

MORTON WAR MEMORIAL INSTITUTE.

The above property which was deemed to be Parish property on the extension of the Borough in 1938 was automatically transferred to the Corporation under the Review Order of 1938.

There are no deeds in the possession of the Corporation and an attempt has recently been made to trace the history of the building. It appears that the front portion was originally known as the British School and was built by the Nonconformists in opposition to the Church School. A Mr. Bartle who resides in the Parish can well remember attending this school over 75 years ago and paying 3d. a week for tuition; the Headmaster did not receive a salary but took the fees as payment for his services. Years later the school was discontinued and the building remained empty (except for casual user) until about 1920 when the Memorial Hall was built on to the back and the front portion was adapted for use as a Billiard Room and Club Rooms.

In November 1919 the Board of Education gave their consent to the proposed adaption and extension of the premises for the purpose of a Village Institute.

The Memorial Hall encroaches upon the Recreation Ground and consent for its erection was given by the Charity Commissioners. The cost of the Hall was met by public subscriptions and the Rules formulated on its opening provide that it should be Parish property.

In March 1920 the Parish Council resolved "That the Morton War Memorial Committee be permitted to take possession of the British School for reconstruction as a War Memorial Institute at their convenience and that they be empowered to dispose of the furniture etc. not required for the Institute to the best advantage."

In September 1922 the Parish Council resolved "That the Morton War Memorial Institute Committee be allowed to have the use of the building free of charge up to the end of March 1923 providing the Committee undertake responsibility for any expenses that may be incurred - including the Rates - and that there shall not be any call upon the rates for this object."

Extended to March 1924 on 5th April 1923.

Further extended from year to year until 1938.

The Parish Council insured the building against fire for £2,000.

On the 7th March 1929, it was reported to the Parish Council that the Charity Commissioners had made an Order vesting the Memorial Institute in the Parish Council.

In February 1938 the Parish Council resolved "That the Clerk place on record the fact that the Morton Institute Committee are tenants of the British School, Morton from the Parish Council free of annual rent, the Parish Council being responsible for the insurance against fire; the tenancy being a yearly one expiring on the 31st March in each year and that a yearly notice expiring on any 31st March is necessary to determine the tenancy."

And on 29th March 1938 "That the Clerk place on record the fact that the furnishings of the War Memorial Institute shall be and the same are hereby vested in the Committee of the Morton Institute for the time being and may not be disposed of or otherwise dealt with except with their consent."

All these arrangements have been made by resolution and at no time has any legal agreement been prepared.

The position in 1938 is clear, namely (1) That the old British School and the War Memorial Institute were Parish property occupied rent free by the Institute Committee, (2) That the Institute Committee were responsible for all expenses other than fire insurance, and (3) That the furnishings etc. were the property of the Institute Committee.

This arrangement has continued up to the present but the Institute Committee now feel that there should be an agreement which would guarantee to them the continuation of the tenancy rent free, that they should continue to have the power to sub-let the Hall and to retain the charges for its use, that they should be responsible for internal repairs, rates, heating and cleaning and that their ownership of the furniture and fittings should be acknowledged by the Corporation.

They also request that as the building is now Corporation property and the funds of the Institute Committee are limited the Corporation should accept responsibility for repairs to the external walls, roofs and windows.

Borough Treasurer's Department,
Keighley.

13th September, 1949.