

SHERFIELD VILLAGE HALL

Parish Council Report

Sherfield Village Hall is managed by a group of 7 volunteer Trustees some of whom have lived in the village for many years. We have built up sound relationships with our users and are active in many aspects of village life. We have tried to select Trustees with a variety of Skills and Knowledge. For example, I have considerable experience in Project Management, whilst another Trustee has experience with Network, Systems and Electronics. We have identified what other skills will be beneficial to the successful management of the village hall and we continue actively to campaign to recruit some “new blood”. Can you help?

The Extended Team

I would like to give special mention to our Minute Secretary, Mrs Eleanor Burt. Like the Trustees, Eleanor is a volunteer and gives her time freely. All meeting minutes are posted on the Village Hall Website and can be viewed with just a few clicks.

I would also like to thank Hazel Cook, our caretaker for just about a year now. Hazel has really taken to her new role and plays a leading role in maintaining the hall to a really high standard. At the same time it is important to recognise the contribution of Wendy Gosden as both Hall Manager and volunteer Hall Treasurer. Wendy has decided to step down from her treasurer responsibilities and we thank her for her immense contribution. A final “thank you” goes to Gilly Duckworth who has been helping the Trustees with her marketing skills and with driving grant applications

As a member of both Basingstoke Voluntary Action and Action Hampshire, we continue to enjoy access to a range of training sessions, help and advice, to help us to develop our skills and to make the right decisions, on behalf of parishioners and users of the hall.

Each Trustee also sits on one or more of the various other committees. For example, I am also Chairman of the Beer Festival Committee and a number of our trustees sit on the Fete Committee. Thus, we all have a good overall picture of the workings of the village hall and therefore have a cohesive approach to managing it on your behalf.

Coronavirus Update

The Trustees are meeting regularly and virtually amid this pandemic. Government Guidelines are reviewed and those protecting the safety and well-being of our users, parishioners and the hall itself are implemented. All user groups have cancelled their meetings and events for the coming months and Wendy, the Hall Manager, is in regular contact with them. All groups were asked to notify Wendy ASAP if they became aware that one of their members had experienced symptoms of the COVID-19 virus and had attended our halls, so that we could arrange appropriate deep cleaning. The village hall will not be charging groups for cancelling sessions whilst the Coronavirus is behind their decision.

Naturally, we have also been considering our own events. Early on, we made the decision to cancel the VE Day 75 commemorations and celebrations over the weekend of 8th – 10th May but were pleased to be able to install the new flag pole to mark the occasion.

The Village Fete

This year's village fete, planned for Saturday June 13th has been cancelled.

The Beer Festival

This is planned for Saturday September 12th so we have a little time. The situation will next be reviewed in June and the decision will be made and announced at that point.

Monthly Sunday Market

This has now been running on the 3rd Sunday in the month since September 2019: its success being measured by the number of repeat stall bookings and the large number of local residents who turn out. Its "café" is also becoming a very popular meeting place selling Tea, Coffee, Cakes and Sausage and Bacon Sandwiches. The credit for the success of this event goes to Hazel Cook who has been the driving force behind it along with a team of Sunday Market Volunteers. Sadly, following Government Guidelines, the Trustees have discontinued this event for the next four months but we all hope that when Covid-19 is behind us, this event will be reinstated and continue to go from strength to strength.

Planning Permission

I am delighted to be able to tell you that in January this year, we were granted full planning permission for our proposed development works at the Hall. These works will commence later in 2020 with phase 1 being the enlargement, improvement and complete refit of the existing kitchen facility. A number of Grants have been secured to fund these developments.

Moving Forward

User Group and Open Meetings

We continue to consult with the user groups and with the public and the output from these consultations feed the plan to develop the hall further. Although the planned May open meeting has been postponed, we have kept user groups updated by individually referring them to this report. Naturally, these valuable meetings will continue as soon as it is safe to do so.

Hall acoustics

The acoustics in both halls have been a recurring theme in open meetings. We have engaged with the “experts” and are currently reviewing quotes for improving the sound quality in the Liddell Hall. We have been advised that portable acoustic screens would be ineffective in a main hall of our size, so we continue to look into other solutions.

Village Hall Volunteers

The Trustees are lucky in the voluntary support they receive from Wendy as Treasurer, from the Fundraising/Events Committee, the Friends/Patrons of Sherfield Village Hall and loyal residents who attend events.

In recent weeks, the village has seen an army of volunteers coming together to support each other through these difficult times. We very much hope that the volunteers will want to retain this volunteering spirit, and that the community will rally round to help the village hall get back into action again. The management team are seeking new trustees and more volunteers will be needed to help to arrange future fundraising events.

In Conclusion

In general the hall is well used. There are few vacant mornings or afternoons and most evenings are hosting something in at least one of the halls. We continue actively to look for new bookings and we are pleased with our recent successes.

As part of the Business Plan, we took a look at the annual footfall enjoyed by the hall and – in summary - the hall is used by circa 30,500 people annually, that's an average of 2,546 per month, 588 per week or 84 per day.

We are pleased to report that overall, the Hall is in great shape.