Village Hall Report for the Annual Parish Meeting May 2016

Before I talk about the last year, I wish to pay tribute to 3 friends of the village hall who have passed away in the last few months. Canon Peter McCrory , a former chairman of the hall committee, was a staunch supporter of the hall. He led the committee in the early part of the millennium and he helped build a strong team which went on to revive the flagging fortunes of the hall. Peter was a generous man. He gave several large donations to the hall and he was always delighted to lend his garden out for fetes and garden parties.

Rita Rayner was a past member of the hall committee and she too was a generous donor. She was a valuable member of the team, regularly serving at the bar on Friday nights and helping at events in her quiet and efficient way.

Though not a committee member, Dawn Collins worked hard to support the committee in many ways. She helped out at events such as jumble sales and the summer bazaar, often providing most of the stock. With Pam she organised events such as the American themed evenings, and the nature walk, and of course she masterminded the WW1 exhibition. A talented artist she regularly produced posters and signs too.

They will all be much missed.

REPORT ON THE LAST 12 MONTHS

Several changes occurred to the committee this time last year and in the past 12 months the new team has been finding its feet.

THE BUILDING

In terms of the building, the first task we accomplished was the installation of the new heating and lighting using the grant money from the Big Society Fund. Once this was complete we re-decorated the main hall and the lobby and I must thank the committee and especially Maurice Jones for painting the ceiling - a laborious task! The car park was looking rather tired too, so we spent some money on new gravel and tidied up the hedge along the border.

We addressed some issues concerning security which had been raised by the insurance company, one of which was who had access to keys. A new lock was installed to the bar door, with access restricted to committee members. We also bought a new locker for the cleaner so that his materials can be stored according to regulations.

Our electricity bill has gone down thanks to the new heating and lighting, and prudent use of appliances like the fridges which we only switch on when they are needed.

PAPERWORK

We have reviewed and updated village hall paperwork, including the constitution - to remove references to bodies that no longer exist. These changes have been acknowledged by the Charities Commission. We have also checked over the hall policies and modified them where necessary. Many thanks to Barbara Wyvill for her assistance here.

FINANCES

We are very pleased that income from hall lettings has increased. The table tennis club is very active and brings in a regular income as does the garden club and the WI.

We have tried hard to produce a programme of events which will appeal. We have introduced a monthly afternoon board games club with a cream tea which has a small but regular group of users, and we have continued to put on at least one event monthly – a magic show, music events, quizzes talks and meals. We were also very pleased to welcome Tom Fitzpatrick the leader of NNDC to our January Bring and Share supper. He officially switched on the new lights. In an effort to boost Friday night bar sales we’ve also purchased a snooker table for use on bar nights and at games evenings.

FORWARD PLANNING

Furniture storage has become a problem. For table tennis the hall needs to be clear, for talks etc we need all the chairs out and we are running out of suitable storage space. We therefore plan to build a side extension which will house the furniture and games tables from the hall. Planning permission and building regulations are in place but we are having difficulty finding a builder willing to do the work. As soon as we have quotes, we can start applying for grant funding.

THANK YOUS

The hall would not be able to function without support from the community and on behalf of the committee I would like to thank everyone for their continued interest, without which it would not be possible to keep the hall running and up to date . We try to provide a programme of events that will be enjoyable and we are always open to suggestions for future events. The hall belongs to the community and we want to put on functions that are of interest.

I would also like to thank the committee for all their hard work and enthusiasm this year. They are a tremendous team and have put in a lot of hours to keep the hall running efficiently. I am so grateful that they have all agreed to carry on next year, apart from Roger who is resigning for personal reasons. He has worked hard for the village hall on this committee and on previous committees and I want to thank him for everything he has done. His contributions to meetings will be missed by the committee.

Bridget Fielden, Chair of the Committee