

Article for the Well Magazine Spring 2010.

## Kemsing Scout Headquarters

For those who remember 1972, it was the year of the last manned mission to the moon (Apollo 17), Nixon's Watergate, the attacks at the Munich Olympics. The Rolling Stones conquered the U.S and David Bowie released Ziggy Stardust and the spiders from Mars!

The Vietnam war still raged and M.A.S.H. was launched on television, to carry on for exactly 25 years. This was, bizarrely, longer than the Vietnam War and longer than any proposed lifespan of the newly erected 6<sup>th</sup> Sevenoaks Scout Headquarters built on the recreation field in Kemsing.

The new prefabricated 'Banbury' building was purchased and erected in 1972 at the grand cost of £1,559 and 50 new pence. 15 years later a small porch was added at the preferential rate of £3,177.45

Over the last 38 years many young people from Kemsing and surrounding villages have attended Scouting here, some young Cubs and Scouts have returned and led the sections. Some parents who saw their children grow all through their Scouting years, are still with Scouting! Many, who cannot assist regularly, help out with activities and fund raising. Scouting is one of those things that you just can't get out of your blood.

I started Scouting in 1963, when I moved to an area with an 'attached' Group, the 37<sup>th</sup> Croydon was a Group attached to the local 'All Saints' church in Norwood. I went on to be a young leader here. Later I was a Scout Leader at the 1<sup>st</sup> West Wickham, before I moved to Kemsing, where I have been assistant Scout Leader, Scout Leader and now Group Scout Leader. It is my mission to replace the current Scout hut with a new Headquarters. The old hut made it to the end of the last millennium and has now seen out the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and all that know it, realise that it is past its prime!

Following discussions with the Recreation Grounds Committee (the trustees of the land) and Kemsing Parish Council, we are now in a position to have preliminary plans. These are currently being transposed into detailed drawings for planning approval. We would like to hear from everyone as to what you think of the proposals, at the address shown below.



The hut will boast the latest 'green' technology, a 'living' roof, rainwater harvesting, passive ventilation and the like. The Headquarters will be available to all youth organisations and projects as well as all community ventures. The proposed site will be at the East end of the Recreation field, to the North of the Pavilion and Tennis Club car parks, just above the top tennis court, near to the bridleway. As can be seen in the 'concept' drawings, it is envisaged that the new hut will be 'set into' the slope of the land. This, together with the 'green' roof, will ensure that the hut blends into the surroundings, when viewed from the Recreation Field.

This area of the field already has the advantage of large car parking areas and is an area of activity with the Pavilion and Tennis Club. It has dense foliage to the North and East of the proposed building. The building will also be placed so as to allow the normal movement of grounds maintenance equipment as well as emergency vehicles, whilst also allowing normal access for pedestrian traffic. The area of the current hut will be returned to the Recreation Grounds Committee, once restored.



The cost of the project is envisaged to be £325,000 and we would be pleased to hear from individuals and organisations that could help us in achieving this goal.

Please contact me with your views of the project or if you can assist in fundraising.

Chris Arnold ~ Group Scout Leader

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