

Annual General Meeting 2021

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The Chair's Review of the year.

Welcome to the Village Hall Annual General Meeting 2021.

A big thank you to the Committee - all but one of whom are in their first year - for your extraordinary contribution in another extraordinary year. And an equally enormous thank you to everyone who contributes so positively to the Village Hall. Community and Collaboration are core themes for the hall.

The Village Hall provides space and activities for the community delivered by the Committee who, as Trustees of the Charity, are required to manage the Village Hall. The Bookings Manager is, of course, at the centre of delivering all the various services the hall provides.

During the year we have sadly said farewell to Jean Cooke on the Committee, after 20+ years contributing to the Village Hall. Jean is owed an enormous debt of gratitude for all she has done, and she continues to volunteer for the Café!

Hev & Ken Woodhouse have moved on to new pastures, quite a wrench as they have been a key part of the team for quite some considerable time. We wish them well.

Emily Rich is now Bookings Manager, taking on the role at a more complicated than average time and has already made a great contribution to the hall.

Matt Millward has joined the committee looking after the growing technology and systems on which the hall and hirers rely upon more and more.

Covid imposed uncertainty over most aspects of the Village Hall with all activities suspended. While waiting for the Covid cloud to lift, it was determined to use this period to look ahead. How to improve in every area, get minor repairs done and both deepen, widen community



involvement and seek to increase income to offer a more robust future for the hall. Getting rid of the annual deficit continues to be an important objective.

A major innovation was the introduction of online booking with keypad security. Keys are no longer required and hirers report that it is much easier to make and check on a booking. George Thompson has done a most impressive job for us on this – and is continuing to introduce enhancements. The system has made possible great improvements in the operation of the Village Hall. Installing the system also meant upgrading the front door with a superior new lock and door closer plus paint.

There was the chance to try mobile catering with Wild Kite Coffee , a burger offer and Steve’s Fish n Chips which continue to be here in the car park on alternate Tuesdays.

External lighting was improved and repaired, useful for the carols sung outside the hall instead of the Court House which was out of bounds due to Covid.

Once Covid controls were eased, hirers returned and, of course, the café, led by Diana and her team as always, was soon up to speed. In parallel to the Tuesday afternoon Café, bowls have been reintroduced generating more customers.

Booking revenue began to recover. Moviola is back in action, a big thank you to Lucy for organising the relaunch.

However Covid is clearly still around so keen to maintain hirer’s confidence in using the Village Hall, special attention has been given to cleaning routines, for example.



Organised in conjunction with All Saints, the festival was well received.

Instead of the familiar Country Fair, this year saw the East Meon Festival, a smaller scale, village focussed event held over a weekend that sought to limit the catchment area for visitors rather closer around the village. Organised in conjunction with All Saints, the festival was well received.



As part of efforts to improve inclusion, flags from nations connected to people living in the village were displayed, including, for example Zimbabwe, thank you Malcolm Farrer. For activities on the Green, the electrical distribution is now rather more robust – thank you Matt.





There is artwork on the stage – thank you Peter Lague for helping to build it and to John Mackinley to leading the team and Amy Lague, Jane Martin and Chris & Jane Cobley for painting it plus a host of artists from the village who 'populated' the scene.

The Village Hall is doing a great deal more for younger East Meoners. It is wonderful to welcome Little Steps – a Homestart Butser initiative – already under way for parents and toddlers. The arrival of The Village Nursery gives some families access to pre-school education for the first time while increasing the numbers of East Meon children attending East Meon School.

The Chancellor has indicated that funding is to be available for younger education. The Committee will be delighted to assist in the application as the nature of the scheme becomes known. Little Steps and The Village Nursery will be making an increasing major contribution to the community.

Getting ready to receive both groups has meant a lot of sorting out to create space, modifications to the kitchen, installing locks and cabinets and so forth, thank you Peter and Emily.

Four hirers have changed their bookings in view of the arrival of the Village Nursery, leading to some additional hirings for the Church Hall.

East Meon School, Little Steps and the Village Nursery, who already know each other well, are collaborating, for example a nativity production is set for December 15th and 16th. The school collaborated with the Café for the MacMillan Coffee Morning - a great success.

The Rev Phili Good now has a hot desk with the content of the Vicarage office shipped upstairs to the first floor above the small hall where more sorting out, removal of a partition and door etc etc created a usable space.

Although Phili does not have the Vicarage, she does now have a local base here to help her look after her 4 parishes, the United Benefice of Warnford, West Meon, Langrish and East Meon.

Delivering this has meant hard labour for some – Jonathan Iremonger heaving seemingly endless stuff over from the vicarage, and Steve & Emily Rich who lifted the printer – it's mighty big and mighty heavy too – up the stairs into its new home. Another huge thank you.

In terms of finance, the financial year was completed with a deficit of £ 3,050.81, but without the Government Grant of £9,000, it would have been £12,000. Overcoming the annual deficit has been a key objective therefore the prospect of more income over the coming 12 months would mark a great improvement in the financial position. Relying on an annual fund raising event, easily be cancelled by poor weather, is not seen as desirable.

Covid has had a major impact on the Village Hall as everywhere else. But the hall is emerging into the post Covid world with greater utilisation, greater community inclusion and the potential for more robust revenue on which future plans can be developed.

Looking ahead there is the Platinum Jubilee weekend in June, the possibility of sport on the big screen in the large hall and much more – all ideas welcomed. Two weddings are already

booked for 2022 and a number of birthday parties too. Community and Collaboration will continue to be core themes for the hall.

Lastly, the reason for including these Festival photos? The Village Hall is all about community for all of East Meon and these pictures celebrate just that!

Thank you.



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