

Chairmans Report – Nov 2020

So this is the first report for a while as we didn't have an AGM last year and this years has been delayed as we had planned to have one in June but lockdown got in the way.

Bookings remain fairly constant with a few changes of bookers but largely the same time slots are filled on a regular basis. We have started to get some of the uniformed groups using us for their weekly meetings which is good we just need to manage start and finish times. We do still have daytime slots available and a waiting list for the evening slots if they become available so if you are thinking of giving up a slot then please let us know.

We have had a change in Trustees over the last 18 months with Riaan Theron stepping down last year and Christina Ansty taking up the place this year. Myself and Vicky remain Trustees.

Our major expense last year was the re-roofing of the hall. It became increasingly hard to locate where the roof was leaking from and as each winter passed more spots would appear near the front of the stage with a number of ceiling tiles coming down after particularly heavy rainfall. The committee took the decision that the roof need to be fixed and the best option from a cost and easy of work point of view was to oversheet the existing roof. This was done and includes hidden guttering. We haven't had a leak since!

We have improved the provision of crockery in both of the kitchens and removed a lot of the random items that had accumulated over the years. In addition with support from the Parish Council the entrance way street light was upgraded along with others in the village and we finally saw the entrance widened towards the end of the summer holidays. This will make entering and leaving the car park much easier at peak times.

Unfortunately, there is a long list of things that still need to be done to both the exterior and interior of the hall to bring it up to a reasonable standard and improve it's appearance in particular from the outside. It had always been the committees plan to carry out these works but unfortunately the funds never seemed to be available.

Following an internal audit of the accounts at the end of March 2019 it was identified that the Village Hall had been the victim of fraud. Further detailed examination identified that this had over the previous 4 years resulting in the theft of nearly £25,000. The police and insurance company were immediately informed and the appropriate steps put in place to prevent it occurring further whilst investigations were carried out. In September of this year we received the full amount from the insurance company. They are continuing their investigation work with a view to recovery.

COVID19 has meant we had to close but once we were open we put in place what we could to comply with the changing guidelines including hand sanitisers and increased signage. Due to the closure we qualified for one of the government COVID grants resulting in a £10,000 boost to the repair funds.

Prior to these funds arriving we had quotes in place to carry some external works and these have now started with the first being the repair of various windows and the replacement of the remaining wooden ones with UPVC. We will shortly receiving a new front door and have also replaced the Portal room fire doors with UPVC doors with glass providing much needed light to that end of the room.

Future works include repair of the external render and wooden weatherboarding as well as repainting the outside of the hall and re-lining the car park. Internally we have plans to carry out upgrades to the heating system, hot water, kitchens and flooring as well as internal re-decoration.

Overall it has been an interesting time with a number of challenges but we have new committee members who are full of enthusiasm and now we have funds to get stuff done.

All other ideas are welcome and will be considered for the future of the hall, please don't hesitate in raising them so they can be considered.

Finally thank you to the current committee and team of volunteers for everything they do, it makes life much easier.

Jon Woodman