

Beech Village Hall and Recreation Ground

Annual Chairman's Statement, Annual General Meeting

26th October 2018

Summary

We have continued to be a very popular Village Hall. Its use by the regular social events, clubs, classes and celebrations has grown, and this has resulted in a good level of Hall Hiring income, managed by Peter Cox. This income has also increased our funds, which is deliberate. We do not want the charity to become "rich" for its own sake, but to enable us to achieve a good rebuild of the Annexe when we have enough money to commence the project. For the same reason we have not undertaken any major property improvements during this last year. We have made



some small investments such as replacing the old sound system with a modern facility, allowing Hall users to have high quality dance music, with haze and lights, for their celebrations. We have also purchased some planters to allow some decoration of the front of the Hall.



The new dance lights and haze

Annexe

The Annexe is an old single skin brick building. It is damp inside and expensive to keep warm. While it remains functional (for example, as the regular Parish Council meetings venue), we know that a good replacement is needed. The facilities we would like to have are:

- better meeting and small conference facilities,
- a social seating area,
- covered access from the Hall, to allow it to be part of a party or function in the main Hall,
- making better use of the pretty outlook across the green,
- good storage,
- a small kitchen facility,
- and a good small toilet facility.

We would also like to make better use of the ground to the rear of the Hall and have a linked



A Parish Council meeting in the Annexe

hard standing and covered area to the side of the Hall on the Medstead Road side.

We are aware that Grant funds are currently very hard to come by, and as a major work like this will take perhaps £80,000, by rough estimate, we will need to have at least £50,000 of our own funds (assuming a 50% grant might be found, and assuming an ongoing working capital “float”). We may be able to start this project in around two years time. If any villager has any good ideas or connections for grant funding for this, we will welcome the news.

Hall Hiring

Peter Cox, has kept the Hall’s income running, and is an excellent manager, introducing the Hall to new users and administering the system. However, Peter and Sally moved to a new house during the summer and, while still living nearby and still on task, the ability to meet new hirers at the Hall needs help at times. So, we are on the lookout for a more local person who would like around two hours or so per week, acting as a stand-in for Peter when he cannot be here. The job would entail meeting prospective Hall Hirers and showing them the facilities. If you would consider this role, for a small stipend, or can think of a neighbour who might like the role, please let me or Peter know.

Communications

The Hall hiring has been helped by improved communications on Nextdoor and Facebook, and good word-of-mouth introductions. This is all assisted by Ruth Dewing’s efforts in keeping the Hall’s facilities and activities on social media, as well as the usual flyers posted through doors co-ordinated by Jane Short, who also chairs the Social committee. Do not forget the Village Website as a resource to find out more about the Hall and the Village. This is maintained by John Emmerson, with the help of others in the village.

If you are a member of Nextdoor, you will see that we have started a fairly regular monthly information post under the title of “Did You Know?”. We are aware that how the Hall functions, and what it can offer the villager is not always known by everyone in Beech, and we are keen that all Beech inhabitants are aware of what this charity can offer them personally.

100 Club

Originally started by Saman Jayalath, the 100 Club administration has been taken over this summer by Stella Charman. It has become a regular way to raise funds for the Hall, with a side effect of offering some fun and a monthly chance costing £5, to win £200. It is clearly a lottery and a chance to win money, but its main purpose is a way in which villagers can contribute to this charity in their village, serving their community. Most members of the scheme recognise this, and so it is proposed to offer members an easier facility for renewing the annual membership. We might do this by the route of Bank Standing Orders for future payments. This will mean completing a Standing Order form (which we can supply) once, and we can send it to your bank. This proposed method will allow the considerable annual effort by the administrator of the scheme to be devoted more to making 100 Club membership available to new villagers, and other users of the Hall, in turn making its membership wider (but not more than 100!). It would also save the regularly renewing members the effort of making payments each year - but clearly cancellable if they wish to cease their membership. I should like to test opinions about this proposal with you, after the formalities of this meeting are done.

Weddings – and drones



We have become a popular wedding reception venue. And as always with such events, photographs are important for the happy couple. Small drones at these events have become popular as carriers of cameras for videos and photographs. We are aware that the Village Green has houses and gardens quite close by, and that there is a level of concern

A Drone shot of the Hall

about the possible invasion of privacy that drones above the Village Green might pose. For this reason, we are imposing a new condition on Hirers of the Hall – that drones may only be used by Hirers with specific and prior consent. In effect this will mean that we are not banning their use entirely, but that they can only be used by properly licensed users on behalf of Hirers. In turn this will mean that the regulations about their use will be observed.

The Village Hall Bar, and Socials – the rota system

Following the sad resignation of Alan and Elaine King, in their role of managing the bar for many years for the Village Hall, we elected to follow a different system. The management of the stocking of the bar, and the sales pricing has now been taken up by Saman Jayalath – thank you to him for his energy. The selling of drinks at Village Hall social events (the monthly social, quizzes and so forth) is now being undertaken successfully with a rota of volunteers. Stella Charman keeps this rota going, along with a rota of volunteer cooks for the monthly social. This is a great way of participating in these social events and is fun in itself, and being publicly thanked, generally to the raucous applause of those attending the event. Thanks to those who have volunteered in this way – and if you are new to the village it is a great way of becoming involved. Please tell Stella Charman if you would like a slot on the bar or cooking rota.

Defibrillator



The Parish Council has recently funded the installation of a defibrillator on the front of the Hall, for the safety of villagers and visitors to the Hall. Please make sure you know where it is and familiarise yourself with its instructions for use. Look around to the left when you come out of the front door and you will see it. Much better to do this when you are not panicking, than wait until the stress of the moment.

Volunteers and Committee

As always, the life blood of this community charity is the people who take part. This is not only the Management Committee, but also the Social Committee who keep a good list of fun things on the Village Social calendar, those who cut the grass with the Mower in the summer, who interest themselves with keeping the Recreation Ground in order, who regularly empty the dog-poo bins, who put our bins out for rubbish collection, and the many who assist at major events like the Beech Fireworks (29 volunteer villagers involved last year!), and in other ways. We also have some paid helpers, including the bookkeeping, the cleaning of the Hall and Annexe, and maintenance. These people should all be thanked and acknowledged by the Committee and the village; the Village Hall is the heart of the Beech Community, and the spirit of taking part and joining in keeps the heart beating. It is also fun!

This year the Committee is as set out on the Agenda for this meeting, and I will later turn to the formal matter of asking for votes to re-elect those who have agreed to be Trustees for the forthcoming year. If you would like to consider joining this Management Committee, and perhaps becoming a Trustee, please let me know.

Nick Charman

**Chair of Trustees, Management Committee
Beech Village Hall and Recreation Ground**