

## **The Shallowford Trust**

### **Report on 2020 - 2021 Construction Work**

#### **The Tricky Year of 2020**

Despite all the hiatus and difficulties that so many people had to endure in 2020, at East Shallowford Farm we were extremely pleased to not only move forward with our building projects, but also host seven groups before lockdown on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2020. By pure chance the team building the Outdoor Education Barn (now named the Ark) had arrived on 16<sup>th</sup> March enabling the team to remain on site until the building was fully water-tight. The contractors appointed to convert the Main Barn could not arrive in January as originally planned but turned up in full force on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2020 and worked without pause to complete on time so that we could be ready to open as soon as lock-down regulations were lifted.

Despite construction work requiring the loss of the main yard, paths were rerouted to ensure that we could continue to support as many individuals and groups as possible in the limited bubbles and periods where rules allowed visitors. We lost 19 booked groups throughout lock-down but our first visitors returned on 5<sup>th</sup> July and then poured in over the summer with 23 groups staying for varying periods until September when schools re-opened and families returned to work. Eleven of the groups fitted into our main target group of disadvantaged youth – considerably less than were booked and we would have hoped for, but planning mixed groups from different households proved extremely difficult. All other groups were families seeking support and time out of their own locked in environment. Schools were largely restricted from travelling, but everyone who visited helped with the animals and submerged into the magic of Dartmoor.

In 2021 we have had only ten youth groups visit, but a total of 35 family groups, with the anticipation of at least another thirteen groups before the end of the year. Local special needs schools and individual families who are desperate to bring their young people out of urban areas to improve their mental health continue to visit weekly.

#### **Construction in 2020 - 2021:**

The major building work was to construct:

- **An Outdoor Education Barn (The Ark):** a warm space for all year multi-purpose use including everything from learning about conservation to basket weaving, holding a tea party to children's painting. The use of the Ark is aimed to be primarily for visiting groups but also available to the local community and Dartmoor related environmental and farming activities.
- **Main Barn convert into accommodation:** The barn had been used for general storage for the previous few decades but was on the brink of dangerously collapsing. The aim was to re-develop the space into five bedroomed accommodation for up to 27 beds with a 'snug/dining room', kitchen, downstairs toilet, a lift and wet room for multiple user access. Further funds were raised to convert the Grade II listed cobbled rooms into a snug and the cobbled tack room into a disabled downstairs toilet. These two conversions were not included in the original tender, as planning permission had not been gained to allow access through all rooms on the ground floor. This was granted on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2020. Additional funding was sought to enable the entire ground floor to be used for visiting groups to maintain the essential sense of 'home'.

**The Ark!** The very practical, but not very romantic name of the 'Outdoor Education Barn' has been replaced by '**The Ark**', a unanimous decision based on the building's shape with only a hint of allusion to us all needing to be saved from the pending Climate Emergency.

## Spring 2019



September 2019: The stable hides the office and the bull and pig pens which leaked horrendously, making it tricky for practical animal use or storage.



5<sup>th</sup> September 2019: the stable in front of the office is demolished, exposing the building which had been hidden since the 1980s by the construction of the stable (housing the washing machine in Picture 1).



11<sup>th</sup> January 2020: the pig pen was toppled and chopped up for firewood by our fantastic volunteers.



January 2020: foundations being laid included drainage, water and electric channels and of course, being Dartmoor a radon sump.



30<sup>th</sup> January 2020: the cement slab was completed by a local contractor, Matt Symes and is ready for the barn construction!



16<sup>th</sup> March 2020: the day before the major build. Phil Dorman and Peter Fouche from Providence House assess, think and plan!



17<sup>th</sup> -18<sup>th</sup> March 2020: beams go across to add security to the frame.

With some herculean efforts throughout lock-down, the five main builders – two volunteers, two experienced site workers, and our Farm Manager banged, whacked and sawed ahead to produce a water tight building by May 2020. Lock-down made virtually no difference as supplies were available thanks to careful forward planning and the opportunity to buy online from Screwfix!



2<sup>nd</sup> April 2020: doors and windows with dark grey metal frames are inserted.



15<sup>th</sup> April 2020: all the fire retardant and insulation in the roof is in place. The plasterboard on the walls begins.



20<sup>th</sup> May 2020: Ed, Tristan and Rami install the electric underfloor heating cables.





11<sup>th</sup> June 2020: Jess and Malcolm Hunter arrived (11<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> and then 15<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> June) with Dave Adams to start the filling of holes, joints and dents. Using masks, an extractor fan, a lot of plaster, sanding and a dangerous balancing (Malcolm) – they took the room to perfection.



8<sup>th</sup> July 2020 work laying the special Lotus International Oxford Oak Vinyl Floor, was completed on the 9<sup>th</sup> July by Dave Adams and Malcolm Hunter. Subsequently many children have been foiled – they believe it is real wood!



5<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> September 2020: the Providence House Work Party arrives to construct the frame for the end wall cupboard.



18<sup>th</sup> December 2020: Malcolm and Dave arrive at the farm to fit and hang the large cupboard doors. The Ark interior with all cupboard doors shut and the kitchenette door open.



The Ark – view from the yard including the newly roofed office and a view of the Ark from the field.



The Arks value and function is rapidly identified by our visitors.

13th August 2020: Providence House Girls Group: Future Board Planning: the first official group to use the Ark. Please note, many groups have used the Ark since it was made water- tight.

13th September 2020: retreat for the Waste Not Want Not volunteers working in London throughout Corona Virus to deliver hot meals to isolated and vulnerable individuals and families.



April 2021: the Ark is ready for use with a new cobbled area between the medieval drain and the office

April 2021, donations of sofas and chairs make the space adaptable for meetings, discussions, bread making or craft work



The work on the Main Barn was scheduled to start in January 2020. However, the builders were intimately aware of the bad 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.



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 '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. Doorways were eventually granted in April 2020.

22<sup>nd</sup> May 2020: the priority was to determine what rocks lay below the floor level in the barn, which needed underpinning and damp proofing.



28<sup>th</sup> 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 Shippon (stone building on the right).



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



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

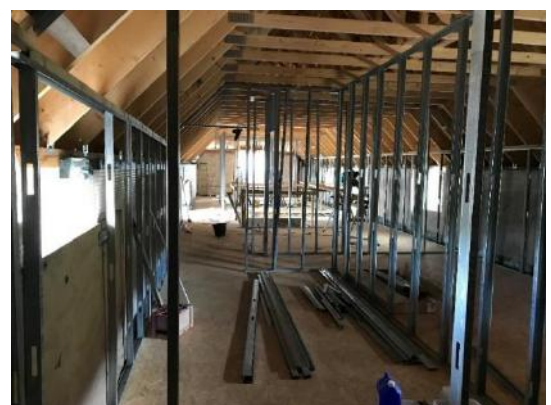


29th September 2020:  
View of the yard with the Tyvek waterproofing on the roof awaiting new metal sheeting.



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

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

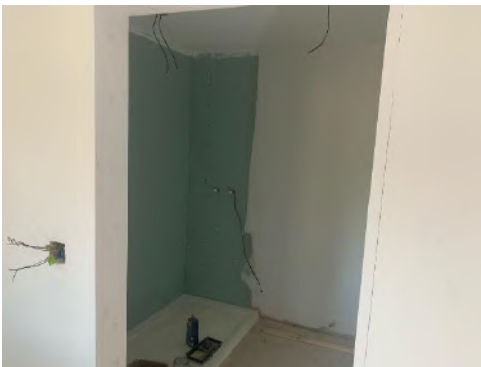




15th October 2020. The builders very kindly disassembled a bunk bed from the house and reassembled it in the barn so we could measure the position of beds and height for plug sockets!

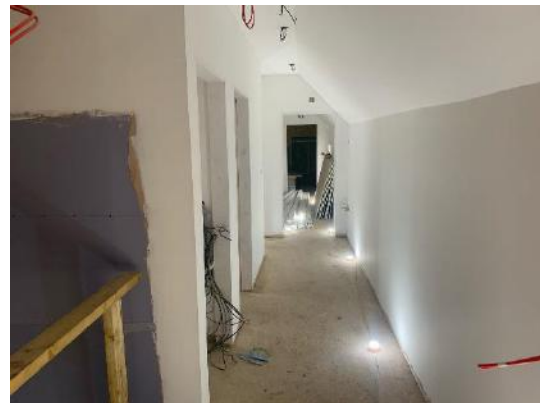


8<sup>th</sup> January 2021: Room Five, the same room in which there is a bunk bed (picture above), fully boarded, plastered, first fixings of electricity and one coat of paint. Note the painting is being undertaken by volunteers.



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

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



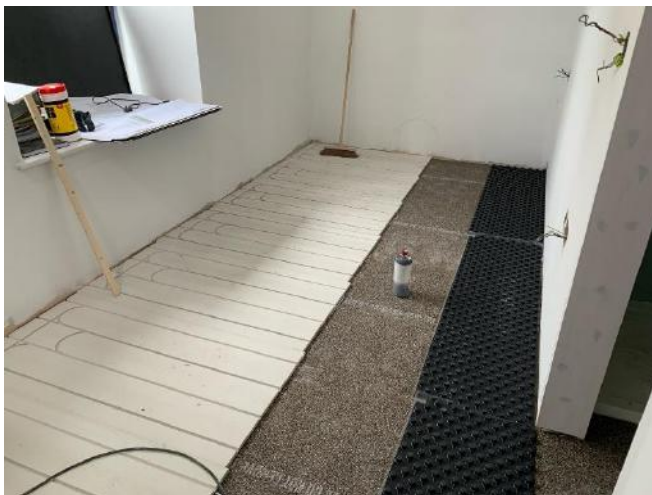
8<sup>th</sup> January 2021: the stairs have been installed with close spindles to ensure good safety and wide steps to ease the flow of people.



13<sup>th</sup> January 2020: view out of the Snug towards the main barn entrance. Glass will be installed in the timber frames as the room has no other windows.



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



13<sup>th</sup> January 2020: upstairs the underlay for under-floor heating has been laid ready for the hot water pipes to be inserted.

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



### Additional Costs:



### Drainage:

12<sup>th</sup> January 2021: additional drainage has been installed to mitigate against flooding following two major floods in 2020.



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 current budget.

### Additional Room Conversions:

Following the granting of Planning Permission on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2020, the builders have 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 dining area.







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

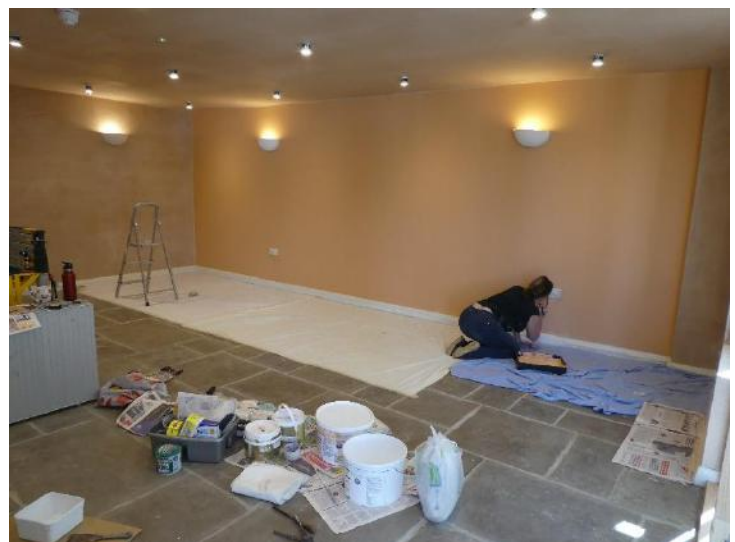


13<sup>th</sup> January 2021: View of the cluttered cobbled end room, for which Alec Hoare & Son, our builders, convert into a disability accessible downstairs toilet with both internal and external access as an additional cost to the original contract.



3<sup>rd</sup> April 2021: the Grade II listed cobbled dairy had to be retained as a 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.

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.





27<sup>th</sup> April 2021: the upstairs, had been levelled with a special resin over the underfloor heating and then 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 comfort.



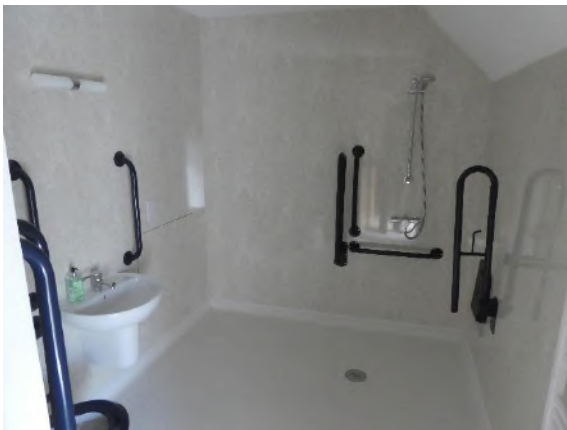
By July 2021, the cluttered cobbled end room had been transformed into a clean, functional, accessible toilet and washroom for all users with easy to clean and safe flooring.







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



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.



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 regular wheelchair visitor 'Dom' agreed to 'test' our new lift. Having muscular dystrophy he struggled to hold the controls but said the experience felt 'safe' and smooth.





By June we were almost ready for our first guests, with the dresser delivered and the table's ready.



Neighbours and friends donated most of the furniture, enabling us to be ready for the first groups who have enjoyed the transition through the door from underfloor heated flag stones, to proper ancient cobbles.

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.





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.



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 and volunteers  
without whom this project could never have been completed.

THANK YOU!