

# How we got where we are today

By TONY PRINGLE

Flies and more flies. Veronica asked me what I had done to her and the family with our move to New House Lane in August 1992. It was a warm summer for most of England and as we had only been in the country for four years—we had moved from beautiful Kenya—we still had a lot to learn about life in UK.

The first thing we noticed—apart from the flies (it was a bad year for them)—was the hospitality and friendship of our neighbours in New House Lane and the Close who made the move for us to this part of England that much easier but also, the right one.

We soon settled in and our three children quickly found new friends. Then came the sad passing away of Doris Boughton in November 1993 and I was asked by some of the residents if I would help to run the Hilltop Social Club, then a small group running a few events at St Faiths. I agreed and was elected chairman of Hilltop Social Committee to fill the gap left by Doris who had for many years kept a tight rein on all the events.

We made some small changes to try to bring the residents together and introduced Car Treasure Hunts and Barbecues. Chris and Cheryl Ives continued doing a grand job with the Harvest Supper and the Wine and Wisdom nights, and the

coffee mornings and several other functions went on as usual. For the next seven years all went well: we had a good crowd at all the events and a core of willing residents who were always eager to help with the setting up and vital clearing away afterwards. As a club, we went from a position of only just surviving to being financially stable.

At this time we had Tim Herbert as the Vicar and he was always very helpful in matters concerning St Faiths and we were starting to discuss with him the possibility of Hilltop taking over the ownership and running of the hall. He however moved on in his career and Ian Aveyard took over as Vicar.

In January 2000 the PCC commissioned a brief inspection to be carried out on the hall by surveyor Andrew Clague to ascertain the condition of the structure. As a result of this, in the May 2000 edition of the parish newsletter, the Rev. Aveyard dropped a bombshell on Hilltop by stating that St Faiths church building was 'past its useful life'. This was indeed a major blow and spurred the residents into action.

The community needed to pull together and make changes that would help to save the hall.

This led to the formation in November 2000 of the Hilltop Community Association. Colin Smith and the trustees past and present have done a sterling job that we should all be proud of as they steer the Association forwards to secure the hall for the benefit of us all now and in the future.

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