

Village Hall Report For Annual Parish Meeting May 2015

The village hall is basically a large enclosed and unobstructed space with a raised stage, a kitchen, modern toilet facilities, a small meeting room and a large car park. It is warm and cosy in winter (barring the occasional problems with the boiler which we now appear to have solved) and can be well ventilated in the warmer summer months. The Village Hall Management Committee is responsible for the upkeep of the hall, ensuring that it is kept clean, that regular safety checks are carried out and that things like the insurance are up to date and that we do not run out of heating oil. To this end we have a small team of volunteers who manage the bookings, clean the hall, keep control of the finances and make sure that safety checks and maintenance are carried out as required. I would like to publicly thank Tony and Lynn Jollans, Nicola Barton, Paul Barton, Ian Nixon, Michele Evans, and David Evans for all the work that goes on behind the scenes and for their continued efforts to keep the hall open so that it can be enjoyed by others. I would also like to thank Linda Underdown, our only paid employee, who keeps the hall clean and tidy through out the year.

It never ceases to surprise me as to how the hall is used, it is a versatile space and we have a number of regular hirers, Pilates, Short mat bowls, Rainbows, Monday club, Parish council, which we thank for their continued support. Sadly the weekly Yoga classes stopped in February, however the hall has now become a regular venue for LK School of dance, which gives children of all ages the chance to use up vast amounts of energy whilst learning to express them selves through dance. It encourages individual performances, but more than that, the effects of a dance group performing a routine as a team can be stunning, building confidence in every one that takes part which will stand them all in good stead for the challenges of life that lie ahead. We continue to be an amazing venue for children's parties and only last week I saw the 'Fun Force' van parked outside the hall and knew that inside were a group of children having a wonderful time letting off steam whilst their parents breathed a sigh of relief that they had not got 40 kids running through their house.

The last six years of recession have been tough for everyone, not least the hall and our aim as a committee has been to keep the hall fees as competitive as possible whilst taking enough money to pay all the bills and keep some in reserve for emergencies. We continue to have a healthy balance in our current account of around £3,437.21 and a balance of £9,292 in a savings account (which has made a staggering £12 in interest over the year!), which we have set aside for essential maintenance and improvements. We have managed to hold our hire rates for yet another year, meaning we have not had an increase in our rates now for nearly 7 years. This has only been possible due to constant monitoring and negotiation of our fixed costs such as insurance and services (even finding a reliable boiler service engineer who is not VAT registered has saved us around £50.00 a year by not having to pay 20% VAT). Despite a slight decrease in bookings, we have maintained a very competitive hourly rate during what has been a very tough economic climate. This has allowed local clubs to continue to use the hall and keep their own costs down so that their members can still afford to meet regularly for their activities.

Our financial year runs to end of May (so we will have at least an additional £150 from hire for the elections to add to the following figures) but to date our income is

£3,629.24 set against expenditure of £2,977.28, currently a small surplus of £651.96. This is down on last year and in the coming months we will be looking to fill some of the vacant evenings with other regular hirers to ensure that we stay in surplus for the coming year.

Last year I reported that personal commitments had taken up much of Michele's time and mine during 2013 and that has been the case through most of 2014, however we now have a support network in place that will allow us more time to be involved with the hall in the future. I ask the same question every year but if any one wishes to join our small team then you would be most welcome, we have a number of improvements that we wish to carry out this year and the more people we have to help, the more we can get done.

Currently there are no changing or toilet facilities for the football team that now regularly uses the playing field, so we would also like to look at a way of expanding the hall to provide a usable back stage area, changing facilities and separate toilets that can be used independently from the main hall. This project will require people to make it happen and along with the Parish Council we will be working to this end, so again, if you are interested in helping please don't hesitate to contact us and help us keep this important village amenity open for all to use.

David Evans