

## **The Conversion of Shallowford's East Barn**

The story begins in 2013, when the trustees reviewed the long-term goals and objectives of The Shallowford Trust, aiming to ensure long term sustainability of its main mission. One of the many objectives was to increase the overall accommodation space, enabling the number of beds to increase to an average class size, whilst essentially retaining a sense of 'home'.

The debate began. What and how could this be accomplished?

The initial plans had included the construction of at least three new staff houses, a new drive and the relocation of the animal barn to what is now a vegetable patch and chicken sheds. The Shippen was proposed as a commercial kitchen and a new dining room was to be constructed where there is now the Corner Barn. The problem was not only would this cost a huge amount of money, it would also feel like an outdoor centre and lose the sense of intimacy and personal responsibility.

We started fund raising, debating and discussing and had several visits from Dartmoor National Park's Planning Department before we finally settled on a plan. As a Grade II listed curtilage (yard) we had to proceed with respect and integrity for our wonderful buildings. Following a detailed tendering process, the final company to win the tender was Alec Hoare & Son.

### **Work Began: January 2020**

The work on the Main Barn was scheduled to start in January 2020. However, the builders were intimately aware of the potentially bad Dartmoor weather and assessed that they could complete within time if they started in February. One short delay and Corona Virus hit, preventing the builders from starting until 18<sup>th</sup> May 2020.



January 2021: The East Barn and yard before work started.



17<sup>th</sup> May 2024: The Barn, now repurposed for human, not farm animal use, much enjoyed by many.



January 2021, the lovely old Barn door, before it was re-purposed for fire wood.



18<sup>th</sup> May 2020: The first equipment to arrive was harris fencing to cordon off the area for security and insurance purposes. On day one of the diggers arriving, the cement was lifted to allow easy access and ensure internal and external 'levels' could be corrected.



May 2020: volunteers had removed all the internal wood, preparing the space ready for future work, a new roof, new floors, insulation, new drains and heating.

Note solid downstairs walls that were not included in the original planning permission were to be left untouched enabling access to two rooms only from the outside stable doors. Internal doorways were eventually granted in April 2020.

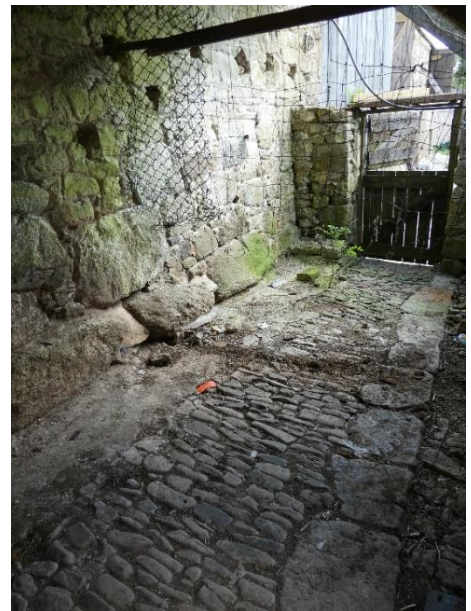


22nd May 2020: the priority was to determine what rocks lay below the floor in the Barn, which needed underpinning and damp proofing.



January 2020: The cobbled lean-to on the East Barn is used for outdoor storage.

May 2020: The old cobbled floor were removed and used in the yard.



May 2021: The derelict lean-to became an underfloor heated bootroom with a dehumidifier for exceptionally wet days.



28th June: the yard was dug up for the various sewerage, water and electric lines, with considerable forward planning should funding ever become available for further work to re-instate the Corner Barn (gap on the right hand side) and re-roof the Shippen (stone building on the right).



June 2020, all the old beams and wooden structures were removed, the floor levelled and drainage channels dug.



July 2020, the first floor is drilled into the sturdy ancient walls before the multiple layers of insulation are applied.



10th August 2020: the day the Klargestar (sewerage tank) was installed – very carefully!!



9th September 2020: the day the rafters went up!



29<sup>th</sup> October 2020: The metal sheeting is secured for a new, highly insulated roof.



29th September 2020: View of the yard with the Tyvek waterproofing on the Barn roof awaiting new metal sheeting.



29th September 2020: our wonderful new carpark, gates and drive, plus the Ark!



6th October 2020: PermaSEAL wall tanking to enable any condensation or damp seeping through the porous granite to trickle down to drains in the floor keeping the walls ventilated and dry. Celotex and rockwool were secured for insulation, covered by hardboard and a final layer of plasterboard before painting.



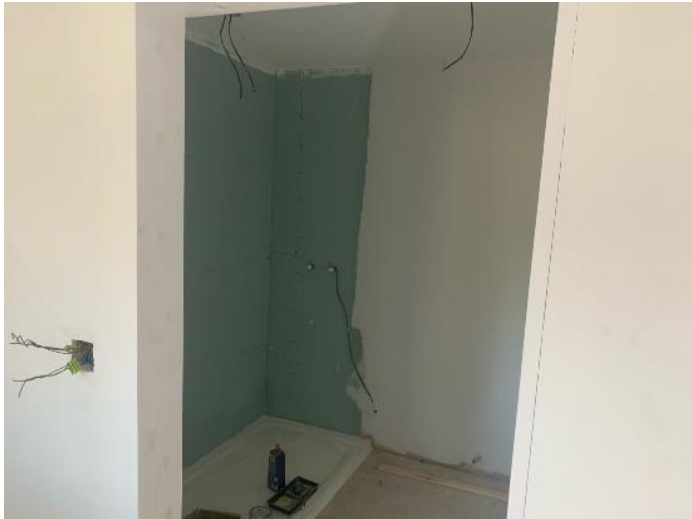
10th October 2020: Placing and spacing!  
Finalising plans for bathroom fittings and doorways on the first floor.



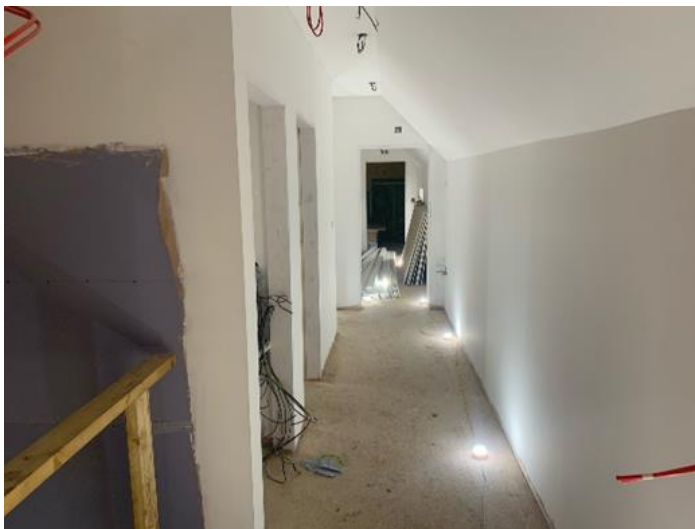
15th October 2020. The builders very kindly disassembled a bunk bed from the house and reassembled it in the barn so we could measure the position of beds and height for plug sockets! Not that any youth will ever have a phone to charge!



8<sup>th</sup> January 2021: Room Five, the same room in which there is a bunk bed (picture above), fully boarded, plastered, first fixings of electricity and one coat of paint. Note the painting was undertaken by volunteers. THANK YOU!!!



8<sup>th</sup> January 2021: the shower tray in Room One is in place. All the shower boarding was ordered and installed within the next two weeks.



8<sup>th</sup> January 2021: view along the upstairs corridor, wheelchair accessible. The lift delivery date was delayed due to Brexit complications having been manufactured in Sweden. The knock-on effect was a delay in the downstairs floor being laid as this had to be completed after the lift installation.



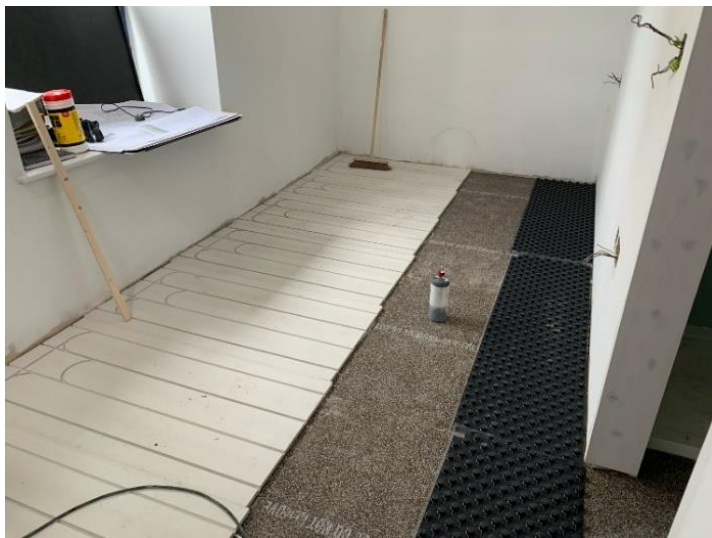
8<sup>th</sup> January 2021: the stairs have been installed with close spindles to ensure good safety and wide steps to ease the flow of people.



13<sup>th</sup> January 2020: view out of the dining Room towards the main Barn entrance. Glass would be installed in the timber frames as the room has no other windows due to Grade II planning restrictions.



13<sup>th</sup> January 2021: view into the Dinning Room from the corridor. A large and warm room.



13<sup>th</sup> January 2020: upstairs the thermal insulation for under-floor heating secured for the hot water pipes to be inserted.



13<sup>th</sup> January 2020: The oak doors had been hung in most of the rooms upstairs.

### **The Plant Room and Store:**



January 2020, the log shed was extremely damp, suitable for logs only. The store room (middle structure) had once been beautifully maintained with neat shelves and organised tins of nails and screws. Sadly, everything was so damp and rusted, nothing was useable.



June 2020: the old store room had been demolished at speed and the ground levelled for the new store or Plant Room.



July 2020, carefully laid ducts and pipes to receive water from our own borehole for filtering as tap water and heating in the Barn and Boot room.



15<sup>th</sup> July 2020, the damp lining had been laid.



28<sup>th</sup> July 2020: the brickwork begins



17<sup>th</sup> May 2024: having been used for a couple of years, the 'Plant Room' serves to not only house the water and heating systems, but also functions as a store and drying room. Note, the cement block building is covered with wooden boarding between the two stone buildings as per the original shed. However, the roof is one continuous line to reduce the need for multiple joints and thus potential leaking.



24<sup>th</sup> September 2021: Phil Dorman, long time volunteer and supporter of Shallowford, insulating the wood shed, which up until 2020 had been a dark, dingy and damp hole only used for wood!



25<sup>th</sup> September 2021: Nick Creasy, Youth Worker and carpenter for Shallowford, working with Phil to insert rockwool. This is THE most insulated and warm store on Dartmoor! It even has a solar powered electric heater and double (two) external doors!



October 2021: shelves made and protected by lino! Store ready for use!!

### Additional Costs:



### Drainage:

12<sup>th</sup> January 2021: additional drainage was installed to mitigate against flooding following two major floods in 2020. This is the yard between the 'Plant Room' (old store) and the House Back Kitchen.



Note, in the previous 30 years no major flooding had been recorded, but persistent rain in February and June 2020 caused spring ingress within the farm house. This drainage was additional to the planned budget.



17<sup>th</sup> May 2024: The rough washed cement was laid to enable water to flow safely downhill away from doors.

The old Log Shed has now been fully converted to a very useful outside store with movement sensed and emergency lighting.

### **Additional Room Conversions: The Kitchen**



20<sup>th</sup> August 2020: the Barn floor is cemented, the first floor in place and the walls for the kitchen and window have been constructed. This internal kitchen replaced the 'concept' of an external kitchen in the shippen, thus retaining a more accessible 'homely' feel.



17<sup>th</sup> May 2024: The completed corridor, with the kitchen on the right, a door to the lift and dining room ahead.

On the left, maps of the world and of Britain were secured by Phil Dorman to enable young people to gauge their location.



Darren, Hicky, Ross and Paddy, our builders from start to completion sitting in what would become the kitchen.



March 2021: the original design for the kitchen had to be revised for multi-purpose use and short people!



June 2021: Final opening of the Barn hinged on securing a practical oven for the kitchen. The fittings, units and much of the equipment was donated or purchased at the most economic price possible and designed to be useable by both professional and domestic cooks. Some equipment was resold at purchase price to cover new purchases.



29<sup>th</sup> September 2021: A new oven is installed by Will Dracup and David Onah making the kitchen ready for multi-purpose use.

### **The Cobbled Room:**

Following the granting of Planning Permission on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2020, the builders carefully created two doorways in the walls allowing internal access to two rooms that in the original plans were only accessible through external doors from the yard.

New doorways leading into and from the cobbled area. Once a dairy, to become a sitting room or 'snug'.



Changes have and will continue to be made as furniture needs to be renewed or is donated.



June 2021: with three donated sofas, a donated carpet table, lamp and picture all from neighbours, trustees and friends, we were ready to open!



May 2024: note, 'Hen-peg' was donated by Michael Cranmer who also helped us with photography. Anything to help the nature, farm, food debate! She apparently originated from Devon County Council!



January 2023: some group leaders call the room the 'Snug', then we tell them it used to be a dairy and show them the drain for urine and faeces!



3<sup>rd</sup> April 2021: the Grade II listed cobbled dairy had to be retained as an historically integral part of the building. However, it was sandblasted, enabling the room to be converted into a useable sitting room with a gently sloping floor. No remains of poo (we hope)!



13<sup>th</sup> January 2021: View down the newly made corridor illustrating the modern first floor frame through which piping and electrics can be run above the special sound resistant plaster board.



June 2021: exposed clean cobbles enabled access throughout the lower floor of the East Barn, retaining a greater sense of home than the alternative, entry from the outside through the old stable door. Note, the ceiling remains as plaster to retain a more natural, traditional feel.



13<sup>th</sup> January 2021: View of the cluttered cobbled end room, which Alec Hoare & Son, our builders, converted into a disability accessible downstairs toilet with both internal and external access as an additional cost to the original contract.



June 2021:  
Sue Malcolm  
one of our  
volunteers  
generously  
devoted hours  
to finish the  
more fiddly  
painting.



By July 2021, the cluttered cobbled end room had been transformed into a clean, functional, accessible toilet and washroom for all users with easy to clean and safe flooring.



26<sup>th</sup> April 2021: all of the painting was completed by volunteers who worked in groups or individually to paint the entire Barn. Juli Williams kindly took responsibility for the dining room.



27<sup>th</sup> April 2021: the upstairs, had been levelled with a special resin covering the underfloor heating before being laid with carpet.



25<sup>th</sup> May 2021: many of the beds had to be 'cut' to fit into the space with 'special' mattresses ordered to ensure a good fit. Darren's carpentry skills proved proficient!



Room Four.



Each of the five bedrooms has an en-suite bathroom with an easy accessible, low maintenance shower. Room Three.



Room Five has disability access and a wide space for wheelchair users.



Room Five has two single beds (donated by a neighbour) which are suitable for people with mobility difficulties.



With a combination of Velux and barn doors now converted to windows, the rooms are well lit and bright (Room Four).



Room One with a large window, formally a first floor 'straw bale door.'



A Swedish lift was installed for easy access, with six monthly maintenance and LOLAR annual certification guaranteed as part of our long term insurance and health and safety plan.



8<sup>th</sup> May 2021: our wheelchair visitor 'Dom' agreed to 'test' our new lift. Having Duchenne muscular dystrophy he struggled to hold the controls but said the experience felt 'safe' and smooth. He became our 'smooth operator!'





By June 2021 we were ready for our first guests, with the dresser delivered, tables purchased and chairs borrowed. The dresser had been spotted on the back of a lorry in Ashburton and purchased for a 'good price' due to it's size. One very kind trustee agreed to provide the funding believing, it would 'fit perfectly.'



On 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2021 the first official and large group of guests stayed in the Barn; a group from Providence House Youth Club in London.



June 2023: new chairs had been secured through the RDPE (EU Rural Development) grant. The lovely blue Willow Pattern china was donated by Penny and Brian Whale when they finally retired the Wayside Café in Widecombe.



22<sup>nd</sup> April 2024: The tables ready for 21 Japanese guests, squeezed in between the school groups.



February 2020



May 2021



May 2021: from left to right: The Ark, the Farm House, the Barn and a well drained yard.

Many thanks to all our donors, supporters, builders and volunteers  
without whom this project could never have been completed.

**THANK YOU!**

**Many thanks to our wonderful builders, Alec Hoare and Son:**

Kevin Hoare  
Ross Lillicrap  
Darren Veale  
Graeme Hickman  
Ian Pollard  
Matthew Weeks

And so many volunteers, but especially, Sue Malcolm, Juli Williams, Chris Houston, Johnny and Sally Walker, Georgina Groves, Brenda Boston, Billy, Pete Brodbelt, the Hodges Family, Miho Rennells and of course Serena Walcot, Will Dracup and Phil Dorman.

**So many thanks to our donors without whom the work could never have been completed:**

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