



# East Worlington Parish Hall

East Worlington, Crediton, Devon EX17 4TS

Charity Number 267969

## East Worlington Heritage Project - OH-12-12290

### Conserve & Research East Worlington Parish Hall, a Converted C17th Cob & Thatched Tithe Barn



## Project Report and Evaluation

OH-12-12290 HLF

Drafted by Steve Baber, Chair East Worlington Parish Hall Trustees / Management Committee

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## **A. Executive Summary**

- i. This report provides commentary and evidence that tells the story of our Heritage Project. Important to understanding our achievements is to understand our context. Our project is located within a rural isolated environment in North Devon with a population of approximately 220 residents. Our project is focussed on the conservation of the Parish Hall, a converted tithe barn dating to the late C17th, and the heritage associated with the immediate community and environment. The Hall is of high importance to our community as a vital facility within a locality with no other community facilities.
- ii. This report aims to explain the difference the project has made to the building and to the community and to express some of the enthusiasm, engagement and commitment of our community.
- iii. A theme of the success of our project is the contribution of volunteers who offered a wide range of skills and expertise.
- iv. Within the report we provide evidence of knowledge and skills development and attitudinal change and this is illustrated with examples, data, and comments, supported with some photographic evidence.
- v. An analysis of what worked well and what didn't work well highlights the strength of the project and the factors that have influenced its achievement. While there is significant evidence supporting good project practice it has also been possible to highlight learning about project management, for example balancing ambition with capacity in the planning and appreciating the challenges of working on a community project with community engagement.
- vi. The evaluation concludes that the project would not have happened without HLF support, that the HLF outcomes have been met and the project aims have been achieved.

## **B. What we wanted to happen – Aims**

### **B.1. Context**

- a. Our project aimed to achieve a number of ambitious aims driven by need, vision and opportunity. Let's set the context by focusing on the area, an isolated area between the more renowned moors of Exmoor to the North and Dartmoor to the South and located on the southern fringes of North Devon. Within the locality there is evidence of Dumnonii settlements, recorded settlements in the Domesday Book and a rich heritage associated with landownership and land use. Our project focussed on our Parish Hall, a converted tithe barn from the late C17th. The building, as a barn, came into existence to play a role that fulfilled the needs associated with land ownership by the church when the barn may have had the uses of tithe collections and corn thrashing. When there were changing circumstances in the late C19th, with no need for a barn, the clergy of the time allowed the building to be used for community use and eventually it was sold into community ownership in 1920. By early C21st the building was in desperate need of conservation. There was also a lack of archived historical records about the Hall and the community and an opportunity as interest had grown amongst the community to learn more about the local heritage.

## **B.2. Aims**

- a. Led by a forward thinking and determined group of Parish Hall Trustees a project was developed which had two main aims. Firstly, to secure our Parish Hall as a vital, and only, community facility within the locality, providing a much-needed venue to enable social interaction, community cohesion, community well-being, and community learning, but often criticised for poor internal condition and unconducive environment. Secondly, to conserve the building as a significant social and economic artefact associated with local heritage and recognised as a community landmark.

## **B.3. So, what did we aim to change?**

- a. Our aim was the achievement of the following changes:
  - i. Reverse the decline and decay of the building and conserve it for the benefit of future generations.
  - ii. Transform the attitudes of the community to appreciate the internal environment and be proud of it as an important feature and facility of our community.
  - iii. Increase the knowledge and understanding of the community (and broader general public) about the heritage associated with the Hall and its immediate environment.
  - iv. Mobilise a generally passive approach by the wider community to the care and future sustainability of the Hall to one that engages more actively a wider group of people as volunteers and supporters in its conservation and its sustainability.
  - v. Increase the financial viability of the Hall as a venue of choice for hire and events and add to the general prosperity within the area through attracting people to events and as a place of interest.

## **B.4. Our Project and HLF Outcomes**

- i. Our heritage project supports the achievement of the following Heritage Lottery Outcomes.
  - a. Better Managed
  - b. In better condition
  - c. Better interpreted and explained
  - d. Identified and recorded
  - e. Develop skills
  - f. Learnt about heritage
  - g. Had an enjoyable experience
  - h. Volunteered time
  - i. More people and wider range of people have engaged with heritage
  - j. Local area/community will be a better place to live, work or visit
  - k. Local economy will be boosted
  - l. Our organisation will be more resilient
- b. Each letter associated with each outcome are coded throughout the content of the document to illustrate how the different elements of our project have contributed to their achievement.

## C. What actually happened

### C.1. Governance

- a. Governance by Trustee was always a vital issue in ensuring we achieved our project outcomes. Over the period of time of the project, due to a number vacancies that arose (e.g. death, moving out of area, work commitments) it was necessary to recruit four new Trustees. This was done successfully and the skills and experiences that they brought had the impact of strengthening the range of relevant skills and the resolve to complete the project. One of the reasons we were able to recruit appropriate new Trustees was the fact we had undertaken the heritage/conservation project and community members were signed up to supporting the vision. (HLF Outcomes: a; h; i; l;)

### C.2. Project Management

- a. **Achievement through Planning:** The fundamental process leading to the achievements of this project was the significant planning that shaped and enabled the project. The ambition and support for this project came from the Board of Trustees however the vision was turned into reality through the detailed planning that was undertaken. It cannot be underestimated how important this planning was in effectively and efficiently implementing our project and monitoring its progress. (HLF Outcomes: a; b; h; i;)
- b. **Achievement through Leadership:** In maintaining focus and direction to drive forward with our project, leadership was a critical factor. Achieving change and improvement, which was an aim of our project, required the need to secure driving forces and resources and to overcome challenges by developing a problem-solving culture. This was only achieved by allocating focussed time, determination and resilience. (HLF Outcomes: a; b; h; i;)
- c. **Achievement through Management:** If leadership is about driving forward with the ambitions and plans, management is certainly about making it happen. Vital in securing progress with our project was our management structures and approaches and the management skills of volunteers in key roles. While our project had an overarching management team the structure of our project with our four action groups were critical in managing the actions and activities of each of the components of our project plan. (HLF Outcomes: a; b; h; i;)
- d. **Achievement through Team:** The strength of our project management was ultimately reinforced by the team approach to the project. There has been a strong emphasis on collaborative working and support and this has helped maintain the focus and capacity needed to ensure the wide range of project elements and activities could be completed successfully. (HLF Outcomes: a; b; h; i;)
- e. **Achievement through Volunteer Skills and Qualities:** An essential feature of our project in both the planning and implementation phases was the ability to draw on the wide range of expertise of local volunteers who offered advice, information, skills and time that supported each of our project's elements. Without this level of support and range of skills we could not have achieved the outcomes of our project. (HLF Outcomes: a; b; h; i;)

- f. Achievement through Monitoring, Review, Evaluation:** Our approach to this dimension helped us was stay on track. The structure of the project and the detailed plans provided a framework which supported monitoring, review and ultimately informed evaluation. The project progress was monitored monthly by the project management team and on-going review supported an ability to maintain focus and pace and respond to any challenges. This was also important to maintain an overall co-ordination of all elements which were interdependent and running concurrently. The information and data collected through this process enabled judgements about project achievements to be made as part of the evaluation. (HLF Outcomes: a; b; h; i;)
- g. Achievement through Financial Planning and Management:** Of high importance to the achievement of our project was the financial planning and management. The discrete elements of the overall project plan, each showing resource needs for each activity, supported effective financial management and enabled careful budget monitoring. A real strength of our project was the role of the conservation project manager (volunteer) who managed diligently the quality, pace and budget of the conservation work, and the fastidious way the project treasurer (volunteer) managed and administered the overall project budget. (HLF Outcomes: a; b; h; i;)

### **C.3. The difference made by the project**

#### **a. Heritage - Conservation**

- i. The conservation work on the Parish Hall has demonstrable impact in ensuring the building is in good condition to secure its future sustainability. The architectural features of the building were exposed and conserved and this now supports learning about the construction of the building. The following photographs illustrate the difference achieved comparing before to after. (HLF Outcomes: b; e; f; g; h; i; j; k; l;)

**Before Conservation Work**



North-facing showing asbestos based ceiling hiding original features of the roof structure.

**After Conservation Work**



North-facing showing roof construction and exposed window previous hidden



C20th internal partition wall concealing existing old barn door



Old barn door exposed and seal with internal glazed doors to enable viewing



South-facing showing asbestos based ceiling hiding original features of the roof structure.



South-facing showing A-frame roof construction a feature of the original barn dating to late C17th



External view of the front of the Hall showing the need for the periodic renewal of the thatched roof



The thatched roof of the Hall following the work undertaken by the Master Thatcher.

## **b. Heritage - Research and Learning**

- i. There has been positive difference in the knowledge and understanding of the heritage associated with the Parish Hall and the community as a result of the research and learning. We now have an archive of relevant information and documentation we did not previously have and through a range of learning strategies, e.g. workshops, exhibitions, presentations, learning events, learning documents and digital outputs, we have evidence that a wider range of people have accessed learning. This is evidenced in the following sections of this report. (HLF Outcomes: c; d; e; f; g; h; i;)

### c. People - Engagement

- i. Our project could only have been achieved through community engagement and indeed the project itself stimulated an increase in community engagement. While our immediate community is small in terms of numbers it is rich in skills and interest in our project did provide a community focus that harnessed engagement through volunteering, thereby unlocking community potential. (HLF Outcomes: f; g; h; i; )

Project Launch, a community event to start the project. This was well attended and some good questions from the attendees. Great support and encouragement to progress the project.



Members of the Heritage Project Team. This group played an important role in developing and implementing the project.



Team of volunteers starting work on the conservation of the Hall. Total commitment, enthusiasm and enjoyment for keen members of the community.



An example of people engaged in learning at one of the project's workshops – the Your Memories; Your Legacy Workshop – Activity of reflecting on and writing down early memories.





## d. People – Knowledge and Skills

### i. Learning through doing (skills)

- a. Research skills. We were able to draw on the research skills of members of our Research Group and by working collaborative share these skills with others, resulting in the increased capacity (number of volunteers) and accessing the interest of a wider group of people to work on identifying recording, better interpreting and better explaining relevant information. (HLF Outcomes: c; d; e; f; g; h; i;)
- b. Archaeological skills. The project included achieving better understanding the work of the archaeologist. This was achieved with engagement with the Archeologically Report undertaken by South West Archaeology Services as part of the project planning, a talk by archaeologist to the community, and desk research by the project team. This provided a basis on which project volunteers were able to undertake hands-on investigation as part of the conservation work on the Hall. This is illustrated in the photographs below. (HLF Outcomes: c; d; e; f; g; h; i;)

The old rotten wooden suspended floor of the Parish Hall is removed exposing the old original barn floor. The research team are on site investigating the construction, recording through photographs and to see if any artefacts exist.



The team discovered that the original barn floor was on two levels which implies storage and thrashing was undertaken.



Looking for artefacts in the floor, but nothing of significance was found.



Exposing the original stone wall construction that supported the cob wall. No footings were found, the stone wall just built on the subsoils.



## ii. Learning through workshops

- a. One strategy we applied to support learning was the use of workshops to further extend the knowledge and skills of participants. This proved invaluable where the need for specialist skills and knowledge were required. The benefit of this approach was confirmed through the evaluations of participants who generally rated their experiences as positive, enjoyable and stimulating. The workshops were open to members of the community and within our context of size of community we judged the interest level to be good.
- b. The following section outlines the different workshops providing an example of participants' comments to illustrate experiences.
  - i. **Thatching** – Learning supported as part of the conservation work where the Master Thatcher shared his skills with community members.

**Attendees** 20

**Example Comment:** *'The opportunity to learn helped me appreciate the real skills of the Master Thatcher, something I'd only observed from a distance before.'*

(HLF Outcomes: e; f; g; i;)

- ii. **Cob wall building** – Provided by Mike Wye and Associates. A practical, hands on, experience showing how to manufacture cob blocks and build cob walls.

**Attendees** 8

**Example Comment:** *'I had no idea how cob walls were constructed before the workshop even though I live in an area with many cob wall buildings. Learning by doing was fun and help me enjoy the workshop'*

(HLF Outcomes: e; f; g; i;)

- iii. **Lime plastering** - Provided by Mike Wye and Associates. A practical, hands on, experience building understanding about different lime plaster products, and demonstrating and practicing different plastering techniques and approaches to rendering and plastering a building using lime putty.

**Attendees** 8

**Example Comment:** *'This was a very informative and interesting practical workshop. I learned a lot that I didn't know about lime plastering. The tutoring was excellent and gave me confidence to have a go.'*

(HLF Outcomes: e; f; g; i;)

- iv. **Art work stimulated by the environment** – A day tutored by a professional artist and teacher who used the environment to stimulate creative thinking. The attendees learned and practiced artistic techniques as a way to appreciate their built and natural environment.

**Attendees** 9

**Example Comment:** *'Gill has a very easy teaching style which encouraged people in to the different experiences she provided for everyone. A very interesting and enjoyable day for all who took part.'*

(HLF Outcomes: e; f; g; i;)

- v. **Your Memories; Your Legacy** - Skills and techniques in recording family history/heritage. A workshop provided by a resident who is a published author and professed experience amateur family researcher.

**Attendees** 9

**Example Comment:** *'The workshop was skilfully led and provided an insight into techniques and approaches. It's stimulated me to research further something I've want to do but never got started. I will now.'*

(HLF Outcomes: e; f; g; i;)

**iii. Learning through events**

- a. As part of the project there have been a number of events that have supported learning. These events include: Conservation Celebration, Exhibitions, Visitors. Details located in the [Review section](#) of this report. (HLF Outcomes: f; g; l; )

**iv. Learning through websites**

- a. The website and other digital p has proven to be a vital asset to the sharing of learning as part of the project. This is described in the [Digital Output section](#) of this report. (HLF Outcomes: c; d; f; g; h; i; )

**v. Learning through documents**

- a. Information sheets and documents were produced as part of the project and these are available for sharing learning at events, and through people visiting the Parish Hall. The information includes history of the Parish Hall, history of the Old School House (Grade II listed), history of our churches and history of the built environment of East and West Worlington. (HLF Outcomes: c; d; f; g; h; i; )

## e. People – Attitudes

- i. Before we undertook our project the views of local residents (our community) varied considerably about the Parish Hall as a building best expressed by examples of comments. (HLF Outcomes: f; g; h; i; j; k; l; )

- *'It's an old draughty building and should be pulled down'*
- *'I know the building is important as a Parish Hall but I don't like going there it's so uninviting'*
- *'It's a pity it's in such poor condition because it is an old building which is part of our community'*
- *'This is a wonderful building of real importance to our heritage and should be conserved and preserved at all costs'*

- ii. These comments are important to understand the context in which we started our project and why leadership was so important to overcome some of the barriers. It must be noted though, that in our public consultations, while there were some doubts and some cynicism, we did have general community support for proceeding with the project. Within our community we could not have moved forward without this mandate to proceed.
- iii. On completing the conservation work the picture was very different. The results of the work had achieved significant attitude change. There have been no recorded negative comments about the outcome, in fact the opposite with a conclusive range of reactions and responses that confirm this was a successful project.
- iv. This is best illustrated by comments recorded after and since the completion of the conservation work.

Boy from local primary school on seeing the completed work for the first time.

- *"I'm gobsmacked. I can't believe it."*

Volunteer who had worked on the conservation project.

- *"I just want to sit in the building on my own and take all in. I'm so proud"*

Member of the community who had previously expressed doubt.

- *"I didn't support the project initially as I thought it would spoil the building we have known all our lives; however, I take back my words. The conservation work is a total success. Well done to all."*

Local resident now in her 80's who has lived in the community most of her life.

- *"I am very proud of our Parish Hall and want to show different visitors I have and explain about its history"*

Country music band who played at the Parish Hall for a barn dance as part of celebrating our heritage.

- *“This is an incredible venue and ideal setting for our music which is steeped in Devonian culture.”*

Member of the community visiting the Hall for the first-time following conservation work.

- *“The result of the conservation work on the Hall is inspiring.”*

Member of the community who has previously not shown any interest in or engaged with the work or activities of the Parish Hall but volunteered to work on the project because he wanted to help.

- *“ Volunteering helped me engage more with the conservation of the hall and its future. I'm now happy to do more to support its role in our community”*

## **f. Communities**

- i. An evaluation to ascertain the difference made to our community highlight some interesting findings from our perspective. (HLF Outcomes: c; d; e; f; g; h; i; j; k; l;)
  - a. Within general conversations amongst members of the community there is a growing appreciation that the conservation work had increased pride in the building and that the investment is seen as adding valuing to the place where they live.
  - b. There has certainly being an increase in interest of use of the Parish Hall both as a historic building and through attendance at events offered there, which increases the Hall's historical significance, financial viability and future sustainability.
  - c. We discovered that local Estate Agents were including the Parish Hall and its 'recent' conservation as an asset of the community within their publicity materials for properties coming onto the market within our area.

## D. Digital Outputs

- i. Critical to the achievement of the research, learning and communication elements of our project was the developments we made with digital technology.

(HLF Outcomes: c; d; e; f; g; h; i; j; k;)

- a. The skills of an IT consultant living within the community was the significant factor in the progress we made in developing our website. <http://ewph.uk/>
- b. Throughout the project we used a blog as one way to keep a record, especially of the conservation work, the meetings of the Heritage Group and information about specific workshops and events. <http://ewparishhall.blogspot.co.uk/>
- c. Social Media provided an excellent strategy to share information about our project and specific events. We utilised both Facebook and Twitter.  
<https://www.facebook.com/EastWorlingtonParishHall/>  
<https://twitter.com/EWPHHeritage>

## E. Review

### E.1. What worked well and why

- i. Many aspects of the project are judged to have worked well and contributed to the achievement of the outcomes, including, the inputs of meticulous planning and management of implementation, engagement of volunteers, appointment of a conservation contractor who worked with diligence and care, work with pupils at the school, and digital outputs development. An analysis of the project achievements confirms that the planned HLF Outcomes have been met.

(HLF Outcomes: a; b; c; d; e; f; g; h; i; j; k; l; )

#### a. Conservation of the Hall

- i. The outcomes of the conservation work are judged to be a real achievement. The planning, project management, choice of contractor, support by community volunteers and the co-ordination of all these features were factors we consider contributed to our project working well.

#### b. Work with the children at East Worlington Primary School

- i. We were delighted with the engagement of the school and the interest shown by pupils, and this led to some demonstrable learning outcomes. These outcomes were achieved as a result of with the work of two volunteers from the Heritage Project Group, both ex-teachers. Their interest, enthusiasm and skills engaged the children fully, developed their knowledge of the history of the locality, and developed their appreciation of the understanding of heritage. The pupils' learning was represented and shared through the production of a wall hanging quilt and a project record book as shown in the photographs below.

Pupils from East Worlington Primary School undertaking field research in the locality. This led to desk research including the use of ICT, taught input, and production of writing, drawings and of course the wall hanging.



Working on the maps. Using their research to plot dwellings on a plan of the village.



The project is finished. We've learned such a lot about the heritage of our community.



Record of the project. A book created by the children



The wall hanging now has pride of place in the Parish Hall for all visitors to see.



### c. Celebration Event, Exhibition and Presentation

- i. Following the completion of the conservation project we held a celebration, exhibition and presentation event.

The event was well-supported by over 70 members of our community, staff of the school, pupils and their parents and guests including funding providers.

Guests included Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of Devon, our MP, our District Councillor, our County Councillor, our Parish Council Chair, our local vicar, Executive Headteacher Chulmleigh Academy Trust and two Trustees from HLF.

The Celebration Event provided an opportunity to share learning through exhibits and presentation.

A poem written and presented at the Celebration Event and Exhibition by a pupil at East Worlington Primary School about his work on the project and the outcome of the information quilt the pupils produced.

The pupils attending East Worlington Primary School were very proud of what they achieved through the project. Their appreciation of heritage and motivation to learn was a significant outcome of the project.



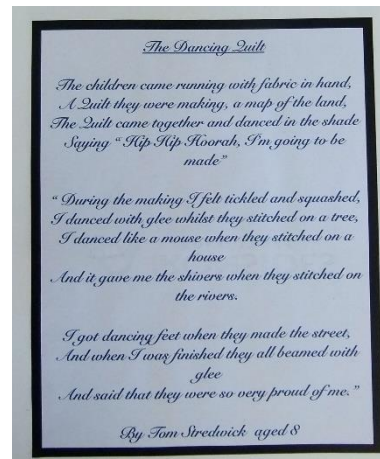
Community members at the celebration



Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of Devon meeting HLF Trustees



Part of the exhibition about the conservation work



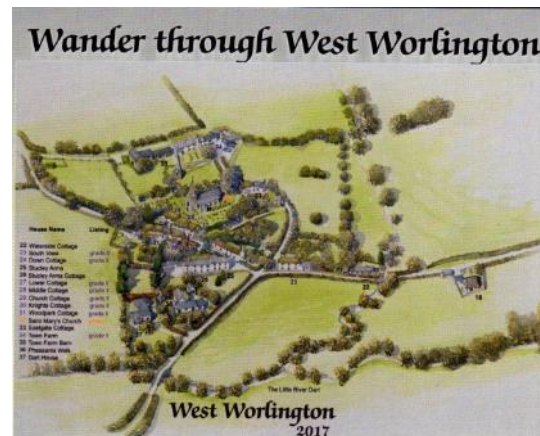
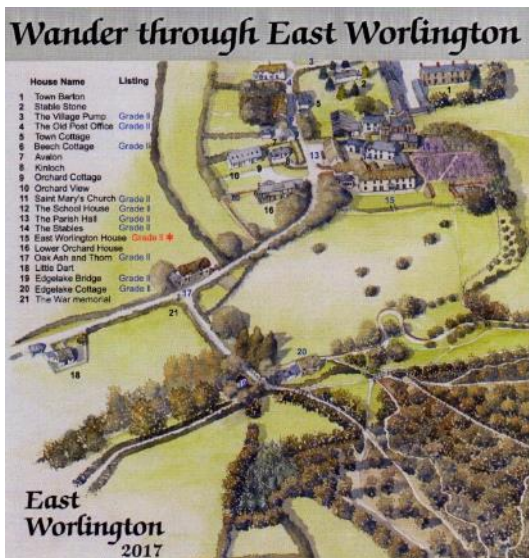
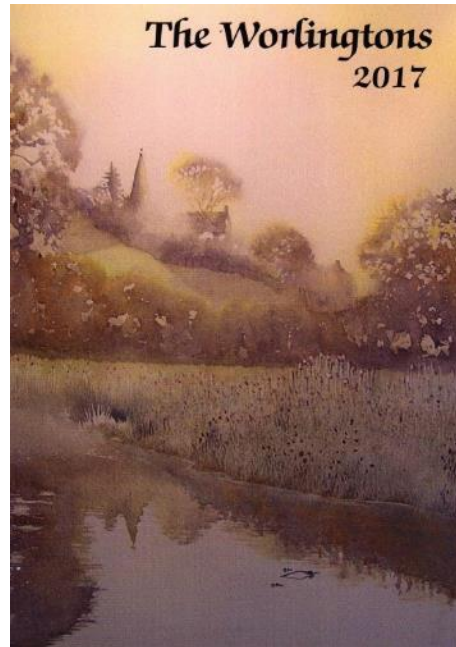
The poem composed by a pupil as a tribute to the project





## d. Work of Volunteers in Support of Research and Learning

i. As part of our heritage project volunteers researched the dwellings in our local communities of East and West Worlington and produced a booklet to share the learning. It was produced as a village trail so visitors can use it as a guide and reference document. The art work was produced by a local volunteer with significant artistic talents. The photograph to the right illustrates the cover and the two maps show the dwellings and key to their names. In 'The Worlington's' all properties have names.



## e. Worlington Heritage Group

i. The Heritage Project Research and Learning Group have become so motivated and enjoyed the experience of the project that they have formed the Worlington Heritage Group that will continue to exist beyond the project. (HLF Outcomes: a; c; d; f; g; h; i; l;)

## **E.2. What didn't work well and why**

- i. While there were many strengths associated with project in review we did consider the extent to which our research and learning programme in terms of the number and range of activities was over ambitious. This did add time pressures on the programme of work and activities and a sense of needed to keep moving forward through the programme. From time to time this restricted the opportunity to research deeper on some points of interest and discovery and left open an agenda for future research post-project completion.

## **E.3. Contribution of the Project to Change**

- i. The key question: Would the work have happened anyway even if there was no project? The simple answer to this is 'No'.
- ii. The fact that HLF exists provided hope and therefore supported ambition.
- iii. The expectations for the outcomes required by HLF ensured a clear focus on the activities needed to achieve our ambitions.
- iv. The structure required by HLF supported planning and provided a framework for activity development.
- v. The funding provided the vital resource that enabled project implementation.
- vi. The progress reporting; staged funding payments and evaluation report ensured accountability. This was important to our type of community project in that community perspectives, that emerged as people engaged with the project and saw it progressing, did not deviate the project away from the desired outcome.

## **F. Summary of lessons learnt**

### **F.1. What different next time**

- i. We learnt the issues associated with running a community project with volunteers, all with their individual perceptions and expectation, and managing a professionally led conservation project, needs carefully handling. The professionals work to a project plan they understand the client (the Trustees) have agreed but the interface between this and the community as stakeholder can create some challenges during the implementation.
- ii. We discovered as the project progressed that individual Trustees had different levels of understanding about the specific details of the project and while there was full commitment to the project only when the project implementation achieved milestones did some Trustees understand the details sufficiently.
- iii. Next time we will be very clear of the need to have ensured all detailed decisions about the project are understood by all Trustees before the project is signed off.
- iv. We will have explicit clarity for all Trustees about role and responsibilities and procedures and processes before the project starts.

## **G. Conclusions**

- i. While the project took place in a small community of about 220 residents the range of volunteers with professional, managerial, administrative and practical skills that engaged and contributed to this project was impressive and a significant feature.
- ii. The impact of the project on the conservation and aesthetic benefit of the Parish Hall has made a significant contribution to the future sustainability of the building and improvements to the quality of life of residents through its facilities.
- iii. There has been a positive attitude change across members of the community
- iv. We have better understanding and documented evidence and archives to described the heritage associated with our community.
- v. A wider group of people, including children and young people, have greater knowledge about our local heritage and have been stimulated to learn more.
- vi. There has been a positive impact on the community by creating a better place to live and increasing resilience.

## H. Some statistics

### Volunteer support for the project

		No.
• Trustees	Skilled	13
• Project Overall Leadership and Co-ordination	Skilled	1
• Conservation Project Development and Project Management	Professional	2
• Volunteers Providing Labour on Conservation Project	Unskilled	9
• Digital Output Developments Leader	Skilled	1
• Digital Outputs Group	Skilled	3
• Research and Learning Leadership and Co-ordination	Skilled	1
• Research and Learning Action Groups	Skilled	7
• Publicity / Artwork / Graphic Design of Documents	Skilled	2

### Learning

• Pupils attending East Worlington Primary School aged 4 to 11		50
• Thatching Learning		20
• Cob Wall Workshop		8
• Lime Plastering Workshop		8
• Art Workshop		9
• Your Memories; Your Legacy Workshop		9
• Conservation Celebration and Exhibition		110

### Digital Outputs - Website

- We are now seeing nearly 1000 visits per month
- Over 500 different visitors in May 2017
- Last 365 Days (to June 2017): 6,417 different visitors, 53,596 visits
- Total since going live in February 2015: 14,638 different visitors and 98,244 visits
- We are now seeing nearly 1000 visits per month
- Over 500 different visitors last month
- Over 100 articles (98 pages, 9 posts).
- Over 300 images of local events and scanned historical photos or documents
- Nearly 200 documents: committee meeting minutes; parish hall policies, plans & documents; questionnaires; and factsheets
- 5 interactive maps including local walks, listed buildings, and WWI memoriam
- Support for online ticket purchases (via PayPal) for local events