



Steeple Ashton Village Hall
Church Street, Steeple Ashton, Wiltshire, BA14 6EW
Charity number: 305575

Wednesday, April 27th 2022

**VILLAGE HALL CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO THE
PARISH COUNCIL 2021-22**

Good evening,

2021 started with another Covid lockdown. More iterations of the Government's Covid Restrictions Regulations meant that we remained closed for several more months, during which time our caretaker-cleaner decided to move on. An advert went into the Parish Magazine, and by good fortune we found Agnieszka who now does a sterling job of keeping our hall clean and tidy.

When lockdown restrictions started easing, we were able to open our doors again for our regular groups, some of whom were keen to get started, and some who eased back into it slowly because their own clients were still nervous about mixing in groups. At last we had an income - not much of an income, but an income nevertheless.

Whereas 2020 was a busy year for our volunteer committee members, carrying out lots of repairs, refurbishments, cleaning and re-decorations to keep the hall in good shape, 2021 was for the community. Geoff Hyatt's generosity allowed us to install the double doors that everyone loves and that have made a huge difference to the way the main hall integrates with the kitchen and bar area. Grants have enabled us to install the overhead projector, new stage lighting and stage curtains, and Robin & Kathryn Sewell donated and fitted the string of LED lights above you - our regular dance and keep fit groups just love them! We also have new bespoke planters at the front, plants purchased using donations from villagers and the W.I., and, finally for 2021, Geoff came to our financial rescue again when the suspended ceiling gave way and collapsed in December.

I hope you will agree that the hall now looks great. The new equipment is being used regularly, and we are looking forward to the first theatrical presentation by The Trowbridge Players on our stage during May 13th and 14th.

In February, the overhead projector televised a day of Six Nations Rugby that proved to be a great success, raising several hundreds of pounds for the hall. The day was supported by Adam, the new manager at The Longs Arms, who was unable to televise the tournament at that time and who backed us by providing the drinks at cost price. This was a fund-raiser specifically for the village hall, but anyone can hire the hall and equipment for their own entertainment or fund-raising events.

All in all, 2020 and 2021 weren't so bad for us, they enabled us to do all this work with minimal disruption to our hirers. It also allowed us the time to fully research all the work and improvements to ensure they were good value and a good fit for the hall and for our community.

Now for 2022:

Early this year it became obvious that our heating system was in need of substantial remedial work. In-depth research into the viability of alternatives and the efficiency of our type of heating for this type of space resulted in a grant from the PC for the necessary repairs - which will be started in May. We are very grateful for this support.

Our income:

We have several loyal hirers who use the hall weekly or monthly, keeping the hall open daily, but it is only two or three hours per day which means we are not maximising our income, so we need more people to use the hall throughout the day and at weekends. Now we are up and running again and more people have seen the changes we have made, our focus will be on gaining new hirers to fill in the gaps in the calendar to boost our regular income to a fully sustainable level. On top of that, we hope to be running our own events to raise funds for the renovation of the kitchen and to create better space in which to operate a bar, and we hope that this will entice people to use the hall again for their special-occasion parties and social gatherings.

Just one last thing - we have a new treasurer. Sandra, our treasurer and bookings secretary who has kept the hall going for years with both the bookings and the bills, has requested the opportunity to concentrate solely on bookings. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Sandra for all her hard work over the years. We are now fortunate to have Francesca Buffery-King who has kindly agreed to become our new Treasurer.

We hope that the Village Hall will go from strength to strength over the coming years and continue to be a valued and pleasant space for our community to use.

Thank you