

Washington Village Memorial Hall

Chairman's Report for the year 1st April 2020 – 31st March 2021

It's been an unusual year as we've spent most of it in lockdown and the hall is only now beginning to return to something resembling "normal". Most of our trustee board meetings have taken place via Zoom, and our thanks go to our talented and efficient secretary Pat O'Shea for mastering the technology and guiding us all patiently through the pitfalls.

Sadly during the year three trustees resigned – Sarah Buddell (regular bookings secretary), Steve Buddell (treasurer) and Sue Stuart-Scott (WI representative). Our thanks to them for their hard work on behalf of the hall. Thankfully Rob Gerig, who had hoped to reduce his involvement in the hall, has kindly stepped in to cover the roles of regular bookings and treasurer. Alison Milner-Gulland joined the trustees as WI representative.

Tracey Slaughter is continuing to manage the one-off bookings with support from Sue-Stuart-Scott and Irene Thomson. Due to Covid-19 restrictions work on the hall has been limited this year.

The Chanctonbury Room roof still leaks from time to time and the trustees have contracted to carry out further investigative work to identify the cause of the leaks and to carry out repairs. These leaks have been a very long term issue and if allowed to continue will have an increasing detrimental effect on the structure of the hall. Failure to solve the problem in the near future is likely to mean a much more radical and costly solution will be required.

The exterior decoration planned for this year will be completed in August (weather permitting) and the interior decoration will be held back until the problems with the roof are resolved.

The half step at the front door of the Dore Room and a path to give access to the boiler room has been approved by the Parish Council. We are also very grateful to the Parish Council for replacing the outside handrail at the back of the Chanctonbury Room.

The hall has operated under Covid-19 restrictions throughout the year; single bookings have not taken place in the period. The hall has been closed to all regular groups for 31 weeks, but in the remaining 21 weeks in the year some 9 groups out of our total of 20 used the hall and we gained two new regular groups. Overall the result has been a 90% decrease in income in the year.

With the uncertainty of lockdown, the trustees agreed not to increase the hiring rates for the year 2021-2022. We have been able to access government grants totalling £9,765 aimed at reducing the impact of lockdown on village halls. In addition we received donations from the School Lane Cafe and the Washington ABC Association. As a result, we have been able to retain our much valued employees and increase our reserves by 40%.

The 100 Club continues to provide additional funds for the hall. Numbers have increased to 92 thanks to the efforts of trustees in recruiting new members, and also to the existing members who increased their memberships. Unfortunately we were unable to hold the annual Christmas Party but the trustees agreed to issue some additional prizes in the December draw by way of compensation.

Finally my thanks to everyone who helps to keep our lovely hall running – the trustees, our volunteers, our book keeper, Sue Goss, our two employees Suzanne Muddle and Bryon Winslade, Irene Thomson for keeping the garden looking beautiful, and, of course, the users of the hall who make it all worthwhile.

Henderson

30/7/21.