

# A New Scout Hut for Stoke Bishop

By Carolyn Jenkins

The 43<sup>rd</sup> Bristol (St Mary Magdalene) Scout Group was formed shortly after Lord Baden Powell founded the Scouting movement in 1907. We are currently fundraising to rebuild our old wooden Scout hut located behind Kewstoke Rd.

The hut is built on part of the site of the old Stoke Bishop school, opened as a church school in 1841. In 1860 the land was given to the Trustees of St Mary's church by the Harford family of Stoke House (now Trinity College on Stoke Hill). Later, the council acquired the site as church schools were transferred into public control over the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The main school building was all but destroyed during the German Blitz bombing raids in December 1940, and the school eventually moved to the current Cedar Park site in 1951.

Maps of c.1880 show a big pond on the site, used by locals for fishing. Over time the pond silted up due to housing development in the Parry's Lane area, and was later filled in.



In 2020, we aim to finalise the design of the new building, consulting with the local community and going through planning approval. Our goal is to deliver a new Scout hut and community building for Stoke Bishop. Our site has a long history of supporting local children which we are keen to assure for future generations. We have recently been awarded Community Infrastructure Levy funding and together with our own fundraising, grants and generous donations, our total raised is now over £160,000. Once we have raised another £30k-£40k, we shall apply to large grant providers for the remainder.



*The pond viewed from the old school building towards Tunstall Close, c.1935*

A long building, moved from Bishop Road, and used as temporary classrooms for the school from July 1941, formed the basis of our current U-shaped Scout hut, with two further additions being added over time: a second-hand wooden structure, probably ex-military, brought from Avonmouth after WWII, with a further section added in the late 1970s.

Our hut is now beyond repair. It has no proper foundations and sits on breeze blocks on the ground, partly over the old pond. However, despite evidence of the pond, investigations have found the ground is stable enough for traditional shallow foundations for a new hut. Our unexploded ordnance survey (carried out given the history of the WWII bombing) found no unexploded devices.

*If you can help in any way with our fundraising we would love to hear from you:  
email [fundraising@43rdbristolscouts.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@43rdbristolscouts.org.uk),  
or to donate please visit our website at  
[www.43rdbristolscouts.org.uk](http://www.43rdbristolscouts.org.uk).*

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