

## **Hagbourne Village Hall**

**Charity Registration Number 900090**

### **Trustees Annual Report – 2022**

Our primary objective is to successfully maintain and operate a village hall for the benefit of the residents of both East and West Hagbourne, as well as the wider community. We do this by providing a clean, safe and hospitable environment at an economic price for all our users.

We normally operate with a small surplus at the end of the year, and this has enabled us to maintain our hire rates at the same level for the last 6 years.

We have again had a successful year. After the trauma of lockdown, during which, thanks to grants from our local district council, we had a very good year financially.

After the easing of the lockdown regulations, our users gradually returned to the hall, and there was also a significant recovery in casual bookings, which meant that overall, our revenue from bookings for the year was £22,154.55 which is similar to our normal revenue (pre-pandemic) of £21K to £22K.

We have though, ended the year with a deficit to our current account, because we undertook several capital projects, which are detailed elsewhere in this report. The full financial details are also detailed in our Treasurers Report.

Because of the general financial uncertainty, particularly around energy costs, an increase in our charges was seriously considered by the committee. However, as our energy costs are presently fixed until September 2024, it was eventually decided that we would once again keep our present charges, whilst keeping the situation under scrutiny. We recognise our users may well be faced with increased cost elsewhere, and we do not want to add to their problems. We regard the biggest risk to our costs would be if one or other of our suppliers were to go into liquidation, but resolved to face that situation if and when it occurred.

Our rolling 5 year forward forecast shows that once our present energy contracts end in 2024, and there is, as anticipated, a significant rise in our energy costs, we will need to increase our hire rates at that time. Exactly how much we may need to increase our hire rates will become clearer nearer that time.

Because of our generally healthy financial position this year we decided there were several things in the village hall which required upgrading. I list these in no particular order: -

### Lighting

Some years back, we obtained a grant to upgrade our lighting systems from mainly florescent tubes to LED tubes, following an energy audit carried out on the hall. However, these LED tubes were fitted into the existing Florescent fittings, which, over the years, have deteriorated. The tubes were held in place by springs, which were no longer as effective as they once were. We therefore decided to replace all the tubes with new fully integrated LED fittings.

### Small Hall Heating

The small hall, used by the preschool during the week, has 5 radiators, two of which are part of the 'wet' hot water fed from the boiler installed during the last major expansion of the hall, in 2010. The other 3 radiators were similar to the old night storage heaters which used to be in the large hall. They did provide some heat, but because the night storage system was removed some time ago, this was only really the booster heating circuit. Also, it turned out one of the heaters was not even connected!

We took the opportunity during the summer break to have all three of these electric radiators replaced with high efficiency convector radiators, which should considerably improve the level of heating and thus comfort in the hall, which is essential for the preschool children.

### Emergency Lighting

During an inspection of the lighting systems, it was found that several of the emergency lights were not functioning correctly, and would certainly fail to operate in an emergency. These lights are designed to operate for a significant period of time (3 hours +) after the mains power has failed. However, because of our usual habit of switching these lights off when

the hall is unoccupied, the control circuitry had been damaged. We were therefore advised to leave the emergency lights on at all times, to avoid this.

### Kitchen refurbishment

We took the opportunity to have the kitchen completely overhauled during the summer break, with a new barn door being fitted between the small hall and the kitchen. All the cupboards were refaced, the work surfaces were replaced, and new electrical equipment (Cookers and Hobs) were installed.

A new full height fridge was also installed, together with a hot water boiler serving all three new sinks in the kitchen.

Because of our healthy financial position, all this work was carried out using monies held in our treasurers account, and we did not have to draw down from our investment account, which presently has over £50K deposited in it.

### Other matters

During the Covid epidemic, and during the subsequent gradual return to normality, many of our users were still reluctant to return to using the hall unless they were sure the ventilation was adequate. In order to monitor the air quality, particularly in the large hall, a CO2 monitor was installed, to continuously monitor the level of unhealthy breathed out air. As we are fortunate to have a large mechanical ventilation system in the hall, as well as many opening windows, this allowed the users to control the level of CO2 for themselves.

We are very fortunate to continue to have the services of Linda Benton, and her husband Geoff Leaver, who between them have kept the hall running in these difficult times.

Our Maintenance Manager, Terry Taylor, is presently in Ukraine, helping with the humanitarian relief effort by a Danish Aid Agency. Their primary efforts are aimed at providing clean and safe water to remote areas. We wish him well in these endeavours.

The interior of the hall, whilst it has been kept clean and tidy, is beginning to look a bit tired, so plans are afoot to gradually redecorate each of the key areas.

I am pleased to report that there have been no particular issues or problems this year which have needed my attention.

With the building of the houses on the land adjacent to the car park (owned & operated as a public car park by the parish council), the builders have undertaken to provide space for an additional 20 car parking spaces, which should go some way to alleviating the parking problems in the morning and evening when both school and preschool pupils are arriving and leaving.

The county council, as the highways authority, have plans in place to stop parking on the road outside the hall. Safety on this road, when many cars are parked in the morning and the evening, was pointed out as being a concern during the consultation process on the housing development, but at the time the highways authority stated this was no different than many other roads outside schools.

The Trustees objected to both the housing development, as well as the painting of double yellow lines on the road, and it remains to be seen whether the county councils actions result in a safer environment for our users.