

Dalmellington Band



OFFICIAL OPENING OF NEW BAND HALL

On Saturday 5th November our new Band and Community Music Hall was officially opened by Depute Provost Tommy Farrell of East Ayrshire Council.



THE STORY BEHIND OUR NEW HALL

In 1999/2000 our old Band Hall at 10 Main street, Dalmellington started to show serious signs of “wear & tear” which would potentially cost thousands of pounds to repair. At that time, the Band Committee decided to cost and prepare for a complete refurbishment of the premises, to modernise the building fit for disabled access and use, but were shocked to learn that the costs would be circa £200K to complete the work. Given the fact that the hall was not ideally situated for access and parking and that we felt it would be almost impossible for us to raise that huge amount of money we decided to seek a new home in Dalmellington and started to examine the number of vacant properties around the town.

Out of about six visits to vacant properties, only one was identified as being potentially suitable for our needs and we discovered within a few weeks that even that property was earmarked for demolition by the council. The Band and committee then agreed that the only way forward was to attempt to fund a new build, a brand new custom built Band and Community Music Hall.

Plans were drawn up by our architects (Hay, Lough Davis of Dumbarton) and partner Richard Davis was heavily involved in all of the initial preparatory work, consulting with the committee on a regular basis during the early stages of the development. It was soon made clear to the band organisers that funds of approximately £170,000 would be required for our new hall and in January 2001 we set about trying to raise the funds and trying to find the right people in our area, attached to granting organisation, who might be prepared to help us.

Within days of our funding information becoming public, our local Councillor, Rab Taylor, was straight on the phone offering substantial help, both financially and organisationally. Rab had previously tried to help us obtain other local properties for use as a band Hall and was really committed to achieving the best for “his” band and he thoroughly agreed with our attempts to build a brand new hall. Over the period of 2 years, from 2001 to 2003 our funding requirement was achieved with some brilliant support from:

Cumnock & Doon Valley Minerals Trust £75,000

2. Social Inclusion Partnership £36,000
3. Score Environmental (in Conjunction with Barr Construction) £10,000
4. East Ayrshire Council £6,000
5. Scottish Co-op (Community Dividend Scheme) £1,000

East Ayrshire also granted us the money to buy the ground on which the hall is built.

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With £128,000 secured, we were still well short of our funding target and when our Councillor Rab Taylor retired we thought it was going to prove too much and too difficult to complete the funding package. To our great relief, the new councillor, Elaine Stewart, started where Rab left off and within a short time had helped us secure a further £30,000 from the Minerals Trust, which gave us a grant total of £158,000.

All we had to do then, was raise approximately £10,000 which we did between 2003 and the completion of the hall in September 2005.

During the building process, which started in October 2004, our builder, Colin Thomson from Sanquhar, encountered numerous problems, some minor and some major, and in the early months the weather wasn't very kind. However, the hall, which is extremely well constructed with superb heat and noise insulation, was well worth the wait and has already helped the band prepare much more professionally for contests and concerts and it has added a new social dimension to our banding, as most of the players wait behind in our lounge area to have a drink, a cup of tea and a really good laugh and a blether at the end of our rehearsals. The building consists of a main practice hall, storage facilities, individual practice rooms, toilets, kitchen and lounge.

The Band would like to sincerely thank everyone who helped in any way with the financing and construction of our new hall and in particular, the people of Dalmellington, who have a long tradition of backing their Band when the needs arise!

Our new hall is also for the use of the community and we want other organisations to consider using the premises for musical activities or simply as a meeting place and interested parties should contact Bert Ritchie on 01292 550250 or Hugh Johnstone MBE on 01292 550411 to view and book the facilities available.

Dalmellington Band are the very proud owners of the Brand New Band and Community Music Hall in Dalmellington and everyone is invited to come and have a look during our rehearsals on Monday, Wednesday and Friday nights.