

Beech Village Hall and Recreation Ground Charity
Annual Report by the Trustees

for presentation at the

Annual General Meeting 30th October 2015, 6.30pm, at Beech Village Hall

This is the 2015 Annual Report of the Trustees of the Beech Village Hall and Recreation Ground. It is true that some of the people who help run our village hall, are noted at the Charities Commission as being the formal Trustees. They meet with others at regular intervals through the year, and we call this the Management Committee. At these meetings we (including the Trustees) make decisions about the way that the Hall is run and how best to spend money which we have collected from the various social events and hiring of the Hall.

This Hall is only a physical thing – so much brickwork, tarmac and grass – it is when we work together that it comes to life. The Village Hall would not be a shadow of what it does and represents for this community without a very wide involvement from many individuals in Beech – among whom there are a few Trustees.

This year, we should like this Report to recognise that much wider involvement, and all the energy which goes into the Hall's

- social events,
- its use by the community in clubs, associations, private functions and weddings,
- the use of the Green and Recreation Ground, and the Play Equipment, for fun, by our children and adults,
- its use by local business,
- its maintenance and upkeep,
- and the improvements which we make as they can be afforded and organised.

For much the greatest part, that wider involvement is for the fun in itself, and creating a sense of belonging to the Village where you happen to own or rent a house and live. We are not going to try to mention all the people involved during this past year, as such a good intent usually inadvertently attracts the irritation of those who you forget to mention, and so we shall try not to fall (for the most part) into that possible trap. However the many villagers who contribute are very much appreciated. We hope they all derive that fun and sense of belonging too.

Social Events

The Social Committee for the Village Hall has again, this last year, put together a good mix of events here for the Village.

The regular Social evenings (last Friday of each month) have done an excellent job of providing a venue to meet your neighbours and enjoy their company, without any formality, and with a very small expense. We have no pub, and I believe it is unusual to find this regular event in villages. This regular Social evening is only possible in this format, because there are those who are happy to come once in a while and do the cooking ("mass catering", is perhaps a better term) for us all. The rota for this is run by Stella Charman, and the main effort comes from among our local cooks, who all do a fantastic job. We know it is not

always the favourite task, but we also know how very much it is always appreciated, ably and loudly expressed every time by their clients on the night. We should also like to underline that appreciation, here.

The current Social Committee, Sally Cox, Sarah Castle Smith, Jane Short, Stella Charman, Sara Varo, Jo Schneider and Nikki Tomalin (recently joined) arrange and plan most of the other regular amusements and parties arranged for the village. They meet to work up the list of future events and take on the organisation for them. Each event in turn involves another range of much appreciated volunteers. Sadly Sally Cox, who until recently was chairing the Social Committee has had to step aside for a while, and we thank her for what she has done, and look forward to her return to the team. The Social Committee do not these days have a formal “budget” expectation or target for a surplus, but nonetheless always succeed in making a useful contribution each year from the small surpluses that the majority of the Social events create.

That surplus is always augmented by the Bar takings at such events, and I cannot pass from this section without mentioning the loyalty and unstinting effort that Alan and Elaine King put into stocking and running the Hall’s Bar, in itself a micro-business. They have been doing this job for many years now, assisted from time to time by volunteers who take over the running of the Bar, when the Kings are away on holiday. Their humour and tolerance behind the Hall bar are a major contribution to the enjoyment at our social events, quizzes, and so forth.

The Hall is also the home of events for the village which are arranged by Beech Gardeners, or Beech Ladies. Helen Lamb is another whose energy and effort for this village is remarkable, and although not formally part of the Village Hall organisation, to differentiate on those grounds would be trivial.

The Hall Hiring

The clubs, associations, private functions, weddings and businesses that use the Hall, pay for that use, as a way of contributing to the costs of running this facility. The organisation of this and the collection of the rent is the work of Peter Cox. He is supported by Nikki Tomalin, when he is allowed leave, but Peter spends much of his life, in Beech, with prospective hirers, dealing with the deposits and rentals, answering queries, raising invoices, and spotting and sorting out problems. His journeys within Beech alone, en route between Hall and home, must constitute fully half his annual mileage. This management task results in the large financial contribution to the Hall’s revenue, and it allows us to keep up with the maintenance and improvement costs, and to use the Hall for village activities for a minimal cost. His knowledge of the Hall, and the villagers are so valuable. This last year has been no exception, and the Hall hirings income has held steady as a result of his much appreciated work and energy.

Cleaning and Maintenance

Because the Hall is so heavily used, we have to ensure that it is always as clean as possible; the supplies of cleaning material, paper towels, toilet paper, soap, washing up material, tea towels and so on, have to be kept at adequate stock levels, not to mention the plates, cutlery, cooking and kitchen equipment which have to be kept in place and operational. We recently

invested in a machine to make the floor cleaning task more effective and quicker; and also a new dishwasher, as the old one had ceased to be reliable. The two individuals who make all this happen are Myles Scott, who does the actual cleaning work, and who also sits on the Management Committee, and one of our Trustees, Malcolm Grace who oversees the Hall's organisation of the stocking of all the materials, and maintenance of the equipment.

Building and land – maintenance and improvements

Ian Gibson, and John Tomalin are two key people for this aspect of the Hall's life. The village hall has been often likened to a famous Scottish Road Bridge, and the upkeep of its fabric, land and facilities is a continuous task. That work in part involves paid help, but also involves management and lots of unpaid help. The grass is kept short in season, by a team who are recruited and managed by John Tomalin (and now thanked by the Management Committee!). Nick Sorby is another name who should have a place in this report, as he is often seen in a haze of dust and grass while mowing, or looking to his new meadow circle on the Recreation Ground, or building the bonfire and lighting fireworks for the November firework event.

The upkeep of the buildings and external equipment is mostly done and managed by Ian Gibson, using subcontractors when appropriate. This task too takes a lot of time, and Ian's red Skoda can often be seen at the Hall, while one job or another is being dealt with. The improvements we decide we would like to make also involve planning and then supervision; the car park, finally finished in this past year, and which exhausted our funds at that time, has been a good example. Future plans are afoot – including the refurbishment of the toilets as the most urgent and substantial job.

Communications

Ruth Dewing has joined the Committee team in the past year; she has joined to bring her communication and design skills to bear, in helping the Hall with staying in touch with the village, and ensuring that the villagers are aware of all that is going on and the opportunities that the Hall can bring them.

The Website continues under the overall aegis of Helen Davis, with help from various contributors in relation to the various aspects of the Village life and activities. The Village Hall features prominently in the website, and provides an excellent record of the many events that are planned and that have taken place in the Hall. This work too is spread among a few trained website hands in the village – and their contributions and work is much appreciated.

Finance

The Treasurer, Ann Whitaker, is now helped by Sheron Gillard (who also acts as the Management Committee Minute Secretary), in keeping the bookkeeping and accounting straight – in itself the Hall is like a very small business, and the VAT and accounting needs are real and complex enough. Anne has also worked on improving our grant funding; this is an increasingly difficult environment for fund raising for a small charity as this; we wish to thank the Parish Council for assisting with the cost of the car park build. Anne will report on the Accounts for the year ended 30th June 2015.

Trustees

Lastly, for re-election as Trustees this forthcoming year, we now have myself, Malcolm Grace, Anne Whitaker, and Ian Gibson. Myles Scott is not seeking re-election as a Trustee. We are on the alert for new members of the Management Committee, and this may result in a new Trustee being “co-opted”, if we find someone!

Nick Charman
Chair of Management Committee, and Trustee
October 2015