

Chair's Report for the Parish Hall AGM
Wednesday 26th June 2024

Another busy year in the life of the Parish Hall since our last AGM. The hall continues to be well used & attracts people, not just local ones, but from further afield as well, even some coming from Lichfield to support our events.

Our pledge for the year 2024 is:

“To maintain and continue improving a welcoming environment, that is accessible to all existing users and encourages newcomers to our hall, to participate in a variety of events and activities.”

This sums up what our Parish Hall is all about and is something that the Committees strive to achieve, through the various events and happenings within the hall.

During the year, bookings and hall usage have steadily increased. Our regular fitness classes include Yoga, Pilates, Zumba and Tai Chi. We now have two weekly art groups and the Friday night indoor bowls sessions. The hall is regularly used by the Parish Council, and the Yarpole Talk community hub group, set up as part of the Good Neighbour scheme, providing coffee, cake, chat & company for those who find it hard to get out. The group has also used the hall for their annual quiz night. The local Police have used the hall to deliver several community sessions and of course the local and general elections have / will be taking place in the hall. The car park has been booked regularly throughout the year by cycling and rambling groups and the Herefordshire Wildlife group have had several meetings in the hall. Flicks in the sticks, organised through Arts alive has thrived again this year, with flicks and food seeming to be very popular. Private hire bookings have gradually increased over the year too for weddings, christenings, parties, wakes and the hall was used as a residential venue for a local Guide company at Christmas. Other fund raising activities have included an Arts Alive Drama event, organised by Janette Kinsey, a twelfth night party and a summer BBQ.

We regularly receive very positive feedback and appreciation for events in the hall and for the general environment, décor and atmosphere, which is always great to hear and sits well alongside our pledge.

We were really pleased that following an assessment, we kept our recognition by Gigaclear as a community hub, and as such they have continued to provide us with free Wi-Fi. This is a huge benefit to the hall, particularly as we live in an area with poor mobile phone signal, and it has enabled groups using the hall to access the internet for their talks and research and is also an added selling point for people hiring the hall.

During the year we worked with the Parish Council to install a seat in the Community meadow with money we collected from the late Queen's memorial fund. There is a plaque on the seat 'to remember and celebrate the life of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth'. We have been given a portrait of King Charles 111 and are about to decide where to position it in the hall.

We haven't had any major works or upgrades to the hall this last year, except for new blinds on the front doors. Other work has been on-going general maintenance tasks and any incidental repairs.

During the year we've had a few changes in the committee. Jane Prail stepped down from the committee in March, and our thanks went to her for all the support she'd given us over the past years. Graham Whitlock has stepped back for a while, due to his very time consuming work at The Bell, but we hope he will rejoin us in the future when things are more settled at the pub. We welcomed Lynn Ashton to the committee and are delighted that she has come to join us. Pete Lloyd retired as our Lottery Administrator after many years of running the 200 club for us, and in fact started it all off almost ten years ago. A huge thank you goes to Pete for his tireless work with this and we are indebted to the large amount of income that Pete generated to the hall from the 200 club over the years he administered it. We're really pleased that the club is able to continue with Jan Tandy taking over as our lottery administrator – thank you Jan, we look forward to continue working with you. This year we have also started a list of 'friends of the hall', people who we could call on for extra help for particular events and tasks if we should need more support, and we are grateful to those who have volunteered for this.

I'd like to finish as usual, by thanking all the Committee for their continuous hard work and support. It continues to be a very active thriving group who work well as a team and everyone has been willing to get involved with things and give willingly of their time. Apart from all the activities and events mentioned previously, there's a lot that goes on 'behind the scenes,' which is not always obvious to everyone. The on-going tasks such as treasurer, secretary, booking secretary, doing weekly safety and fire checks, events organising and helping, keeping the bar stocked, planting and maintaining the large plant boxes by the front door, gardening, cooking, painting and keeping the décor up to scratch etc. The list of 'incidental' tasks is in fact endless, and we are so grateful for all the voluntary contributions of people's time as without all of this commitment, the Parish Hall would not be able to function. Jennie Martin continues to regularly wash our tea towels, which is greatly appreciated and Pam Lewis continues to work hard each week keeping the hall clean and sparkling. Thanks also go to Adam Scott for organising the films for our flicks and food evenings.

Thanks must also go to all those in the community who have supported us so well by attending events and running the various groups and clubs, and we look forward to the continued support for next year, and of course, if anyone else would like to come and join us on the committee we'd love to see you!

Jill Grant
26/06/23