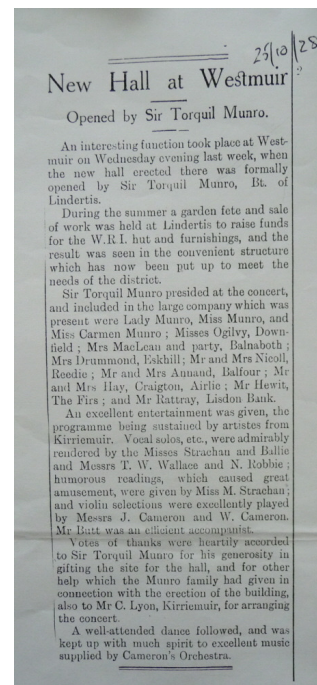


Westmuir Hall



Westmuir Hall Minutes 1932 – 1987

A Minutes of Hall meetings book for the Village Hall has survived intact since 1932.

The first formal meeting of Hall Trustees was held on 21st January 1932 though there is reference to an earlier meeting in September 1929. The hall was officially opened on 25th October 1928 by Sir Torquil Munro of Lindertis, later of Drumleys.

It was very much due to the efforts of Sir Torquil that the hall was built in the first place and both he and his sister Miss Carmen Munro, Craighton of Airlie remained as Hall Trustees throughout their lifetime. Sir Torquil was elected Chair at that first meeting in January 1932.

There was quite a pattern to the meetings with similar topics and problems coming up for discussion and interestingly some of the topics are similar to those which crop up even now in the 21st Century.

What to charge for Hall lettings was always difficult and in 1929 (following an appeal from three ploughmen) the charge was reduced from £2.00 to 30/- shillings to hold a dance. A wise decision it seems as fifteen dances were held during the ensuing year compared to none at all the previous year. The early 1930s were bleak times economically throughout Britain so for country folk to have a bit of a 'fling' the only answer was to attend events at local Village Halls. Dances at that time would finish at 2.00am (with no provision of alcohol) and a long trek home afterwards. The hall charges remained much the same for over 40 years. In 1975 the charge for dances was raised again to £2.00 per let but with an extra £1.00 per hour after 10.00 pm until (and no later than) 2.00 am finish time.

Improvements to the accommodation offered in the hall ranged from adding a cloakroom to a 'retiring room for the ladies'. By 1935 a larger kitchen was on the horizon "with built-in cupboards" becoming a must! The roof forever needed repairs and creosoting the outer walls was always a priority but only occasionally would the work be achieved. Maintaining the boundary fence and repairing the entrance path were also forever appearing on the minutes only to be deferred year after year until 1959 when Sir Torquil 'sent along a man' who concreted the path and renewed the fencing.

During the War Years 1940 to 1943 there were no meetings of the Trustees.

By 1940 some consideration was given to the cost of installing heating and in the same year a request was approved for free use of the Hall for Whist Drives and dances to raise money for the Red Cross.

In March 1945 the WRI requested (with a small charge for the Hall) that they would run dances on Saturday nights in aid of the Welcome Home Fund.

In May 1947 the Trustees agreed that the charge for the Hall be fixed at 5/- shillings (plus paraffin costs) per week for school children having dinner in the hall.

Some years after the War (1951) the Trustees decided it was important to have electricity installed, a major step as it was so expensive to install and would involve hefty running costs.

The WRI played a significantly important role in village halls. Very often the prime reason for the existence of these halls was to provide a meeting place for Women's Rural Institute members. Initially in Westmuir the WRI did not have to pay a hire charge but were required to organise events and raise funds to help maintain their village halls. By 1970 everything changed and payment of hall fees by all hall users became essential (and perhaps the WRI became tired of the work involved in planning fund-raising events).

For many years there was an active Men's Club (darts, dominoes, indoor bowls etc quite competitive!) and they were required to pay a hire charge of 5/- and eventually 15/- per weekly meeting. The Men's Club offered extra support by assisting with some of the hall maintenance work.

Hall finance featured in every set of minutes with normally a reasonable debit balance ranging from - £1.50 (1971) to £369.26 (1985). Some minutes reflected a degree of alarm when annual expenditure exceeded income!