

## Chairman report 2018/19

The VH committee aims to keep the VH building in good repair, and to organise social events to maintain a good community spirit in the village. These events help fund the maintenance of the Hall and are an important part of what we do. We have organised events that have been enjoyed previously- Harvest Home day, Christmas gathering, New Year fireworks, but also introduced some new events; the poppy seed planting at the entrance to the Green for the WW1 commemoration and an Easter egg hunt and tea to encourage younger members of the village to join in. It is good to see the continued use of the Hall for the café, and newly reinstated toddler group on a weekly basis. Other hire income comes from a variety of activities -childrens parties, band practice, family events etc

We were very pleased to accept the offer by the Wootton Women group who meet in the village, to run a village quiz, with proceeds donated to the Village Hall. This was a successful evening, and our thanks to everyone who ran it, and 'quized' for this community support.

We reported last year that we were struggling to cover our outgoings from income, and although we have some saved funds, we do need to plan carefully for future maintenance and improvements. The running costs of the VH in 2018 (Jan-Dec) was £2414. This includes Rates, Insurance, Electricity, Water, annual PAT testing, Fire equipment checks and Cleaning. This does not include maintenance, or any improvements. Some of this cost is obviously offset by Hall hire income and electricity meters, but our continued aim is to increase the regular use of the Hall.

We are trying to improve our online presence, and have recently found an existing website set up some time ago, (HallsHire.com) but still active, and we are also registered with MDC as a venue for hire. We now feature in a local google search for village Halls, and hope to have be a feature on the community section of the PC.

We are grateful to the Parish council for their commitment to supporting the village Hall with a financial grant.

With no Festival in 2018, our regular income this year is reduced, but while the Festival continues to be held in Pilton, with the availability of traffic stewarding income here in the village, we are able to keep a viable Hall within the community; it is a valuable asset to everyone. The fund raising raffle was a very successful fund raier last year, and we were well supported by the village community.

Last year we put together a list of maintenance and improvement projects that we envisaged we would need to do, or would like to do. Our own funds will not cover all the proposed work, so we will be looking for grant support in the future. However, we are unable to apply for help from many grant donors at the moment because of the short length of time left on the existing lease. As reported last year, negotiating the terms of a new lease from the Diocesan Board of Finance, has been a frustrating, and lengthy process, and continues – now in year 3. . Our thanks go to Bill Bartlett for the time he has continued to give to this ongoing task. When we have the new lease we will be in a position to move forward with some of those projects.

In the meantime, we decided that the Hall really is in need of an internal facelift, which we will fund from our own funds, and this is due to begin at a convenient time later in the year.

We have completed some essential maintenance of the Hall electrics, replacing some old meter units and cabling, and taking out some redundant cabling. The existing electrics almost have a new inspection test certificate, as has the new work of course. We have also set up a new tariff with EDF, which should reduce our electricity bill by a significant amount. We are grateful to Ian Lester for helping to sort this out.

So, from our short term list we have completed the

- Electricity inspection/upgrade of meters and wiring where necessary
- Repaired the damaged wall around tree in car park
- Replaced the support for electricity box on the village green
- Repaired the cooker and replaced the microwave in the kitchen

Our thanks go to Shane Stanley for donating time and materials for the repair of the damaged car park wall and the new electricity box support on the Village Green.

Two items have not yet happened.

- Repairs to car park surface – we hope to have some goodwill help to do this ourselves as the estimate was more than we felt able to commit to.
- Replacement mower – so far the old one has kept going, with just some 'minor' repairs. Our thanks to Mike ..... for donating his time to do the repairs.

2 larger projects listed last year were the

- Refurbishment of the kitchen
- Improvement of the heating/insulation.

Once the new lease is finalised we will be able look at these again.

We were also asked to consider some sort of sound improvements in the Hall, but had not been able to find anything at a realistic cost. We decided to try some acoustic panels on the wall. We appreciate that in their present form they are not very aesthetically pleasing, and it is difficult to know how successful they are in reducing echo, but a sound engineer who recently visited the Hall was surprised at the lack of echo here; perhaps they work better than we think! In the refurbishment we will give some thought to what we do.

I would like to thank the committee, who do an excellent job, and give a good deal of time and effort to keeping the VH a viable and valuable asset to North Wootton. As well as managing the building and organising events, the Green also needs managing. We are grateful to all those who help to keep the Green a safe, usable space for the village to use.

We are also grateful to the many people in the village who give their time, expertise and financial support throughout the year, without whom we could not maintain the Hall and Green and provide a facility for all to use. Our thanks particularly go to Julian Walker who has maintained the accounts book this year, got us online, and prepared the annual accounts.

We continue to look for new members to join us on the committee.