

A Brief History of the Libraries of Kibworth

The first libraries in Kibworth belonged to wealthy families in the big houses. They often paid to have specially-bound copies of the latest books on their shelves.

Kibworth Village Hall was built in 1866, and in time provided space for a library and reading room, but it was not until the 1920s that the County Council began opening libraries in rural areas.



The Village Hall

The first Council-run library in Kibworth was in the Church of England School in Station Street, now the Old School Surgery. Adults could browse the limited stock after school hours. This sharing of premises required the co-operation of the headmaster's wife, Doris Welton, with the County's growing library service.



The Old School Surgery, Station Street, Kibworth Beauchamp. Formerly the Kibworth National School and Kibworth Church of England School.

The private sector also became involved. The Timson family owned the shop next to Village Hall (now Kibworth Carpets) and were the Village Hall caretakers. They opened a small library, though no-one knows where the books came from. Later, this moved to 47 High Street from where Alan Timson would deliver books on a tricycle, but business was disrupted at one time by a fire in the adjacent shop.



Timpson's shop is now The Well

Later, the Oddfellows Hall in Paget Street was hired for two afternoons each week and opened as a public library in 1958 on Tuesdays and Fridays. It was fitted out with five sets of shelves protected with a cage front during the week when the library was closed. Mrs Eva Fox, the wife of Eric Fox of Fox's Glacier Mints, and who lived at The Knoll on Fleckney Road, would send her chauffeur to the Oddfellows Hall library each week to exchange her books!



The Oddfellows Hall

The present library with just over 5000 books opened on Wednesday 26 June 1968 and cost £6633. It was built in the playground of the former Infants School. Doris Welton continued her involvement, helping the librarian, Mrs Jane Kay.

The building was refurbished in 2007 and adopted by the local community in May 2016. Two years on, and fifty years since the building was constructed, the hardworking management team has recently become a Charitable Trust drawing together skills from the whole community to ensure the continuing success of this important and valued amenity.



(With acknowledgement to Norman Harrison and the Kibworth History Society)

