

Ninebanks Church and Community Hall

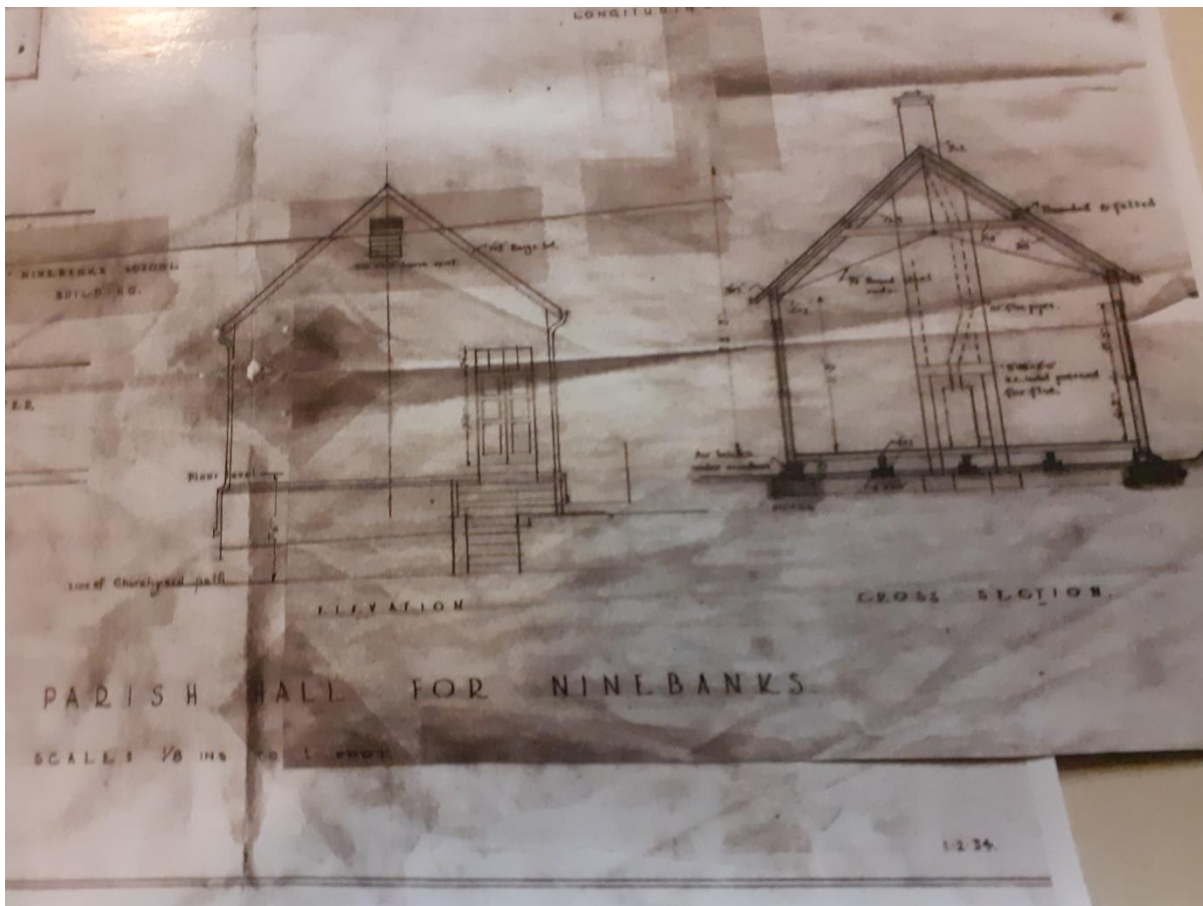


The beginnings of the Church Hall lie in the reading room, games room and school room that were built in 1853. The hall was built in 1934 on the site of this reading, games and school room with additional land that was donated by Mr W Coulson of "Chairheads" (sic)

In October 1906 it was decided by the Parochial Church Council of Ninebanks to enlarge the reading room to become a church hall.

The money required was quite substantial for a small parish and it is likely that the 1st World War interrupted the fundraising because in 1923 a Mr Summers proposed that the "re-building of the Church Institute be continued".

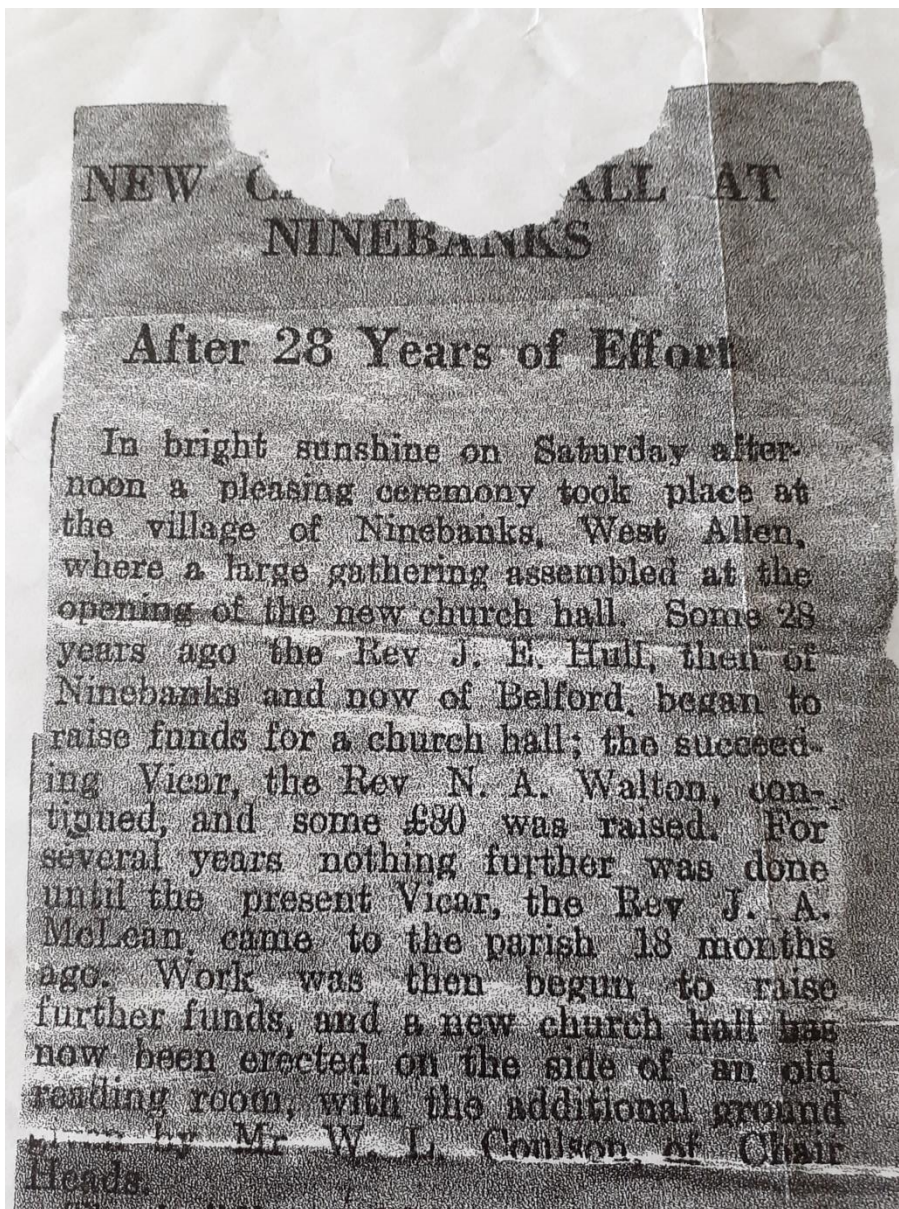
In 1933 the Parochial Church Council met again to consider the rebuilding of the Parochial Church Hall. Mrs Blakett-Ord of Whitfield Hall sent £50 and Capt. Blakett-Ord explained the plans for the building of a main hall of wood, two cloakrooms and a kitchen of stone.



The plans were accepted and tenders were invited from two building contractors; one in Alston and one in Allendale. A tender of £472, for the main hall, from Messrs Boulton and Paul (Norwich) Newcastle was accepted by a special committee at a meeting in the vicarage on Friday February 23rd 1934.

It had taken 28 years of fundraising by the people of Ninebanks, led by the vicar of that time. The money was raised through whist drives, barn dances held in farm barns, bring and buys, sports days on the field in front of Hawkuplee and by donations or subscriptions.

The Hall was officially opened on October 13th 1934 by Mrs Blackett-Ord. She was presented with a bouquet by Don McLean (the vicar's son).



Hire charges were agreed as follows: All meetings 3 Shillings, Whist Drives and Dances 15 Shillings between 7 and 11.30 on week nights and 17/6 from 7 and 2 am on Saturday nights.

The first Women's Institute meeting in the hall was recorded as being held on November 22nd 1934. The WI meetings were held on the Thursday nearest the full moon and many of the women attending carried jam jars with candles in them to light the way. The women of the valley congregated to enjoy talks and demonstrations. The WI hosted a children's Christmas Party on December 28th 1934. Many whist drives, dances, concerts and pantomimes were organised by the WI. During the war years ladies met to knit gloves for the soldiers.

In 1935 the hall was transferred to the Diocesan Board and has been held in trust for the Parochial Church Council of Whitfield and Ninebanks since. Lord Allendale stood surety for £100 at this time.

In September 1947 it was agreed that the hall kitchen could be used for the cooking and supplying of meals to the pupils attending the County School at Ninebanks and that the hall be used for other ancillary purposes for the hours of 8.30 am and 3.00pm when the school was in session. Initially the agreement was for 5 years and the County Council agreed to pay £35-0-0. A request for the use of the hall as a classroom was refused however the hall continued to be the school canteen for many years.

“We used to go to the church hall to have those (school dinners) and there was plenty of semolina and jam and things like stew and lumpy mashed potato” said Ted Middlemass whilst reflecting over his memories of Ninebanks School.

A Grand Carnival was held on January 21st 1949.

In the early 1950's a generator and motor, costing £45, was purchased from Mr G Robson of Wark and Messrs Potts Bros of Clarghyll Head, Alston undertook to wire out the Hall at a cost of £20-9-6 with labour costs added. In November 1953, enquiries were made as to the cost to link the Church and the hall with the new main electricity line that went to Carrshield. The estimated cost was £450. In September 1955 there were new proposals from North Eastern Electricity Board regarding the electricity supply. The estimated cost was £335 to supply the Church, the hall, Vicarage, School House and Cottage. The estimate was accepted and mains electricity subsequently arrived in the hall sometime over the next couple of years once sufficient funds had been raised.

The hall continued to be well-used with regularly dances in the 1970s and 1980s but with the era of pop and disco music the dances fizzled, use of the hall declined and it became increasingly dilapidated. The WI finally succumbed in 2004.

In 2009/10 the toilets and cloakrooms were refurbished. The old fashioned toilets and coal storage area were replaced with modern WCs and a disabled toilet. These refurbishments were paid for the Whitfield Estate Clay Pigeon Shoot which supports many local groups and interests.

In September 2010 a reunion event was held to mark 50 years since Ninebanks' School closed. Previous students returned and there were displays of old school photographs and old school books. In 2011 and 2012, celebrations in the form of a barbeque and ceilidh were held for Prince William's wedding to Kate Middleton and for Queen Elizabeth's Diamond Jubilee, respectively.

In 2018 the stair lift and defibrillator were installed. These were paid for by local people, businesses and local funding organisations.

November 2018 marked 100 years since the end of the First World War and people came together to share photographs and memories.

In more recent times over £40,000 was raised to refurbish the hall's kitchen and meeting room which completely transformed them into warm, cosy spaces with a new kitchen available for all the community. An official "opening" took place in May 2022 with another celebration with bubbly, tea and cake. This was all finished just in time for the village celebrations for Queen Elizabeth's Platinum Jubilee in June where a street party and later a supper and ceilidh were held.



The hall is very much at the heart of the community being the only public building. It is used for meetings, as a polling station, for funeral teas, community “pub” nights, and bingo evenings and for celebrations. The community is grateful to those who spent 28 years raising money to build the hall.



Information for this booklet was gathered from the Parochial Church Council minutes, Ninebanks WI minutes and recollections from local people.