rec tennis courts**

the time office just as an employee, Mr Frank Powell, looked out of the window. "I got the shock of my life," he said.

The stag was later seen going in and out of the main entrances of the ICI Avenue Works. Then it ran across the Jubilee Field and through the gardens of Brunner House before going on to Moss Road.

It doubled back and leapt into Winnington churchyard. And as darkness fell, the stag – a stately and majestic animal – was last seen standing proudly in the middle of the Moss Farm Sports Complex.

(Winsford Chronicle, 29 October 1960)

* Unfortunately, the striking photographs of the stag taken by the Chronicle photographer and printed with the article in the British Newspaper Archive are very dark and difficult to reproduce.

VILLAGE HALL PLAYGROUP 1980s

DURING the 80s I ran the Village Hall Playgroup together with a dedicated band of helpers, most were Mums and several had been teachers so they brought with them a wealth of experience.

The 25 children we had in our care each day were offered a range of activities to encourage their all -round development as well as mixing and playing with others and relating to other adults.

Many of our activities were decidedly messy and our hall caretakers, Mr and Mrs Booth, were very tolerant! They often joined in with our parties, even acting as Mother or Father Christmas when required.

Several incidents stick in my mind, one was a little boy who always arrived late, would burst into an already busy room and shout "I'm here! You can all start now!"

After a project on flowers and bees, during which we enjoyed honey sandwiches with our milk, another child insisted on taking a large blank sheet of paper home - apparently it was a painting of hundreds of bees that had all flown away.

I was quite concerned about a child who time

and again completely covered his paper with black paint. He wouldn't tell me what he was doing, but when I tentatively asked his mum if he had any problems it turned out he had been helping his grandad to creosote the fence.

Our role was also one of supporting young families and we had a system of a Mothers' Rota, both to help us but also for them to learn, from us old hands, ideas to stimulate, entertain and even how to negotiate with their little ones.

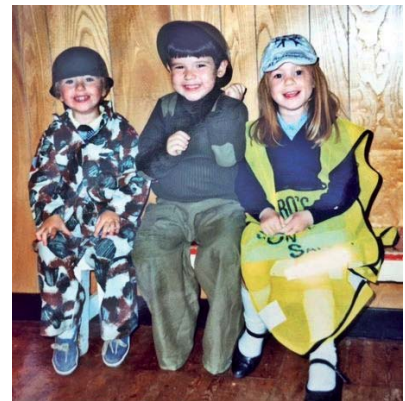
We had Nursery Nurse students from Hartford College on a regular basis and they brought in fresh ideas as well as gaining experience .

The toys and equipment, including a huge climbing frame and sand and water trays, had to be lugged in and out of the old outdoor shed, often battling against wind, rain and snow.

Our group was also involved in and supported by the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

We must have had hundreds of Hartford children at our group over the years and the greatest joy now is to hear from them about their own families, the various professions they have entered and to think about the educational stepping stone that we provided.

Audrey Haffenden



CATERING FOR OLDER PEOPLE

TEXT FOR EXHIBITION

THE HALL of course has always been a venue for events appealing to all ages, including flower shows and jumble sales. But it is interesting to see how its provision for older people has reflected contemporary attitudes to their social and medical needs.

From the earliest pre-war days, "pensioners", as they were called, were always welcome there.

However the report below on the launch of the Over 60s Club in 1953 could hardly be more condescending - nowadays, thanks to increased longevity, those in their sixties look forward to an active retirement and think of themselves as middle-aged.

The Luncheon Club provided an important service to provide a good inexpensive meal and companionship each week, especially for those who were widowed or lonely. Regular whist drives served the same purpose.

Now activities specifically for villagers of the "Third Age" mean they can learn new skills and have their minds stretched by attending the U3A group sessions in the hall on majong, canasta, social history, geology and quizzes. Tai chi and yoga classes are also available.

Those with medical problems like strokes, aphasia and diabetes can find expert help. And finally, for those with dementia there are "Singing for the Brain" and "Love to Move" sessions run by the Alzheimer's Society, which along with vital emotional support, improve the quality of life for sufferers and their carers.

BACKGROUND

1953 - NEW CLUB LAUNCHED

THE HARTFORD Over 60s Club was given a promising start when eighty elderly men and women attended the club's first meeting, opened by Mr T Whalley, Chairman of the Northwich and District Council of Social Service, in the Hartford Recreation Room.

Mr Whalley said the Council of Social Services were prepared to promote and help to maintain clubs for old people in any district in which suitable premises could be found.

After the opening ceremony the old folks (as they prefer to be called) joined in singing such time-honoured favourites as "Daisy" and "When you and I were seventeen" to piano accompaniment by Miss Dean.

The old folk certainly seemed to enjoy meeting each other and all vowed that they would attend the second meeting of the club to be held at the Recreation Club on February 12th.

(Winsford Chronicle, 31 January 1953)

CLUB PROVIDED FOOD AND COMPANIONSHIP

HARTFORD Luncheon Club meetings were held at 12.30pm each Wednesday in the Village Hall for many years, and in 1978 and 1990 the Parish Council paid half of the cost of buying a new cooker for the scheme, to augment the one already provided for hirers.

The food was mostly cooked at home by volunteers and heated up at the hall. In the 1980s the cooks would arrive when the playgroup was still occupying the main hall and the hungry playgroup team - who had been working all morning - were often tantalised by the aroma of a tasty meal being prepared in the kitchen next door. *(Hartford News and anecdotal)*

2023 - HALL USERS' LIST

Alzheimer's Society, Singing for the Brain, and Love to Move; Hartford Civic Society; Hartford Parish Council and Committees; Hartford Bowls Group; Hartford Stroke and Aphasia Group; Marshall's Arm Local Nature Reserve; NHS Diabetes Prevention; Yoga; Pilates; Papillon Soul Yoga; Rhythm Time Baby & Music class; Tai Chi; U3A Majong; U3A Canasta; U3A Social History; U3A Geology Group; U3A Tea and Quiz; Yoga for Healthy Lower Backs. *(Village Hall website)*

A popular venue: some random bookings

