

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT year 2015 – 2016

This last year has been a trouble free and quiet year for the Village Hall Committee since the AGM in June 2015 with only one Committee Meeting required on the 19th December.

Sue Sulkin continues to do the most incredible job as Booking's Secretary and Treasurer. Bookings have gone well with a number of outside bookings, village events including Artsreach performances, weddings, celebrations and parties alongside our regular Lunch Club, Youth Club, Village Café, monthly group meetings and art and exercise classes. The hall is now being very well used and despite keeping the fees modest, is more than paying its way.

The one week Sue left me in charge of the Bookings Book made me realize anew what a sterling job she does. In that one week I had to deal with bookings, confirmations, queries on access and a complaint. Sue deals with this 52 times over and probably with far more skill and tact than I employed. It is important to place on record how indebted we are to her and how much we appreciate all that she does to keep the hall running so smoothly.

Similarly, our indebtedness and appreciation very much goes out to Trevor and Jan Marpole who have so willingly responded to repair and maintenance issues throughout the year.

The main unusual expenditure this year has been the sanding back and resealing of the main hall floor and the stage at a cost of £1100. Towards this cost we received a generous contribution from the fete of £500. The work was carried out in August after our annual clean-up and paint and it is noted that the front edge of the stage is slightly rough following the sanding back and needs attention during our next clean-up weekend.

The annual hall clean-up on the 26th July was sadly a rather wet day which meant that some jobs, such as re-oiling the notice Board could not be done. None-the-less the walls throughout the hall were painted along with much of the woodwork. A good number of volunteers from the various users groups turned up and with many hands we completed almost all jobs within one day. Trevor gallantly got thoroughly wet sorting out the guttering and having it effectively tested immediately.

The gardeners continue to do a fine job keeping the grass tidy around the hall so that the native flora seems to be diversifying and it was a joy to see the appearance of 6 new Common Spotted Orchids in the front grass. Gill Southam has equally kept the border adjacent to Stevens Walk a delightful mixture of wild and cultivated plants. We will greatly miss here green fingers when she leaves the village and possibly need to ask the gardeners to add this to their grass cutting task.

The new drainage installed behind the hall was tested hard during this last very wet winter and appears to have coped well. The wilderness area beyond has now settled down into a mature woodland area and has clearly been much enjoyed by the youth club.

The Parish Council asked the Committee if it would be prepared for the Hall to be one of the dedicated “Emergency Shelter’s” for the village in a time of crisis. To this end they are applying for a grant to purchase a suitable generator that could support the hall if needed in a power outage. The Committee discussed this at the December Meeting and are very happy to cooperate, but there is no request for us to provide any funding.

The issue over minor lead contamination of the mains water supply to the hall was resolved by Wessex Water with a new supply pipe being installed by them from the road to the hall inlet outside the disabled cloakroom. This was done in August 2015 at the expense of Wessex Water.

The Hall has continued to host a wonderfully varied programme of Artsreach drama, pantomime, music, dance and song. Each event has been a great success and has made an extraordinarily beneficial contribution to the finances of the hall. We are indebted to Ian Scott, Katharine Haynes and Fran Parker for their unstinting efforts in organizing these. The March events in particular, a cabaret style performance by the Moscow Drug Club was a sell-out, generating a fantastic £359 for the hall. Looking ahead, a special children’s summer activity day is planned for the 8th August using the wilderness area behind the hall, and the first of the 3 winter Artsreach events is a concert by the world renowned guitarist John Etheridge. Fran has again raised the need for a wooden roller shutter to the Kitchen area during these events and this is something we need to look at prioritizing this year.

It is with sadness that we have received an email from David Oswald, the leader of the Youth Club, advising us that if a new leader cannot be found after the summer vacation, there is a risk that the Youth Club will close. He has requested that if the Youth Club still remains leaderless by the end of the year then he will organize removal of their equipment from the rear storage room.