

THE BARTONS VICTORY MEMORIAL HALL FUND
(REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 261459)

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE FUND

The fund was formed at the end of the Second World War to collect money to provide a hall for the parishes of Steeple Barton and Westcote Barton, including the village of Middle Barton, to commemorate victory and in memory of all those who had given their lives in service to their country. In view of the fact that the Alice Marshall Hall already existed and, given that sufficient funding had been raised, the opportunity was taken to instead acquire two fields on the north side of the Worton Road, Middle Barton for use as playing fields, a facility that neither parish enjoyed. The purchase of the land was completed by a conveyance dated 28th June 1948 between Mr William John Constable (the owner) and the then custodians of the fund: Major Phillip Fleming, Mr Norman Henry Cross and Mr Robert Jarvis.

A building which had been the Officers Mess at the temporary wartime airfield situated at Hopcroft Holt was acquired and erected in the centre of the land to serve as a pavilion. A bowls green was created and football pitches marked out. Play equipment for the children was also added and a tennis court laid down.

In the early seventies the pavilion was converted by volunteers into a clubhouse and bar and the Bartons Memorial Sports and Social Club came into existence. On the 3rd August 1976 a formal trust deed was made for the fund with Norman Henry Cross, Robert Jarvis and Robert Fleming as Trustees. It was registered as a charity and title to the land was vested in the Commissioner for Charities. Also, during the seventies, three small plots of land between the bowls green and the Worton Road were sold for residential building to raise funds.

A function room/ community hall was then added including changing rooms, a kitchen and bar and this was opened in 1977 and named the Jubilee Room in honour of the Queen Elizabeth's 25th Jubilee. Again, much of the work was done voluntarily by local craftsmen. A concrete parking area was also laid between the club building and the bowls green. The site sloped from north to south so, in the eighties, the top part was levelled to form a better football pitch. Subsequently some wooden play equipment was erected at the top of the field. Since then a separate club room has been erected alongside the bowls green for use of the Bowls Club; the funding for this being raised by the Bowls Club whose members assisted with its construction. In 2011 a new wooden children's play area was erected at a cost of £49,000. Subsequently the tennis court was refurbished and extended to form a multi-use games area for tennis, netball, basketball and football

In 2014/15, funds were raised (£161,000) for a project to provide public toilet facilities, disabled toilet facilities, improved changing rooms and a larger kitchen in the Jubilee room. This was completed in December 2015. In 2016/17 the energy

efficiency of the Jubilee room was significantly improved by the installation of extra loft insulation and cavity wall insulation, and improvements to the heating system originally installed in 1977. In 2018 it was re-decorated and new furniture purchased. In 2019 three new spring mounted rides were added to the play area.

The latest completed development was the creation of a Memorial Garden, including a “Tommy” figure and a stone war memorial. This was completed in time for the 75th anniversary of VE day in 2020, sadly the Covid Pandemic meant that the opening ceremony was heavily curtailed along with the VE day anniversary celebrations. The fund is currently looking at a scheme to install solar panels on the roof of the Jubilee Room, however, the next big project is the refurbishment and replacement of the play equipment, much of which is rotting below ground level.

The fund only has very limited income so any improvements and additions have to be funded by way of donations and grants. The fund also relies heavily on volunteers for general maintenance, safety inspections and litter picking.

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