

Hartlip Village Hall Management Committee

Chair's Report for AGM 14th March 2013

I would like to welcome everyone to this year's Village Hall AGM. If there are any matters you wish to raise please let us know under Any Other Business.

I took over as acting Chair of the Management Committee at a special meeting convened on 31st May last year shortly after the sudden resignation of the elected Chair Nikki Newman. The smooth day to day running of the Village Hall has been maintained throughout the year thanks to the friendly co-operation, dedication and hard work of committee members. I would like to thank them all for their support and for carrying out their duties willingly throughout the year. Committee meetings are now held every other month instead of monthly.

I remained as Secretary and generally kept up with administration of the hall's affairs. Also, I helped with maintenance and improvements and carried out the regular fire precautions inspections in accordance with our Fire Safety Risk Assessment.

Michael Spurr has been our Treasurer and looked after all the usual financial matters including paying the bills and applying for grants. An extra problem to deal with this year was the legal action by Wastetech who set about taking us to court for cancellation of their contract. Michael fought them off successfully and he will probably refer to this in his own report. Michael has also managed our website. Mike has announced he will now step down from the committee and we thank him for his work over the past 6 years.

Alison Bruce became our Bookings Clerk in March 2012. Since then Alison has managed all new bookings backed up by more rigorous terms and conditions in our revised booking form. Alison lives just outside the boundaries of the village and has to make frequent car trips to the hall to meet hirers and enquirers for which she is now reimbursed.

Ruth Bellord has continued as our caretaker/housekeeper. Her close proximity to the hall means that she can keep an eye on it and routinely check the safety, cleanliness and upkeep of the hall on a regular basis and at short notice.

Alan Auger represents the 55+ Club and has continued as our Maintenance Manager doing minor repairs as and when needed. Alan missed a brief period recently due to a hip operation but he is now back with us fit and well.

Paul White continued to represent the Parish Council and maintains contact with our governing body the Parish Council.

Donna Brazier represents the Pre-school and has maintained a good working liaison with the management committee at all times.

Representation on the Committee by village organizations is now possibly at an all-time low. There are very few in existence now and those that remain do not seem to offer anyone to join the committee. However, we are grateful to anyone who volunteers their time and energy to the village hall. These are difficult times for us all.

Fundraising remains a challenge, not only in terms of finding interesting ideas that will engage the Village, but also those individuals willing to stage such events do

eventually get tired. The Chalkfoot production last weekend proved yet again to be very popular. This raised valuable funds and helped get the Village together. It's a pity this was their last ever production although I believe a new company may take their place next year.

This has actually been a reasonable year for one-off bookings. One notable event was the Christmas Craft Fair. Although it raised funds for Hartlip church it helped to lift the profile of the village hall itself. Regular hirers such as the Invicta dog club, the Art Club, the 55+ Club, Power Hoops and the 'Living Lively' singing class remain consistent. Yoga returned after a brief absence. However, we have lost the Pilates class permanently. The Hall was also used as a polling station and of course continues to be the venue for Parish Council meetings.

Our largest customer remains the Pre-school using the Hall from 7am – 1pm daily during term time. The new Occupational Licence sets out the Terms, Conditions and hire charges for the Pre-school. It is renewable every 6 months and has been in place now for about 15 months.

The problem of dealing with snow and ice in the hall car park and driveway has often caused a headache in the past especially for the Pre-school. However, this year Richard and Alison together with her children optimistically shoveled away the snow without fear or dread of being taken to court thanks to new government advice that community spirit is more important than fear of prosecution for negligence. The grit bag provided by Swale was useful.

Maintenance of the building fabric, services and general facilities has continued. Annual safety inspections were carried out on the gas boiler, portable electrical equipment and fire extinguishers. Appropriate certificates have been issued. Also, quarterly pest control checks have been carried out. Minor building improvements to the boiler room, the disused back door and a fire door have been carried out by David Munn. Roofing repairs have been done recently by Malcolm Crayford. Graham Seymour has been our electrician of choice for maintenance of the electrical installation. We thank him for doing maintenance and giving advice on several occasions.

Sue Marlow continues to be our cleaner. Sue is co-operative but Ruth still manages to find fault now and then. Keith Mitchell cleans the Hall windows inside and out twice a year. Finally, we thank Julian Davison for help with gardening jobs around the hall such as grass and hedge cutting.

Last November the vexed issue of Sunday bookings was raised again. The debate has divided opinions and caused strong reaction from some of our immediate neighbours. The mood of the committee has been soured and at this point in time the matter is unresolved.

Otherwise we now look forward to another year in which we seek to maintain Hartlip Village Hall as a fit-for-purpose social and cultural venue for all those who wish to use it.

Richard Hill
Chair of the Management Committee