

DAVE HIRST



Dave Hirst joined the club in the early 1980s. He became chairman in the late 1980s and played an important role in the major developments that took place during his time in office.

"We had a bit of a party last Sunday night and we are all full of anticipation for the anniversary celebrations and the cup final."

The Southowram club was formed by a group of players from other Halifax clubs who drank in the Cock and Bottle at Bank Top, Southowram.

After a series of inter-pub games, the team joined the Halifax Association in 1977 and initially stayed on a council-owned ground and was rented for the second team at Wainstalls.

Their current Ashday Lane ground, a former landfill site, was obtained from Marshalls.

Southowram joined the Halifax League in 1991 and their finest hour came at Copley two years ago when they won the Parish Cup, beating Outlane in the final at Copley.

Rams' party goes with a swing

AROUND 80 people attended a party to celebrate Southowram CC's 25th anniversary at the clubhouse on Saturday evening.

Secretary Keith Walker said the event had been a huge success.

"It was brilliant. We had a good response to our appeal for former club members to attend and people travelled from different parts of the country."

Earlier in the day the club's new nets had been opened by the Mayor of Calderdale, Councillor Patrick Phillips.



Club officials, guests and junior players at the opening of Southowram's nets included the Mayor, Coun Patrick Phillips, and consort Ms Liz Ingleton. Southowram chairman David Hirst is third from the right and president Neil Davidson on the right. Halifax League president Terry Wynne is on the left.

£10,000 grant is 'fantastic opportunity'

Village club nets cash from lottery

CRICKETERS in Southowram are celebrating after the village club was awarded a lottery grant of more than £10,000.

The cash from the Sport England Lottery Fund will help pay for new full size twin-lane artificial cricket nets at Southowram Cricket Club's ground.

The Halifax Parish League Section B club has three senior teams and two junior sides - and club secretary Keith Walker hopes the new facilities can be in use by the end of June.

"This is a fantastic opportunity for us to build on," he said.

"This facility will be used not only for the benefit of the club members but will encourage our coaches to work towards better inclusion of people of all ages in the area in the game of cricket."

The club was formed 25 years ago and is one of the newest in the local cricket

By Steven Fletcher

leagues. Members now hope the club can begin offering starter courses for all ages, including opportunities for women's, girls' and disability cricket in the area.

Mr Walker spent 18 months working on the grant application and hopes to unveil the new nets at a 25th anniversary reunion of all the club's ex-players in early summer.

And he was full of praise for the lottery fund, which has awarded more than £8 million to community sports projects in Calderdale since 1995.

"The fund is an important source of help to all budding sportsmen and women and is important to the development of all sport for the good of the community," said Mr Walker.

"Southowram Cricket Club intends to be in the forefront of cricket in the area and this grant will help us achieve that aim.

"We've also had a lot of invaluable help from Tony Scargill and Duncan Blundell at Calderdale Leisure Services. They have given us



Looking at the plans at Southowram Cricket Club are (from the left) junior manager Simon Walker, secretary Keith Walker, and chairman David Hirst

enormous support," he said.

And however the Southowram teams fare this season, the club will end its anniversary year on a high note.

"We have been chosen to host the Parish Cup Final at the end of the year," said Mr Walker.

"I think this is an honour for the club and a recognition of the work the members have done in developing the whole complex."



VILLAGE CRICKET CLUB OPENS NEW INNINGS

Batting into next century

18 MAR 1997

By CHRIS LEAVER

VISITORS to Southwram will be well and truly bowled over this season thanks to a transformation which is set to take the village cricket club into the 21st century.

Renovations over recent years have knocked the archaic Ashday Lane ground for six — but new seating, a new scoreboard and an improved wicket have already scored highly with regulars and rivals.

Now the costly improvements are set to be capped next month with the completion of a new £30,000 pavilion.

The single-storey building — complete with changing rooms, showers, tea hall and bar — is a far cry from an old pavilion which did not even have running water.

Southwram Cricket Club committee chairman Mr Dave Hirst said the old pavilion leaned, leaked, and had been long past its sell-by-date!

"The club had bought the old shed for £5 from Barkisland Cricket Club in 1981 when it first came to Ashday Lane and was still in the Halifax Amateur Association," he said.

"It had originally been taken to Barkisland from an old cricket club in Southwram more than 60 years ago on the back of a horse-drawn cart and it was not in a very good state at all."

Mr Hirst said when the club were elected to the Halifax Parish League's second division in 1988 it had been decided that extensive improvements were needed to update the ground — with the pavilion a priority.

Fund-raising was stepped up, wicket improvements made, a £6,000 new scoreboard and store built — replacing an old hamburger stall bought from Halifax Town Football Club as a score-

box in 1982 — and new ground seating installed.

But with an estimated £30,000 needed for a new pavilion, the club — which was formed as a team for the Cock and Bottle pub in Southwram in 1977 — batted on with their leaning landmark until last year.

Mr Hirst said the committee decision to replace the pavilion was taken at the end of last season after the offer of stone to build a new one from Southwram firm Marshalls.

The club successfully applied for grants totalling £16,000 from the Yorkshire and Humberside Sports Council and Calderdale Council's Fair Shares committee. Planning permission for the new building was granted last June.

The old pavilion, which was built for the disbanded St Anne's Church Cricket Club in the village, was put to the torch last December.

"For many people it was sad to see it go — but not for me. It was virtually falling down and if we had not have done something soon it would have come down on our heads," said Mr Hirst.

But almost as soon as construction got under way workers — including many committee members and players who were helping out on the project in their spare time — hit a sticky wicket.

The ground, a former quarry and council tip, was found to have a problem with underground methane gas and a special base had to be made before building work could start on the new pavilion.

The hitch put work back at least a month and the club was left with a £3,000 bill it had not planned for.

But first team captain Mr Mick Pollard said the village responded magnificently to the pavilion appeal.

"The support we have had from the pubs, clubs and local business in the village has been great and we have raised £3,000 very quickly. We are still about £10,000 short but hopefully this will come in with further fund-raising and another grant," he said.

"At the end of the day we will have some of the best facilities around Calderdale, should be able to attract some of the best



Getting ready for a new season... Southwram Cricket Club members, from left, Jowett, Dennis Walton, Rodney Veal, Dave Hirst and Tracy Pollard.

players around the district and get into the first division. It will be the start of a new era."

The new pavilion is due for completion next month ready for the start of the Parish League season at the end of April.

It is hoped to organise a knock-

out contest involving teams from all over Yorkshire as part of the official opening celebrations.

A signing-on night will be held on Thursday at Southwram Social Club for players for the club's first, second, Sunday and junior teams and more fund-raising events will

be held next month including and race night at the Liberal Club on Broadway. For further information contact Tracy Pollard on 369407.