

Chairman report – North Wootton Village Hall and Green Committee 2016/17 - Report up to AGM – May 8th 2017

I would like to start by thanking all the committee for their support of the Village Hall, and the time and energy they give to maintaining this important part of life in North Wootton.

The village Hall continues to be used for a variety of activities, both from within the village and outside hirers. Regular users include the popular Village Cafe, badminton, church events, including messy church and children's activities, Parish Council meetings, together with the various events organised by the Committee.

The committee have tried to expand the range of events organised to encourage a wider range of village residents to participate in the community events. The events in 2016-17 have included

- Flower Farmer talk
- Queens 90th Birthday picnic on the Green
- Harvest Home
- Boiling Kettle Theatre company performance
- Christmas Gathering,
- New Year Fireworks
- Progressive supper

These are both fundraising events, to keep the Hall functioning, and also provide an opportunity for those in the village to meet socially.

As well as fundraising events, obviously hiring the Hall for private use is also an important income source, as is Stewarding for the festival traffic as it comes through the village. It is particularly good to see the weekly cafe, and the recently formed Wootton Women regularly using the Hall.

The Green is used by village families for recreation as well as the Harvest Home and New Year Bonfire, and this year the village picnic.

The Mid Somerset show Wassail event also makes good use of the Green, as do some hirers of the Hall including Mossy church.. We are grateful to all those who help to keep the Green a safe, usable space for the village to use. The ride on mower is at the end of its life, and a replacement will be necessary in the foreseeable future, and something we will need to budget for.

The Harvest Home was a successful day, though reduced in its content this year. A Harvest Lunch in the Village Hall, craft show, It's a knockout and teas were planned, together with a hog roast and barn dance for the evening, but we struggled with ticket sales for the evening event, and made a late decision to cancel, rather than lose money on the evening. Following on from this, we have decided to rest the Harvest Home in 2017, and look at alternatives or changes that will be attractive to more people in the village.

The 100 club continues to bring in funds, and although in recent years we haven't managed to sell 100 shares, the rules laid down when first set up enable us to manage the funds as a successful fund raiser.

We continue to be a registered Charity, and are also registered with Mendip District Council, and Somerset Community Council which gives us access to information and other people access to our Hall details on their website.

The monthly Village Hall report ,in the NWNews, keep the village in touch with what we are doing.

Where does the money go?

Our major maintenance job this year has been the refurbishment of the Hall floor. On inspection, the joists of the floor were seen to be rotten in many areas. The planned work of lifting the floor boards, replacing the joists and then relaying the boards, which were unaffected by any dry or wet rot, was completed in August 2016. While the floor boards were up, we made the decision to add some insulation beneath the boards. Having taken advice, insulation board was fixed to the joists leaving a gap beneath the boards to allow for some air movement around them. As reported last year, we secured grant funding of £4,0000 from Mendip District Council 's Legacy Fund , and, £1800 from another local grant body, who does not wish any publicity, and so will remain anonymous.

We replaced curtains that had been in the Hall for some time, with insulated linings to help preserve heat in the Hall in winter. We also investigated the installation of some soundproofing, but this proved to be very expensive, and the decision was made to shelve this idea.

Some outside painting has been completed, though some still to do, and will be completed Spring/summer 2017 when the woodwork is dry. We have also been monitoring the Hall drainage— suggested as a possible problem when the floor was removed and we could see what was below. At present still monitoring.

Fire certification, insurance, rates and heating all eat into funds raised. Electricity bills are particularly high, and we have already begun to look at ways of reducing this bill, and possibly upgrading the heating in the future. Following the updating of Business rates, we may have larger bills in the future. At present, the effect of the increases has been minimal due to additional interim funding by MDC.

At the end of 2106 the water heater feeding the hot taps in the toilets was deemed beyond repair and needed replacing. The kitchen taps had become very difficult to turn on and off so these have also been replaced, and the thermostatically controlled disabled tap needed repairing. For plumbing reasons, one boiler now feeds all the hot taps in the Hall - previously the kitchen had its own boiler..

In order to be eligible to apply for a grant in the future, the process of renewing the lease with the Diocesan Board of Finance continues. Our thanks go particularly to Bill Bartlett for the time he has given to this ongoing task.

Dead apple trees have been removed and replaced on the Green. 3 recent replacements include 2 eating apple trees, and 1 cooking apple. These can still go for cider making, but can also be used by anyone in the village. with the help of C Coombes and the Bartletts, we have also improved drainage in the entrance to the Green. The Green continues to be kept tidy by a group of mowers and our thanks go to Paddy Gordon, Simon Shimmin, Andy Townend and Marcus Laing for their hard work. Ken and Sonya Leaman keep the outside area of the V Hall tidy, and plant the tubs and, as always Stuart Fisher regularly does jobs around the Hall keeping the whole area tidy. Inside, we have installed our village Photo Gallery, and will keep this as a rolling programme, displaying events and people in and around the village; our thanks to Ken Leaman for his expertise and time given to this project..

Two other important jobs are fulfilled by non committee members. Lucy Lester coordinates bookings for the hall, and Sue and Andrew Campbell-Orde keep the accounts.

We would like to thank all in the village who help in so many ways, who participate in events, and who generally make things work. Our thanks also go to the Parish Council who have helped us financially, as well as helping in a supportive role. I believe we make a good contribution to village life and help to maintain a thriving community.