

Hinton Blewett Village Hall



2020 (built 1876)

The original school in Hinton Blewett had previously been located in one of a group of cottages on the current site of the hall adjacent to Greenway Cottage from around 1860.



Pre 1870

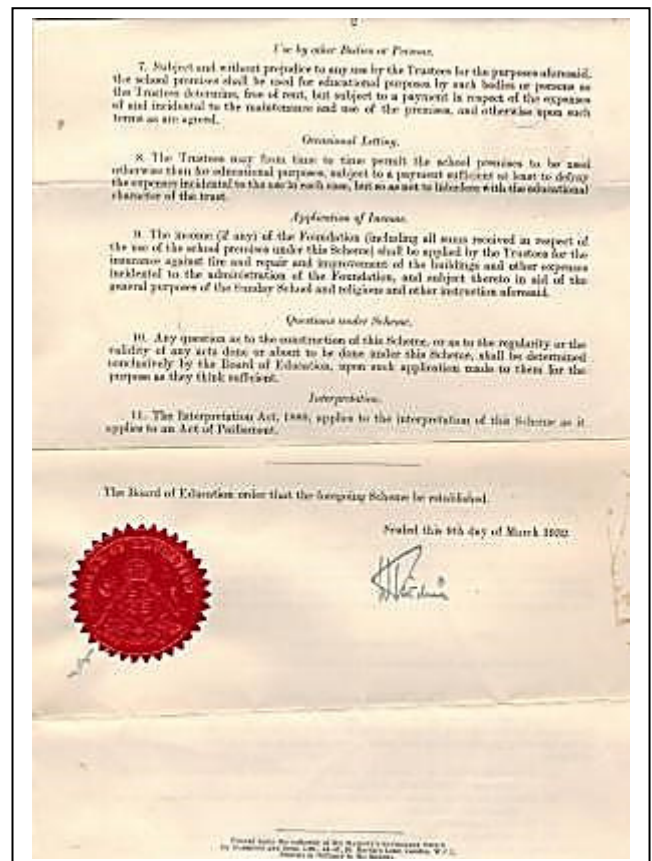
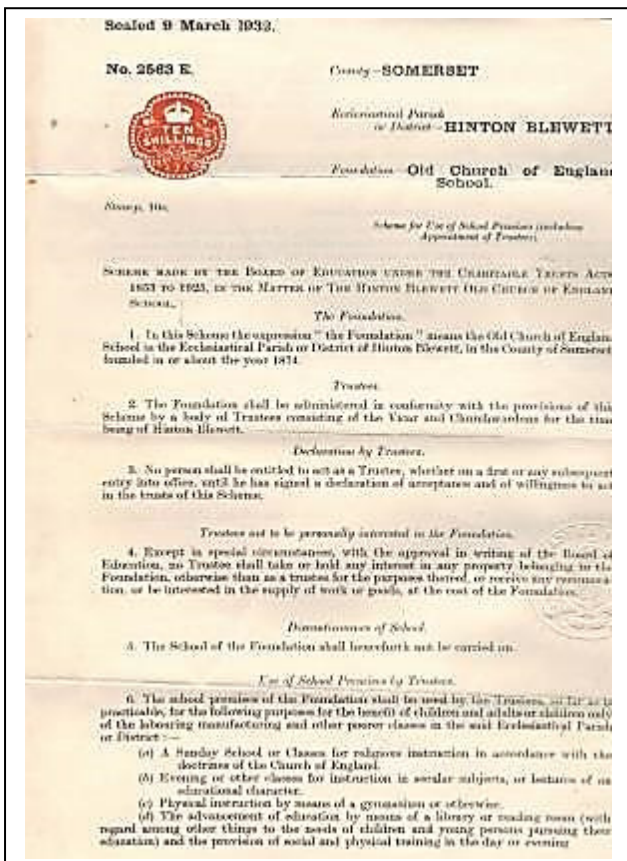
The hall first opened as a newly built school in 1876 – see plan below dated 1874.

1930



Two parishioners living in the Hinton Blewett in 2020 attended the school in the late 1920s – brother and sister Jack Uphill and Hilda Selway.

By 1931 the number of pupils at the school was so low that after 55 years the 'new' school was closed and the children transferred to Temple Cloud. One of the pupils was Jack Uphill who was 101 on 10th November 2021, though sadly he died the same day. The old Church of England School was discontinued officially in 1932.



Jack's younger brother, Geoff Uphill, who was too young to attend the hall school, says that the flat roofed kitchen was added before the 2nd World War. This is backed up with the wall structure having been built with Imperial bricks.

The current hall lease refers to a conveyance, dated 1957, being made between the Diocese of Bath & Wells and the Hinton Blewett Parochial Church Council.

The extension to the main hall is thought to have been added in the mid-1970s with plans having been drawn up by Norman Wood. It was built by John Maggs who lived in the village.

The hall was registered as a charity in 1975.

From the late 1990s the hall was rented during the week by a Montessori day nursery. Although annual income over the last couple of decades has been £3,500-£4,000, hall expenditure covering the cost of electricity, water, phone, insurance, cleaning, replacement of equipment plus wall, chimney and electrical repairs has consumed in the region of 75% of the income each year.

In 2003 the lease was renewed for 33 years through to 2036.

In 2016 the Hall Committee had accumulated enough income to spend £13,000 renewing the heating system and re-roofing and insulating the storeroom.

In 2018 the Montessori day nursery, which had rented the hall for over 20 years, had to close because of insufficient funding from B&NES to cover the cost of free child care. Without the nursery rental income the ongoing cost of repairs, electricity and insurance almost depleted the hall funds.

In 2018-2019 the Hall Committee put in hand the installation of a disabled toilet having been successful in getting a grant from Leader which was an EU organisation. The Leader grant was for 80% of the cost and further funding was sought from Quartet for the other 20%. The Hall Committee had already had to spend £2,310 in the same period on repairs to the flooring, redecoration of the hall and a replacement window. Being an old building the likelihood of on-going repairs is to be expected.

Since then the Hall Committee has only been able to rely on funding raised from village events held in the hall. By 30th September 2019 funds had shrunk to £1,168.

During the early part of 2020 the roof on the extension at the back of the hall suffered storm damage. A temporary repair was put in place but on investigation the slates were found to be asbestos which meant replacement of the whole of one side of the pitched roof. Fortunately the damage was covered by an insurance claim including disposal of the asbestos.

Because the kitchen flat asphalt roof was also aged it was decided to replace both roofs. A designer was consulted to draw up plans for a single roof to cover both sections of the building and to obtain planning permission which was necessary because of the hall being in a Conservation Area.

Fortunately the Hall Committee was successful in getting a grant of £10,000 (March 2020) from the Government in support of small businesses, retail, hospitality and



leisure sectors during the Covid-19 pandemic. So the hall's finances were in a good position to cover the cost of the new roof.

Planning permission was granted for the replacement roof and quotes for the work were sought from three contractors.

In November 2020 an application was made for a Local Restrictions Support Grant from B&NES as a business forced to close as part of the second Covid-19 lockdown. Because of the continuing lockdown three more grants became available in early 2021 followed by an opening-up grant, in total amounting to a further £18,500.

The grant funding was sufficient to enable the installation of a new roof on the west side and also re-tiling of the east side covering all the extension and the toilets. Work on the roof was completed in early October 2021.



In early 2022 a further B&NES Support grant for £2,667 was made available and also a Leader application for 80% grant funding towards the cost of installing a new kitchen was also successful. Installation of the new kitchen was completed in June and the 80% grant claim was submitted in July and paid in early September.

Updated September 2022.