

On 26th April 1910, Mrs. Anna Harvey, of 'Ploverfield', Bursledon, gifted an area of land off Long Lane (then called Chapel Road) "together with the Hall & buildings now in course of erection" to the Diocesan Trustees. The plaque on the wall records that it was to be in memory of her late husband, the Rev. Richard Harvey. On this land was built what was then the Church Hall to be used as a Sunday School or classroom, for the celebration of divine service, clerical meetings, conferences and "any other meetings for instruction, recreation and entertainment".

In 1998, worries about the state of the Hall came to a head. The Environmental Health Officer said that much work must be done to the toilets and kitchen or he would not feel able to renew the Public Entertainments Licence. While the Trustees could see that this was a reasonable demand, what they could not see was where to find the money. Planning permission was already in place for an extension to house such facilities but about £20,000 were needed for building. The Borough and County Council could not help with grants as they are not permitted to put money into Church property. The Parish Council felt it could not contribute for the same reason. An "Albemarle" Scheme for disassociation from the Church was being prepared, but this was not in place and might not be so for some time.

Later that year a public meeting was called by the Vicar, Rev. Peter Vargeson, and what were then named "Friends of Bursledon Church Hall" were formed. Their aims were to give practical help to the Trustees, assist with future grant applications, help maintain the Hall and, most importantly, safeguard its future.

By October 2000 a Lottery grant of £285,000 had been awarded and since then the Friends have gained grants for adding an extension to the play school area, separate facilities for the Anna Harvey Room, a commercial kitchen and most recently a first floor extension housing a meeting room, a lighting/sound room and much-needed storage facilities.

Our intention has always been to retain what gives the Hall its character but with the modern facilities demanded by hirers. We think we have achieved this and that we can justify our strap line "Comfort with atmosphere".