

BEECH VILLAGE HALL & RECREATION GROUND

Registered Charity No 301738



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

for presentation at the

Annual General Meeting 31st October 2014, at Beech Village Hall

It has been a busy year again for the Village Hall. One noticeable difference on the Green this year has been the activity on the swings, balance beam and climbing tower, which are proving very popular with the children who live in, or visit Beech. It is very gratifying to see the parents and grandparents who can watch their children playing here, and making use of this asset provided by and for this community. So this feels like all the work from the previous year in getting the Play Equipment funded, specified, purchased and put on the Green has been well rewarded.

Fabric Improvements and Maintenance

The list of work done in maintaining the land and buildings is both long, and self-perpetuating, as it is always filling up with jobs to be done (like the Forth Road Bridge). This work is led by Ian Gibson, who we are very lucky to have as a Trustee; the endless detail of this maintenance would stretch the patience of many, but he seems to take it in his very practical and capable stride. But it also involves other volunteers from the village – a good illustration of that is the Mowing Rota. The large grass areas we own are a lovely asset – but they need mowing! So Ian runs a rota of mower drivers among your neighbours, to ensure that the grass is regularly cut in summer, and presentable before village events. But the mower itself is now showing the strain and this winter it will have either to be replaced, or be overhauled, depending on the advice. When it is being run under load, it is now producing a seriously interesting amount of smoke, and we have been nervous whether it would last to the end of the season. It has just. If you too fancy your skill as a mower driver, and would like to lend a hand, Ian will be happy to hear from you for next year's rota.

One way to reduce the mowing was spotted by Nick Sorby (but I am not implying that this was his prime motive for the suggestion), and he is introducing a wild flower patch on the Recreation Ground. It will be very interesting to see what this becomes, and the wild life it will support.

The hedges around the Green too are always providing opportunities for maintenance and we are having them attended to twice a year now – the next planned trimming event is for this November.

The major improvements to the fabric that we have had this year are:

- Resurfaced car-park
- New car park lighting
- New shed bought and erected (the last one was smashed by a falling branch in a gale)

The benefits of the new car park will be in the ease of clearing snow and ice and also safer passage for those walking on it, when the weather and light is poor. The new surface is porous (it will absorb water) and so, with the new drainage in the car park, the rainwater runoff onto Medstead Road will be far less, too. By the time we consider this report, we hope that the new lighting pods will be connected to electricity, and so will be in use for the long winter evenings. We also are to have the new shed connected for lighting; that will reduce the excitement and mystery of probing and stumbling around for chairs, tables or bits for the Skittle Alley in complete darkness.

The new picnic table, in the area outside the front door, is a memorial to local people who suffered in the 1st World War, and this year is the Centenary for the start of those horrors. The table has a commemorative plaque, and it was all funded by Beech Parish Council. We are pleased to provide a site for it, and are glad that it is finding a use as a nice spot to sit, outside, with a table, for Hall users.

The key thing to point out is that all of this work, the most significant (ca £30,000) expense being the car park work, was done with some assistance from grants from EHDC, and the Parish Council, who were particularly helpful, but the main brunt of these expenses was borne by this Charity's own funds. We

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Website: <http://www.beechvillage.org>

have taken no external financing for the work this year, but handled the bulk of the expenses from internal cash resources. These funds are built up by surpluses coming from the hiring of the Hall, and from social events in other words mainly from you, the Beech residents. So you are also to be thanked and I should like to say that the more you use (and enjoy) the Hall, and support the Social events, the sooner that we can afford to make improvements as they come up on the list. The Treasurer's Report will supply the financial numbers for this.

On the list of future targets for improvement are:

- Refurbishing the Main Hall toilets
- Building a semi-permanent marquee/dance area
- Annexe meeting room and toilet

When funds recover (with your help!) we aim to improve the Toilet facilities in the main Hall, as we are keenly aware that they let the side down. The damp areas need to be dealt with, the walls need tiling, and redecorating.

We are also excited by the prospect for a modestly priced "extension" to the Hall's useful weather protected area. We have a plan to turn the largely unused area outside the main hall on the Medstead Road side, into such an area, by means of an external gazebo-like light structure, with access through the double doors in the corner of the Hall. This will then provide three separate zones – together with the main Hall and the Bar area, and reduce the acoustic challenge of having live music, and eating areas in the same place; or simply to provide additional covered area for events. The main hall facility will be much made easier to use for parties, and bigger events.

The Annexe is based on an old original single skin walled building, and again damp needs to be tackled, and its separate toilet area could do with refurbishment, as our funds allow.

Hall Hire

The bookings for the Hall are running at a good level, and Peter Cox has charge of booking and hiring this important resource for the Village, and the revenue that it collects, for maintaining the facility. Thank you, Peter, for your continued loyal service and help. There is plenty of space in the calendar for villagers to book the Hall, and you are encouraged to use it for your own events; there are many local clubs using the Hall, as you can see from the diary on the noticeboard. Bridge, Art classes, Dancing, Pilates, and other activities ... the choice is yours. We have even a demand for the Hall's Bowling (Skittle?) Alley, which is making a contribution. The Hall has bookings for Wedding Receptions too – and how attractive it looks in that role, with the Green as perfect location for our Marquees. We are also fortunate in having the Hall Hire being supported by Malcolm Grace who so capably takes care of organising the cleanliness of the building facilities, and the maintenance of the catering equipment in the Kitchen. This too is a continually self-perpetuating task, and we have had a contractor undertake a deep steam-clean of the kitchen, bar and toilet areas recently, and believe that this must become a regular job.

Village Volunteers

Many thanks go to the Beech friends and neighbours who have helped in many ways to make the Hall such a useful facility for the Village over the past year. These contributions have in some cases involved modest amounts of time, but in other cases considerably more time and energy. Either way, this is very much appreciated by the Management Committee and we also hope that they have had some fun into the bargain.

Social Committee

The Social Committee, chaired by Sally Cox, has arranged an excellent array of village events this year - the Quiz Evenings, the Summer Ball, the Pub Games Night, The Fireworks Night, the Christmas Fayre and Parties - and of course the popular and regular last-Friday-of-the-month Social Evenings. Supported by the Social Committee, the recently re-formed Beech Gardening Club also put on the Village Show this September, with great success, and we hope to have that repeated next year. We have a full list of events for the coming months, and to help with organising these the Social Committee are always looking for helpers and organisers of events, or to join the Committee. I know that they are seeking village cooks who are happy to go on the rota of cooks for a Social Evening. Please let me (563046) or Sally Cox

(563421) know if you would like to help. Your help will be much appreciated, but you are likely to enjoy it too.

Beech Village Website

The Village website (beechvillage.org.uk) was set up for the Village Hall some years ago by David Woodrooffe and is now maintained by Helen Jayalath for the Village Hall, with the help of Ann Bishton and Sarah Neish. This year it has been redesigned and given a new look. This is a useful resource as a record of past and future events in Beech. It has a lovely gallery of local images. If you have not yet looked, go see it. You may well find your own picture in it, if you come to village events. You can find out much other information about what is going on in the village, Club activities, the Parish Council news, and a section about St Peter's Church. This is an excellent opportunity to note our thanks and appreciation to Helen Jayalath and her team for her ongoing support, and skill for this job. It is a great asset for us.

You and the Village Hall

As I keep saying, we are keen to attract more helpers. So if you would like to take this opportunity to know others in your village, in a shared interest and activity, please let us know, and we can find a task or job without doubt. No pressure – the aim is to join in and have fun. Working with others around hall events and activities is usually accompanied by much laughter.

If you are a recent arrival in Beech, I can particularly recommend this as a great way to become friends with a wider range of your neighbours and accelerate your feeling of knowing, and been known and at home in your village.

Trustee Appointments

Turning to the Management Committee, this is composed of Trustees of the Charity, and others, all of whom have roles with the management of the Hall.

Dealing with the Trustee appointments on the AGM agenda this year, we have no permanent resignations to report. The Trustees retiring (myself, Ian Gibson and Malcolm Grace) do so by rotation, and all are offering themselves for re-election. We have a new Trustee proposed for election in Myles Scott. Many will know him as a keen musician, and he may well be the youngest Trustee that the Village Hall has ever had. We welcome him; the role he will fill is to look out for, and to arrange, the benefits that the Hall may bring the youth in the village. He has already served on the Management Committee for some time. The rest of the Management Committee is Anne Whittaker (also a Trustee, and a much appreciated Treasurer), Peter Cox (Hall Hire) and Elaine King (who was a Trustee, and represents the Social Committee). Daniel Gordon, a Beech parent of a young family, who, along with other parents in the village, did so much to bring the Children's Play Equipment into use, unfortunately has had to resign from the Committee due to pressure of work.

We are seeking additional members of the Committee. In particular we should like to have villagers as new members:

- a parent of a young family
- someone familiar with marketing communications
- someone with organisational skills
- or someone with a combination of the above!

If you know, or are, someone who could be prepared to act in one of these roles, please let me know, and I will be very pleased to have an informal conversation (with no commitment on either side).

Nick Charman

31 October 2014

Trustee, and Chair of Beech Village Hall and Recreation Ground Management Committee
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