



Transformation

REDEVELOPING HESKETH BANK COMMUNITY CENTRE - REINVIGORATING A COMMUNITY

PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT - APRIL 2021





The Trustee team

Steve Kirby - Chairman

Bill Hall - Vice Chairman

Diane Earles - Treasurer and Publicity

Tony Earles - Booking and IT

Mike Ellis - Project Manager

Sue Ellis - Project Manager

- Fund Raising team leaders - Mike and Sue Ellis
- Events co-ordinator and Community Centre events fund raising: Sue Ellis
- Building design, Planning and Building Control applications: Mike Ellis assisted by Sue Ellis and Bill Hall
- Layout and Interior design: Mike and Sue Ellis
- IT systems: Tony Earles
- Health and Safety, Fire Safety and Policy co-ordination: Steve Kirby
- Publicity and Social Media management: Diane Earles
- Sustainable drainage design: Tim Carr, CFA Civils Limited
- Main Contractor: Springfield Modular (Lancs) Limited
- Ground Works: Cutler Waterworth Limited
- Demolition and sustainable drainage: J S Berry Contractors Limited
- Landscaping: Becconsall U3A Gardening Group
- Planning Authority: West Lancs Borough Council
- Building Control: Assent Limited, Wigan



Hesketh Bank Community Centre

Station Road, Hesketh Bank, Preston PR4 6SR

Registered Charity No: 1180178

This Completion Report has been prepared by the Trustees of Hesketh Bank Community Centre.

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The story

Hesketh Bank Community Centre was formed in April 1944 and has been at the heart of the community for seventy seven years. Throughout its history, the Trustees have worked hard to make the Community Centre relevant and valued to the community. Even though money has always been an issue, the Community Centre has always been self sufficient and has never relied on grant support to continue operating. This commendable approach, however, has, over the years, created a problem which the current Trustee team have had to address.

By operating with minimum funding and only occasional support in the past from Hesketh with Beconsall Parish Council, the Community Centre has never had the money available to fully maintain the two buildings it has on site let alone invest in new facilities. This meant that the buildings have deteriorated and become increasingly unsuitable for the demands of users.

In 2016, a new Trustee team was formed. A complete reorganisation of the way the charity worked and operated was made with a new accounting, management and booking systems being introduced along with a total revision of all operating policies. The existing charity was closed and became a CIO to reflect this change in approach.

At the same time, it was clear that the Back Hall was becoming unsustainable and beyond repair and as this was the main hall used for the majority of meetings, the Trustees decided that redevelopment was the only viable option. Initially, the Trustees looked at many options at

which point it became clear that an investment of up to £500,000.00 was going to be needed to replace the hall. Clearly, this was not a matter of holding a few jumble sales to raise a few hundred pounds but required a serious fund raising programme if the money were to be raised. The community was sceptical that this could be done - a new hall had been needed for over fifty years but the funding had never been found.

The funding programme was carefully planned and researched - helped by the Trustee's unbounded enthusiasm and determination to be successful. Carefully structured approaches were made to seven key funding organisations and all applications were successful. Our own fund raising made a significant contribution.

By working together with the community, Parish Council and local authority, the Trustees were successful in raising the money to build a new hall and this was completed in late March 2021 and handed over by the builders on April 7th 2021 after a total build time of only three and a half months.

It has not been an easy process, especially as the COVID 19 Pandemic has had a significant impact and slowed the build programme significantly. The Trustees have learnt a great deal by designing the building, project managing the build as well as working through local political issues. Strong bonds were developed with Hesketh with Beconsall Parish Council which will, over time, benefit the two organisations and the community. It has been both challenging and immensely rewarding. Local interest has been considerable.

This project would not have been successful without the amazing support the Trustees received locally, regionally and nationally which is recognised and greatly appreciated.



The project

There are two halls at Hesketh Bank Community Centre - the Front hall and Back Hall. The Front Hall is a brick and concrete structure and was originally built as an entrance to a much larger building that was never built.

The Back Hall was a timber structure made up of two ex-military huts from Weeton Barracks in the Fylde. Local residents told us that they brought them to the site on local resident Frank Wright's fruit and vegetable lorry and members of the community then assembled them. They were brought to site in 1984 but as they possibly dated back to 1917, they were always going to have a limited life span. From what we understand, the Back Hall was seen as a temporary solution but it endured.



By 2016, the building was clearly rotting externally and internally. By 2018, the heating system had totally failed and could not be repaired. Although the Trustees did all that they could to maintain it, the condition of the building deteriorated further. By this stage, the cost of running the building had become prohibitive. With the new Trustee committee formed in 2016, a great deal of effort went into increasing the number of users. Trustees Diane and Tony Earles were very successful in this task but as the building declined, so did the number of users.

The options were stark - rebuild or close the Community Centre as without the Back Hall, it was financially unsustainable. Given its long history as a community facility, closure was going to have to be the very last resort.

What we knew at this stage:

- That there was around £1,000.00 in the bank,
- That mortgages and loans were not going to be possible for Hesketh Bank Community Centre,
- That most in the community doubted that it was going to be possible to raise the money needed to rebuild the Back Hall,
- On a positive note, there was a Trustee team in place with all the right skills and abilities to deliver a new Community Centre,
- All that the Trustees needed was a plan.

Before progressing further, the Trustees needed knowledge:

The site and building

- What were the practical options for redeveloping the site,
- How much a new building would cost,
- Building technologies,
- Ongoing maintenance,
- How to retain existing users,

The community

- Existing users,
- Parish council, Local authority and partners,
- The greater community.

Site and building knowledge

In respect to knowing more about the site and building, an initial options analysis document was prepared to consider possible options for the site and building. This involved discussions with users, Hesketh with Becconsall Parish Council and West Lancs Borough Council Planning.

It was established that the Community Centre site was classified as Green Belt in the 1940's and this had never been changed. This restricted what development would be possible on the site. It was also established that the land had never been registered with the Land Registry as it had never changed hands.

Through a local architect, it was established that external repairs to the Back Hall were going to cost in the order of £150,000.00 without any improvements to the interior. This was not a viable option as the building had sub-standard toilets, kitchen and community facilities. The Trustees were advised that the cost of bringing the existing building up to the minimum standard required was close to that of a total rebuild and so a decision was made to pursue a rebuild option.

In establishing a basic design brief for the new building, there was considerable community and user involvement. Extensive surveys were carried out both face-to-face and online which, when analysed, supported the approach which we were taking in respect to spacial requirements. It was established that the new Community Centre needed:

- Three hall spaces - all to be used simultaneously if required,
- A social meeting area,
- A kitchen and bar,

- Office
- Storage facilities

The building also needed to be eco-friendly with low maintenance and operating costs so that charges for users could be kept low in line with the Centre's philosophy of making the Community Centre available to as many as possible. Early in this process, it also became clear that if the new building were to follow a traditional brick and block approach, then the required build time would result in the loss of a significant number of user groups to other locations. This meant for the Community Centre to be financially sustainable, a different and speedy approach to construction was required.

Industrial building

One of the Trustees had previous experience of using industrial building techniques which can give a much faster build time whilst at the same time requiring a lower number of onsite workers so reducing the impact on the local community.

Initial conversations with construction companies proved positive but the scale of the building, being small, meant that there was going to be a cost issue with a steel frame and cladding approach. Through this process, the Trustees also explored a modular approach to construction which could deliver a building in a short timescale at a viable cost. Meetings were held with three modular build companies and costings obtained. Initial costs came in between £300,000.00 and £600,000.00.

The Trustees were fully aware of the additional costs involved in building through the retention of an architect, surveyor and project management. An additional advantage of using modular construction was that the design and project management services were included in the cost - a turn-key project. With the skills and experience of two members of the Trustee committee, it was concluded that it would be possible to deliver the project without employing an architect. A surveyor was retained for project oversight and advice. This approach worked well for the Trustees.



Community knowledge

Whilst the development of the building layout and strategy was ongoing, the Trustees began an extensive community survey project. This involved face-to-face surveys, online surveys and attendance at local events. Later in the project, two well-attended public consultation meetings were held.

Every opportunity was taken to talk with users and groups both at the hall and at a local supermarket. Visual presentations were made to Hesketh with Beconsall Parish Council, West Lancs Borough Council, Hesketh Bank Silver Band and interested groups.

Two successful competitions were run to encourage survey responses. All of this activity was supported through a planned social media campaign and Public Relations supported by regular newsletters.



How did this activity influence the Trustees?

A great deal of time and effort was invested in reaching out beyond our traditional users in the community and whilst many of the findings have confirmed our ideas, there have also been some new ideas which were explored and in most cases incorporated into our plans. It was clear that as well as the traditional uses of a community centre, there are some unusual opportunities for use too and these have only come to us through the outreach that we have carried out.

Establishing and developing communications with local schools has been particularly beneficial and productive. We were aware that limiting consultation to existing users and groups was a potential problem when making decisions, so were pleased that the outreach that we was done brought in many new people with new ideas. This additional input broadened our access to the community, helped develop our vision and confirmed that there was a continuing need for a Community Centre in Hesketh Bank. It inspired us to look further and to do more. It has been, and continues to be, a worthwhile exercise. From our initial planning activity when the project was started, we have adapted the design of the spaces, reviewed our methods of communication and were inspired.

By 2017, the Trustees had established a basic approach to building technologies, established a design layout and specification and had carried out consultation. With that knowledge, the Trustees were able to develop an outline budget and a funding plan.

Funding plan

Raising the money needed to rebuild the Community Centre was never going

to be easy given that there no financial reserves and no access to loans. A multi-faceted fund-raising plan was developed:

- Community Centre fund raising - donations and Friends of the Community Centre,
- Community Centre events - Race Night, Bingo, Comedy Night, Murder Mystery, theatre and music performances,
- Community Centre markets and sales,
- Approach locally based funders,
- Approach National funders.

Key to our fund-raising was, again, knowledge. From previous experience, it was clear that for any application for funding to be successful, it was essential for any application to meet the funder's needs and requirements. As such, funders were carefully researched and approaches only made where there was common ground. This resulted in seven applications and seven funding awards. It was also essential that the Community Centre was working hard to raise funds itself which we did - asking for help and doing nothing ourselves was never going to be successful.

Funders:

- Hesketh with Beconsall Parish Council
- West Lancs Borough Council
- The Co-op Local Causes Fund
- The National Lottery
- Garfield Weston
- Bernard Sunley
- NFU

Initially, in 2018 we applied to three local funders - Hesketh with Beconsall Parish



Council, West Lancs Borough Council and Co-op Local Causes. The foundation for our success was an award of £50,000.00 from Hesketh with Becconsall Parish Council which gave other funders confidence in supporting us as well as inspiring confidence in the community. The Community Centre was accepted by Co-op Local Causes for support over two years and, following meetings with the West Lancs Borough Council, we were invited to apply for CIL funding of £100,000.00.

With a potential £154,128.00 funding in process (£54,128.00 of it secured), the Trustees reached out to the National Lottery and after a number of conversations and meeting, were invited to apply for funding - an application for £199,213,000 being submitted in February 2020 and a conditional award was made. In March 2020, West Lancs Borough Council awarded the Community Centre £100,000.00 from it's CIL investment fund and this was transferred in June 2020 after legal paperwork had been completed.



At the same time, the building design had been developed and costs refined. At this stage, we had £303,763.00 secured funding along with our own fund raising efforts - not yet sufficient to place orders. It was pleasing that at this stage a number of members of the community made significant donations which were welcome and appreciated. Whilst the application to the National Lottery was underway, the Trustees had also applied to the Garfield Weston Foundation and a grant of £25,000.00 was awarded in May 2020 and a further application to the Bernard Sunley Foundation secured £15,000.00 in June 2020. A grant from the NFU Foundation and the Dutchy of Lancaster gave a secured funding total of £418,457.57 to meet our target.

A great deal of effort was put into communication with all the funders that we approached and regular updates were, and continue to be, provided.

Finalising the design

As the fund-raising progressed and confidence grew, the Trustees began the process of finalising the design. A public meeting was held in September 2019 to present four options for developing the Community Centre site. One of those options was regarded by some as controversial and this prompted a vicious social media campaign from a few local residents and Hesketh Bank Silver Band. Given the positive response that we had up till then, this was very unfortunate. We learnt a great deal from that experience and at a second public meeting in December 2019, a final plan was proposed that was universally accepted.

Given the green belt status of the land, the new Community Centre building, it became clear that the new building would have to match the existing Back Hall's footprint with broadly the same floor area. During December, final plans were drawn up and a planning application submitted to West Lancs Borough Council on February 6th 2020. At this stage, the plan was to be on site in August 2020, the best time to demolish and rebuild as many users stop using the hall over the summer period. COVID 19, however, and closing the Community Centre, slowed the whole process down so Planning approvals were much later than expected - May 29th 2020. To be able to draw down the money from the National Lottery, it was necessary to register the land with HM Land Registry and this became a very drawn out process taking nearly three months. Lottery funding was not made available until construction was underway.

The result was that we were not able to place an order with the contractor, Springfield Modular until the 22nd September 2020. Construction in the factory began on December 14th 2020 and was delivered to site at the end of January 2021. The old Back Hall was demolished on 12 October 2020 and the site was ready for groundworks which began in January 2021. The completed building was handed over to the Trustees by Springfield Modular on April 7th 2021.

Income and Expenditure

Project Income

Own Fund Raising:	£19,506.87
National Lottery Reaching Communities England:	£199,213.00
West Lancs Borough Council:	£100,000.00
Hesketh with Beconsall Parish Council:	£50,000.00
Co-op Local Causes 2019:	£4,128.00
Co-op Local Causes 2020:	£3,552.70
Garfield Weston Foundation:	£25,000.00
Bernard Sunley Foundation:	£15,000.00
NFU:	£1,582.00
Duchy of Lancaster:	£475.00
Secured Funding Total	£418,457.57

Project Expenditure

Cost of building:	£303,983.00
Haulage to site:	£5,500.00
Crane hire:	£15,100.00
Electric installation:	£6,606.00
Groundworks:	£37,847.50
Demolition:	£7,500.00
Planning Application & Conditions:	£1,558.00
Building Control and Fire Assessment:	£2,750.00
Surveys:	£2,450.00
Unplanned additional site works:	£7,651.00
Pre- build works costs:	£10,640.92
Additional required post build site works:	£2,375.00*
Landscaping:	£4,500.00*
Other sundry costs - WiFi, cables:	£8,585.80*
Total expenditure:	£417,047.22
Remaining funding:	£1,410.35

* these items are a mix of actual expenditure and PC sums for work yet to be completed so may vary.



Impact

The Community Centre site has been transformed by the new building. Given COVID, it will be difficult to assess the real impact of the new Community Centre as the Centre will not formally reopen until May 17th 2021. Those who have already seen inside the building have been enormously impressed. It will be up to a year before the benefits of the new building become clear so we are planning for a second impact review in a years time.

What do we know:

Interest in the new building has been considerable from within the community and there are now many new groups and individuals looking to book space. Some users who left us because of the state of the old building, have expressed a desire to come back such as Slimming World. Our booking team are also receiving calls from people who have never used the Community Centre before and have confidence that once open, the number of users will grow.

To date, all our previous users have already re-booked their slots in the hall bar one - the Scouts who have moved elsewhere. Some users have seen the potential within the building and expressed a desire not only to return but offer and do more. Our first booking is for May 17th, the earliest date we can reopen, so the community is keen to use the new facilities.

The Social Meeting Area has been furnished thanks to a National Lottery and Government grant and has already been used for two internal meetings. The Trustees are excited and preparations are already underway to get the hall ready for May 17th.

When the Trustees began the rebuild project in 2016, there was a great determination to succeed and it is pleasing to report that we have done so. The skills that we had available from all six Trustees have been pushed to the limit and we have all learnt a great deal both about ourselves, delivering a project of this scale and running and managing the community centre. We are all better people for having done it - at times we didn't think so - but we are. Delivering the project in the middle of a pandemic was profoundly challenging - we were later delivering the building than we had planned but it is now in place and ready to support our community just when it is going to be needed most. Whilst the project was not delivered in the timescale we planned for, it was delivered on budget. All of the Trustees have all had to learn new skills so what has been done through this project will benefit the Community Centre and the local community well into the future.

Questions were often asked as to why we only had six Trustees but in respect to this project, it was ideal because between us we had the skills that we needed, we were dynamic and supportive of each other and small enough as a group to drive the project forwards. Simply put, it worked. Ongoing, the Community Centre will need more Trustees with a different skill base and that recruitment process has already added in two new members of the team. The future is going to be exciting.

The Trustees would like to express their thanks to all the businesses that helped us to deliver the project and the community who supported us. Our heartfelt thanks go especially to all of our funders. We have made great use of your investment in our community, it will make a massive difference and we thank you for it.



Events



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Christmas Bingo
at the Community Centre
December 9th
HESKETH WITH BECCONSALL VILLAGE COMMUNITY CENTRE
Eyes down at 7.30

Cash prizes Raffle Refreshments

Murder Mystery Night

A Plot for Murder

...and you thought having an allotment was fun!
Become a sleuth and join us for an evening with the brilliant St. Ambrose Players as we work out "who dunnit" down at the allotments.

Hesketh Bank Community Centre
September 16th - 7.30

Tickets **£13 - £11** for concessions
includes hog roast, full bar, prizes and raffle.

A Night at the Races

Friday November 17th
at **HESKETH BANK COMMUNITY CENTRE**
Doors open at 7.00pm
Fun for all with lots of races to bet on.

Tickets: **£5.00**
Bring your own food and drink.

Tickets available from **Top Shop, Hesketh Bank**
or call **07784 942127**





Demolition





















