

FACTS ABOUT EAST DOWN VILLAGE HALL

The Village Hall was originally built as the church school associated with the current parish church. The school's administration was overseen by a group of parents who were known as the School Managers.

Even as a school, the building also functioned as a Village Hall, providing a venue for a variety of local community activities and events.

Much of the building remains as it was, the only changes being the indoor toilets and the kitchen area. The old outside toilet block still exists at the back, but it is now used solely for storage. The main hall was used for the junior school pupils, spanning the ages from seven to eleven, and the area where the kitchen is currently located accommodated the infant pupils. The current car parking area was used as the playground. On average there were up to 20 juniors and 10 infants attending the school at anyone time, and two teachers, one being the head. One of the longest serving head teachers from living memory was Mrs. Maude, who's own son attended the school, and I understand that fellow pupils of that era have plenty of stories about his escapades!! It was normal practice for pupils to walk up to 2 miles to and from school daily, including infants, and this was often in addition to the regular walk to Arlington for nature studies etc. There were no school meals provided, but many children took pasties with them and they were heated up on the school boiler. Discipline was not really a problem at school, as there was regular contact with parents who were considered best to deal any such incidents. Despite many pupils jumping on the automatic gate opener for the Manor House opposite, Mr. Pine remained a generous patron to the school. Each Christmas he would provide the food and presents for the school party.

The school closed in 1945, with all the pupils being transferred to Berrynarbor school. There are still a few ex pupils living in the area, and I am sure that they have many more interesting stories to tell.

The Village Hall is now owned by the Parish of East Down and is administered by a Board of Trustees, formed of 2 members from the Parochial Church Council, 2 members of the Parish Council and the chairperson of the management committee, which is responsible for maintaining this community asset.