



Beech Village Hall & Recreation Ground, 1 Wellhouse Road, Beech, Alton GU34 4AQ

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Registered Charity No. 301738

Annual report of the Chair of the Trustees

Report for the financial year ending June 30, 2026, presented to the Annual General Meeting on September 25, 2026 at Beech Village Hall

Highlights

- Official opening of **The Wellhouse** at our first **Health & Wellbeing Fair**; very wide range of classes and therapies now on offer
- Our first **BEECHFEST weekend** with a barbecue, film night and Beatles tribute band
- Live music launch with three **Gigs on the Green** concerts
- **19 movies and National Theatre Live** performances
- **67 active volunteers**
- An estimated **16,000 visits by villagers and customers**
- The charity's **annual surplus** was in line with our budget, with higher than anticipated expenditures offset by above-budget revenues.

Health and Wellbeing Hub



courses, workshops and events.

The highlight of 2025-26 was the opening of The Wellhouse, our transformed health and wellbeing space. The Wellhouse has been extremely well received by users from the village and beyond, who now have access to an extraordinary range of classes, therapies,

The Wellhouse is living up to all our expectations – it is warm, dry, comfortable and serene, and we have received many compliments from practitioners and their clients.

Health & Wellbeing offerings

- **Regular classes:** Pilates, Yoga (x7), Qi Gong, Dance
- **Regular therapies:** Acupuncture, Psychotherapy & Counselling, Holistic Therapies, Massage & Facials
- **For children:** Creative Dance, Toddler Sense, Baby Sensory, LittleKickers
- **Hobbies:** Art, Bridge, Embroidery
- **Courses and workshops:** Yoga (x2), Living Your Values, Moving into Year 7, Signing Bowl Meditation, Soundbath, The Sunday Reset
- **Ad hoc therapy sessions**

Our inaugural Health & Wellbeing Fair on January 25 was a great success. The Hall was packed with exhibitors offering a variety of health and wellbeing services, the six talks in The Wellhouse were well attended, and Dr Hugh Bethell cut the ribbon to formally open The

Wellhouse. Shortly after, we launched the Practitioner Circle, a group of health and wellbeing practitioners who meet regularly to share learning, offer mutual support and encourage collaboration. This has been very well received, and members are now starting to plan joint initiatives.

We estimate that there have been around 9,600 customer visits for health & wellbeing classes and therapies during the financial year.

Social Hub



In July 2025, we enjoyed the first BEECHFEST weekend with a barbecue, film night and Beatles tribute band on the Village Green.

As usual, the Rec was packed with record numbers for the annual Bonfire Night, with the torchlit procession, bonfire, fireworks display, and burgers, sausages and drinks.

Our monthly Friday evening Socials each attracted around 25-45 attendees. We ran 10 socials, including seven with supper from professional caterer Anne Moore, the BEECHFEST barbecue, and a pub night.

The Christmas Gift Fair achieved record attendance, with 22 stall-holders offering a big variety of gifts. Later, the Village Hall and St Peter's Church hosted an atmospheric evening of Christmas carols around the Beech Family Tree on the Green.

The Friday coffee shop continued to be popular, with a lively, informal atmosphere as both regulars and occasional visitors enjoyed excellent coffee, delicious cakes and pleasant conversation.



Culture Hub

We further expanded our Culture Hub with three fantastic music evenings which we call "Gigs by the Green".

As well as 11 film screenings, the National Theatre Live programme expanded to eight shows on the "Screen by the

Green". Our format of limited attendees, cabaret style seating, an open bar and a short interval in the middle is unrivalled locally and continues to be popular, with most screenings sold out in advance.

Celebration Hub

We continued to hire the Hall out successfully for wedding receptions, children's parties and family celebrations, and we have revamped our promotional materials to encourage bookings.

Managing the Hall and green spaces

The Wellhouse has been our biggest focus this year, but we have also continued to improve the Main Hall and how we run it.

After the first sell-out Gigs on the Green, we purchased a new 12m² modular stage, which is much easier and safer for our volunteers to install and remove than the old, very heavy stage which we now only use for outdoor events. Our East Hampshire councillor, Tony Costigan, supported this with a grant of £500.

Our new robot floor cleaner has been a big hit with hall hirers, especially those who need a super-clean floor for yoga and pilates. We also re-varnished the outside doors, replaced the hand driers in the loos, and laid scalplings to improve the overflow parking area near the fire exit.



As part of The Wellhouse project, we installed a new storage shed – the old one will be taken down soon – and tidied up the area around it.

We purchased 50 new outdoor chairs and two outdoor bistro tables, thanks in part to another grant of £790 from Tony Costigan.

Our green spaces team continues to keep the Rec, Village Green and area outside the Hall tidy and attractive.

Behind the scenes, we have deployed Microsoft SharePoint and Anthropic's Claude artificial intelligence to help us run our operations smoothly and we moved our accounting from QuickBooks to Xero.

The Hampshire and Isle of Wight Air Ambulance have collected 5.2 tonnes of recycling over the four years since they installed the collection bin for clothes, shoes and bed linen outside the Hall.

Screen by the Green movies

- Mr Burton
- The Penguin Lessons
- Bridget Jones: Mad about the Boy
- Four Letters of Love
- Black Bag
- Downton Abbey: The Grand Finale
- The Roses
- I Swear
- The Choral
- H is for Hawk
- Hamnet

National Theatre Live

- Inter Alia
- Mrs Warren's Profession
- The Fifth Step
- Hamlet
- The Audience
- All My Sons
- The Playboy of the Western World
- Les Liaisons Dangereuses

Gigs by the Green

- Serious Child/My Girl the River
- Suntou Susso
- Laura Jurd

Public benefit and community engagement

In planning our activities, we keep in mind the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit.

Many more people are now using and enjoying Beech Village Hall. We estimate around 16,000 customer visits during the financial year, a 16% increase on the previous year. Local people benefit from meeting and talking with others at social events, learning and mental stimulation through cultural activities, and improving their physical and mental health through our Health and Wellbeing programmes and our green spaces. The volunteers who support our efforts benefit from a strong sense of camaraderie and the satisfaction of contributing to village life. For some, the Hall is an antidote to loneliness and isolation.



The dramatic increase in community events, especially films, National Theatre Live and live music, means that we hosted an estimated 3,866 customer visits for social and cultural events in 2025-26. This is an increase of 46% compared to the previous year, which in itself was up 30% on the year before.

We estimate 9,617 customer visits for classes, therapy sessions or meetings, boosted by The Wellhouse, which opened halfway through the financial year.

In addition, many villagers used the Rec, Village Green and children's play equipment, and a few hired the Hall for private parties, generating 2,500 visits.



Volunteers are at the centre of our social programme. More social events translates to more volunteers needed to run them, and we now have 67 active volunteers. We estimate they contributed almost 1,400 hours of their time during the year – 33% more than in 2024-25. (This doesn't include the work performed by the Management Team to run the Charity.) It has been a pleasure to welcome a number of new helpers during the year.

Our membership programme grew from 107 members to 172, including 99 full members living in Beech. They represent 77 households, around one-third of the village. Members receive regular email updates, as well as special rates if they hire the Hall.

Managing the charity

Beech Village Hall and Recreation Ground (Registered Charity No 301738) is an unincorporated association governed by a constitution which is available at <https://www.beechvillage.org.uk/managing-the-charity/>

Our charitable objectives are:

“The provision and maintenance of a village hall and recreation ground for the use of the inhabitants of Beech and the neighbourhood without distinction of sex, religious or other political opinions and in particular for the use of meetings, lectures and classes and for other forms of recreation (including physical recreation) and other leisure-time occupations, with the object of improving the conditions of life for the said inhabitant.”

I was honoured to take over as Chair of the management team at last year’s AGM in October, working alongside the other trustees, Kim Eakers, Cheryl Fisher, Jo Curtis, Karen Littlewood and Dan Soutar. During the year, Karen stood down as a trustee although she continues to support many of our activities. Dan Soutar will retire as a trustee at the AGM following his three-year term and has decided not to seek re-election, but he will also continue to help us as a volunteer. In July, Sara Varo was co-opted onto the management team and will be standing for election as a trustee at the AGM in September. New trustees are generally co-opted by the management committee and elected at a general meeting. If anyone is interested in joining our team, I’d love to hear from you.

Statement of Financial Activities

The Trustees are pleased to report a satisfactory financial performance in 2026:

- We successfully delivered on time and budget two major capital projects, the refurbishment of the Annex to create the Wellhouse and the new storage area.
- The charity’s annual surplus was in line with our budget, with higher than anticipated expenditures offset by above budget revenues. The higher expenditure mainly reflected higher than budgeted administration and hall cleaning costs, driven by more events and the Wellhouse project. Revenues benefited from a fuller events calendar and the successful introduction of Gigs by the Green and BEECHFEST, as well as the continued popularity of the coffee shop.
- Our unrestricted reserves are in line with the level required by our reserves policy, which we established during the year in line with Charity Commission guidance.

Unrestricted fund activities

Over 96% of the charity’s unrestricted income is generated by its two core activities, Hall Hire and Social and Community events.

In 2026 the charity recorded an unrestricted funds operating surplus of £7,343; above our 2026 target. This increase was largely driven by a 93% increase in net revenues from our Social and Community Events, along with a 15% increase in Hall Hire revenue. More particularly:

- Net income from NT Live screenings and the Bonfire was double the 2024-25 level, while net income from film nights was up 50% and the coffee shop was up 40%.

Together, the coffee shop, film nights and NT Live accounted for over 60% of 2026 net income.

- Income from Main Hall Hire was broadly flat, but the successful launch of the Wellhouse in December 2025 resulted in an overall 15% increase in hire revenues.

Restricted Fund activities

In 2024-25 the charity received grants from Veolia Environmental Trust and the National Lottery Community Fund for the Wellhouse refurbishment and storage project. In 2025-26 the charity received the balance of the Veolia funding together with additional grant funding for the Wellhouse and Storage projects from Garfield Weston, EHDC, Alton Town Council, Beech Parish Council and Enterprise Mobility. The grants awarded in 2026 allowed us to enhance the garden, improve the car parking area behind the hall and ensure the successful launch of the Wellhouse. In total, the charity received £128,974 from external funders (£77,802 in 2025-26 and £51,172 in 2024-25) and used £15,671 of its own reserves to fund these projects.

We were also pleased to receive two EHDC Councillor Grants from Tony Costigan totalling £1,290 to part fund our new stage and new chairs for external events.

In total the charity received £79,092 from external funders in 2025-26 and £87,710 in 2024-25. £18,656 was expensed in 2026; the remainder was capitalised with a £18,218 depreciation charge in 2026.

The charity also made a transfer of £6,828 from its own funds to restricted funds, which reflected the Veolia Environmental Fund's requirement for all grantees to provide 10% of the their grant award. This was incorrectly shown as an expense against the Veolia grant in the 2024-25 accounts.

Balance sheet movements

Fixed assets increased by £118,296 (£98,466 after depreciation), primarily reflecting the charity's investments in the Wellhouse and Storage Projects.

Restricted and unrestricted reserves are £510,641, an increase of £49,562 over 2025.

Reserves

The Trustees have determined that the Charity should aim to hold the following designated reserves:

1. An Operations Reserve equivalent to 6 months of core operating expenditure (2026 value: £19,000). Core operating expenditure includes utilities, insurance, routine maintenance, administration and other essential running costs. This reserve is intended to cover short-term cash flow needs, provide a buffer against unexpected loss of income, and allow time for corrective action in the event of financial difficulty

2. A Buildings reserve sufficient to meet anticipated major maintenance and repair costs identified through ongoing review of the Charity's property and to protect the charity against the cost of significant unplanned repairs or renewals to the building fabric. As a guideline, this will be maintained at approximately 1.5% of the building reinstatement value, or 20% of forecast major works over the next five years, whichever is higher, and reviewed annually. For 2026 the Buildings Reserve is £20,127, 1.5% of the insured rebuild value.
3. An Equipment Reserve equivalent to approximately 25% of the cost of replacing essential operational equipment (eg AV equipment, kitchen and coffee shop/bar appliances) (2026 value: £12,500). This reserve is intended to mitigate the impact of a large one-off replacement cost falling on a single year's budget.

Total unrestricted (free) reserves available at the end of 2026 total £51,090, consisting of the £386,356 general reserve less fixed assets funded by the Charity of £331,751.

Free reserves are £378 above the amount required under the reserves policy.

Principal risks

The Trustees have identified the following as the principal risks facing the charity: rising utility and insurance costs; reliance on a small number of volunteers to deliver events and maintain the building; the age and condition of parts of the hall; and dependence on external grant funding for major capital projects. The Trustees monitor these risks regularly and reflect them in the reserves policy set out above.

Going Concern

In the light of the above and the Charity's reserve position, the Trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue as a going concern for the foreseeable future. The accounts have accordingly been prepared on a going concern basis.

Looking ahead

We are hoping to maintain a similar level of social events, films and music in the coming years, so we are expecting similar results.

We see opportunity for further growth in Health & Wellbeing activities, because 2026-27 will be the first full year of operation for The Wellhouse, and there is continuing interest from practitioners and therapists. We therefore anticipate a 12% increase in health & wellbeing users, but we will need to continue to invest in marketing in order to achieve this. This will include a new village website, which we are already working on.

Expenses should continue to be broadly similar, so we have planned for a small surplus in 2026-27 and we monitor our financial results every quarter so that we can make adjustments if necessary.

At some stage, we will need to tackle some larger repairs and maintenance issues with the Main Hall, including external painting as well as roof works to address a persistent leak which affects the kitchen. We also need to evaluate the potential benefits of air conditioning, an air source heat pump and solar panels.

We have some ideas about possible longer term projects and we are developing proposals which we can take to villagers for feedback, starting at the 2026 AGM. We think there are several ways in which we could use the outside space on the Village Green more effectively to improve the experience for our community:

- Improving the bar area to make it easier and quicker to serve customers, whilst adding bifold doors so that users of the coffee shop and bar could enjoy outdoor access;
- Replacing our ageing marquee with a more permanent structure that would support community outdoor activities; we are already seeing demand for outdoor health and wellbeing classes.
- Improving the popular children's play area, which will need to be refurbished anyway in the relatively near future.

Our capacity to manage projects is limited, so whatever we decide to do, we will be asking for volunteers for help!

Thank you

I am constantly impressed by the strong sense of community and commitment in Beech. This year, we have achieved so much and it's all because of a great band of people. Some spend many hours helping to organise everything, others drop in when they can to make a cake or move tables around. The combination is awesome and, usually, great fun!

There are so many people to thank and I apologise in advance for all those who I have not been able to name personally:

- First of all, my colleagues on the management team – Jo Curtis, Kim Eakers, Cheryl Fisher, Karen Littlewood, and Dan Soutar, joined from July by Sara Varo – who bring humanity, wisdom and a great set of skills to bear on behalf of our village.
- Everyone who helped with The Wellhouse, notably Sara Varo, who shaped our offering to practitioners and led their recruitment, and Nick Carey-Thomas, our architect – as well as everyone on the management team.
- Mark and Sarah Brett, who have brought us three great Gigs by the Green music events and are promising us many more.
- Gill Scott and Angela Mitchell for taking over the running of the bar, reorganising the stock and storage, and organising the food for the events which we cater ourselves.
- The organisers of our key events – Jo Curtis for BEECHFEST, Martin Littlewood and Dan Soutar for Bonfire Night, and Anne Whitaker, Stella Charman and Jane Freeman-Hunt for the Christmas Fair.
- The many volunteers who bake, serve coffee, tend the bar, wash up, empty dog waste bins, let off fireworks, shift tables and chairs around, put the marquee up, look after our green spaces, and so much more.

- Our team of contractors who help us with finance, admin, cleaning, maintenance, gardening, catering and, new for this year, marketing support – Nicola Kitney, Vicky Smart, Debra and Dunstan Rickhaus, Simon Hodgson, Stuart Lee, Sam Gardiner, Lucy Loosemore, Anne Moore and Jen Jenkins.
- The organisations and individuals who helped to fund the redevelopment of The Wellhouse: Veolia Environmental Trust, The National Lottery Community Fund, East Hampshire District Council, Alton Town Council, Beech Parish Council, Garfield Weston, Enterprise Mobility, and the people of Beech.
- Elspeth Mackeggie, who has kindly reviewed our accounts.

Finally, thank you to everyone in the village who comes along to events, films and the coffee shop and enjoys our green spaces. We do this for you and it's very rewarding to see everyone enjoying themselves.

Richard Whitaker

Trustee and Chair

Beech Village Hall & Recreation Ground

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September 25, 2026