

BRANDESTON VILLAGE HALL MANAGEMENT AGM 2023

Meeting held on the 29th April 2024

Present:

Chair: Mary Ketley

Vice Chair: Michael Cousens

Secretary: Kathy Churchill

Treasurer: Andrea Bays

Together with all other members of the committee – Terry Robinson, Paul Baker, Ruth Garratt, Cara Duffy, Jan Baldwin, Connie Grimwood and Tim Randall, plus 8 residents of Brandeston.

Apologies: Sue Fisher, David Russell, James and Roz McKenzie

Minutes of the 2022 AGM:

These were signed as being as true record.

Matters Arising from the Last Minutes:

None were raised.

Chairman's Report: Mary Ketley

1: Welcome to all and thank you for coming.

2: 2023 -24 was my second year as Chair. Again, I was in New Zealand for three months (Jan-March) and Michael - Vice Chair (who also volunteers on some of the regular activities) - held the fort together with the committee members.

3: Thank you to all who commit time, hard work and support, whether on a regular basis or ad hoc. Some activities are 'the Hall', some the Church, some joint, and some run by individuals. They are all open to the community and all add to it.

If I don't mention your name I apologise, but you know who you are! And believe me, you are, each and every one of you, appreciated.

4: The regular activities have continued, and Cara will be speaking to you about Hall Hire and the regular activities later.

Coronation Tea – this was held on the playing field at the Hall in April, with flags and medals for the children - a real old fashioned community event and, my first coronation!

Dunwich Dynamo - not as successful as previous years, mainly due to food stations being set up and cashing in earlier on the route. However, none of the food was wasted as leftover food was donated to Salvation Army Hostel.

Brandeston Art Events – this was held in July and was a wonderful two-day event between the Old Chapel and the Hall – Jan, Kathy and Helen et al organised this event, with help from their support team and it was extremely popular, with quite a few sales, and a great display of local work from paintings to sculpture, pottery to lacework and photography.

Fete – this was held on September 16th as a joint fundraiser with the Church.

It was held at the Hall for the first time in a long while because the pub, where it had previously been held, was closed. As always there was a large group of volunteers to set up/

take down/run everything - we especially thank Aaron for the electrics - something he so often does for us at various events.

Elvis even came to join us at the end!

Everyone enjoyed a variety of games, including Welly Whanging and coconut shy, Dog show, bric-a-brac, cakes, plants, fashion stall, cocktail stand serving Mojitos, books, bottles and all sorts of fun and games.

The Churchill Arms had been open on the Friday evening and also opened for the fete which proved to be very popular.

Traditional Horkey – this took place in October and many thanks to those who took it up and organised it while the committee were still reeling from the fete!

Passion Talks - A new season of these ever-popular talks organised by Darryl started later in the New Year.

The Wine Club – this reemerged thank to Michael, with Kathy's help, and included a big black-tie dinner/dance in December to start off the festive season.

NYE - live music and supper to celebrate the New Year. A jolly good time was had - again organised by a working party of villagers (plus a couple of committee members) and it always so good to see members of the community taking the initiative.

The Churchill Arms – this started on 20th January 2023 and has gone from strength to strength. Helen, Pat and Darryl, and a whole host of helpers have worked so hard to make this happen, and it is great to see it so well supported. We will hear from them later.

We have had fewer fund-raising events this year and, with the pop-up pub substantially contributing to the funds, have had the time to concentrate on other aspects of village life that will hopefully have an impact to the village - of more later.

Hall lettings continue, of course, and Cara to talk to us later about that.

This year's big projects:

Solar Panels - Michael to talk later about this but it was made possible with the benefit of grants and our own funds.

Defibrillator - we will hear from Will Elson later – and again this was possible with Grants and Parish Council support - we are grateful to the Parish Council for their support on this and other projects.

Bulbs – We applied for sacks of bulbs from East Suffolk and a working party of volunteers helped to plant them all - this spring you all saw the results!

Committee:

We run a committee with 12 members. Regular meetings and the minutes are circulated in the village email and posted on the website.

Decisions are made on fund raising, maintenance, events and matters brought to our attention by villagers. We work with the Church and PC, who each have a representative on the committee, and we thank both organisations for their continued support for our work.

All decisions are made for the good of the village as a whole.

Last year we said goodbye to Karren Piper and welcomed Andrea Bays as her replacement as Treasurer.

We also said goodbye to Sandra Roberts and Katie Tassell and welcomed Connie Grimwood and Tim Randell.

Committee Members:

Mary Ketley: Chair

Michael Cousens: Vice-Chair
Kathy Churchill: Secretary
Andrea Bays: Treasurer
Terry Robinson: Maintenance Plus
Cara Duffy: Hall Bookings Plus
Tim Randell: Playground and Health and Safety
Jan Baldwin: Member without portfolio
Sue Moorman: Member without portfolio
Connie Grimwood: Member without portfolio
Paul Baker: Representing Parish Council
Ruth Garrett: Representing Church

Financial Report: Andrea Bays

Covering the period 1st Jan – 31st Dec 2023.

The bank account has been reconciled for this period and the accounts have been audited – see attached.

The total income for 2023 was £17,653

The total expenditure for 2023 was £14,120

Depreciation £60

Surplus for the year is therefore £3473

Hiring of the hall this year was up, bringing in £5,780 (£4391 in 2022) and this included 4 weddings, Private Chef, WI, holiday club and PCC

Regular events are also up bringing in £6933 (£5666 in 2022) and these included traditional favourite fundraisers such as the Horkey, Fete, Eastern Angles and The Art Creation, which was new! It also included the 12 pop-up pubs, which has been an enormous success both financially and for the community, and the total profit from this monthly event is £5,593 plus another £364.23 profit at the Fete (this includes charges associated with card processing). At the year end, we held 'Pub' stock to the value of £975.23 and purchased the Alcohol Licence at £600.

The Dynamo did not make a profit as sadly the work, time and energy that the team put into organising refreshments were thwarted by pit stops earlier en-route, especially a new one at Needham Market which had a large number of food vans. The New Year Party did not make a profit either, but surplus drink was kept for the bar stocks.

Expenditure:

Cleaning for 2023 was £3436 as opposed £2170 in 2022.

This is due to the fact that the cleaning is now managed by a professional company, NX20 which charges £2,863 including supplies.

Window cleaning is £325, Gutters etc £145 and cleaning products £10.

The works and final cost of installing the Solar Panels falls in 2024 therefore £5000 grant is included in Creditors at year end.

Electricity for 2023 is £547 as opposes to £1,933 in 2022.

We were in receipt of Utility Aid Compensation, pending possible further negotiation, to the value £2,283 therefore actual charges for 2023 are £2828.

The bank accounts for the year end are as follows:

Current Account £20,937

Maintenance Account £13,336

Every year, we transfer £3000 from the Current Account to the Maintenance Account to protect us from depreciation.

Questions:

Michael Cousens asked if the figures included any debtors.

Action: AB to report back

Maintenance Report: Terry Robinson

Terry reported as follows:

“First, I am grateful to Tim Randell for taking over responsibility for our fire protection and emergency lighting systems, and for the safe condition of the playground. It is good that these matters are in the hands of a Health and Safety professional.

So, turning to the general condition of the hall, I hope you will agree that it’s looking presentable inside and out, and (currently!) everything works.

I should mention that our new kitchen is now nearly three years old and is standing up to some fairly rigorous usage. The main problems have been with the commercial dishwasher, which can be temperamental and has required frequent maintenance and descaling.

Otherwise, certain items are beginning to show signs of age, notably some of the curtains, which have been weakened in places by sunlight. In particular, the large curtains in this room will I think need replacement soon and blackout blinds may be a better option.

Another priority is the exterior, which will probably need repainting, and the replacement of a few items of decayed softwood, in the next three years or so.

Against this background the Committee may need to raise the current £3,000 per annum set aside for maintenance, effective from next year, in view of the steep rises in the cost of building materials and labour.

Thank you for listening; I’ll be happy to answer any questions you may have.”

No questions.

Solar Panels: Michael Cousens

Michael reported as follows:

“The panels were commissioned on 29th January.

After considering estimates from 6 suppliers, we chose Aaron Nobbs who had recently started installing PV solar.

The total cost was £13,846 inc VAT.

£5000 of that total was provided by way of a grant from SCC.

The system consists of 12 panels, an inverter and 2 batteries. The latter accounted to almost 50% of the total cost but were strongly recommended by Aaron.

In practice 45% of the electricity used by the hall would come from these batteries and a further 24% directly from the panels. The total reduction on grid dependence would therefore be 69%.

He estimated there would be savings of 4,896kw per year equivalent to a car ride of 3713 miles or the amount of carbon absorbed by 48 trees.

The panels are guaranteed for 25 years and the batteries for 10 years.

In practice, despite the overwhelmingly overcast weather, this forecast has proved accurate over the first 3 months of the year. During that time the panels had already saved the VH over £300. On a sunny day such as day of AGM, the panels have saved the hall over 34KW which equated to £20.00 at our present tariff of 56.8 pence per kw.

During the summer we should be able to export electricity to the grid but the present export tariff from EDF is a measly 5.6p per kw so this aspect is not likely to make a significant difference. Our present contract with EDF ends in November when we will probably switch to Octopus whose export rates are the best on the market, at over 20p per kw.

Independent from the system report, the AGM might be interested in the proposed Community scheme underway in Framsdén.

The owner of Helmingham Hall has indicated he would be prepared to lease an area of land behind the Greyhound pub to enable a substantial array of panels and a wind turbine to be installed. A pension company has indicated it would be prepared to underwrite the capital costs of the installation and villagers who wished to partake would buy their electricity at a much cheaper rate from this community asset. It may be that given the availability of suitable plot of land, Brandeston might benefit from a similar scheme.”

Questions:

Will Elson commented that as his house is listed, he is not allowed to instal solar panels, so if we do decide to go down this route then would individuals be able to benefit from the electricity generated?

Ivor asked whether this should be a matter for the PCC?

Michael replied that he hasn't looked into the details of the scheme, but it would be worth keeping an eye on Framsdén to see if they are successful. It might be that the PCC do decide to take this up in the future but he believed that 50% of the funding was raised by the village itself.

Rachel Summers stated that the Framsdén scheme has come through an independent group of villagers who formed a separate committee to raise funds and purchase their pub.

Village Defibrillator:

The defibrillator was purchased in April 2024 after receiving funds from both the PCC and East Suffolk County Council. Aaron Knobbs very kindly installed it free of charge and it is now located in the shelter to the front of the hall.

Will Elson, kindly agreed to talk about how it could and should be used.

The defibrillator is in a locked cabinet so if a person in the village is suspected of having a heart attack you must call 999. Our cabinet is registered with the Ambulance Service who will have its location logged. They will direct the 999 caller to the Village Hall and give them the code for the cabinet. Once unlocked you can take the defibrillator to the person – do not try to move the person.

The emergency services will then stay on the line to help you and guide you through the process. The device will be fully automated, once the pads are in place it will check for heart activity and determine if a shock is needed or not. The device is safe as it checks the heart rhythm and will only shock if it's needed. You cannot shock someone accidentally.

It is very safe to use and very effective, increasing survival from 10% to 50-70%.

Will laid out the basic procedure as follows:

1. Call for help – 999
2. Confirm the state of the person
3. Ask for the code for the cabinet
4. Stay on the phone to the emergency services
5. The cabinet will also give you instructions as to how to use the defibrillator
6. Place the sticky pads on the chest of the person
7. Once attached the defibrillator will monitor the person and analyse their situation
8. If it needs to shock the person, stand back
9. Leave the defibrillator attached as it may go through several cycles.
10. Stay with the person and wait for the ambulance services to arrive.

Will also suggested that CPR can be very effective and recommends training. He also suggested that an excellent resource is the Livesaver website as it has lots of training videos. www.live-saver.org.uk

Michael Cousens confirmed that the maintenance costs are £200 a year and that he will be in charge of ensuring it is kept in an excellent condition and, if it is used, that he will replace the necessary equipment.

Hire of the Hall: Cara Duffy

Cara reported that it has been a steady year for hall bookings, with the majority of income coming from children's parties.

We continue to have a busy schedule of regular events: film club, village lunch, Coffee morning, pop-up pub, whist, table tennis, toddlers etc

The hall is also used for a variety of regular classes including Pilates, yoga and art club and the WI now have a meeting on the last Thursday of the month.

The calendar of events and classes is on the website and kept up to date.

Toddlers is currently struggling for numbers and has gone from a weekly booking to every other week but otherwise attendance is always good.

Pop-up pub:

Darryl Morgan reported as follows:

“There have been 17 Churchill Arms pop up pub nights since we started in January 2023. Andrea has the final figures for 2023 but we raised around £6000 after all expenses.

This year, we ran the January pop up as a fundraiser for St Elizabeth Hospice: we donated £830. Not all of this was profit from the bar as a lot of money was donated by card and cash. We paid the hire charge for the hall on this occasion. That aside, we've raised almost £1500 for the hall since then.

Our four biggest pop ups in terms of income were January 2023 and 2024 – January 2023 was our first night and Jan 24 the fundraiser as I've just mentioned. September (the night before the fete) and December (the last Friday before Christmas) were the other two big ones. We took over £1400 on each of those occasions.

Food and drink prices have gone up since we started but we've absorbed all the increases, and we have no plans to increase our prices.

We started doing specials for the food menu in May 2023 graduating to small meals in October. It means someone can come to the pop up and have something to eat and a drink for less than £9. We're mindful of food hygiene and allergens and we try to accommodate gluten free, dairy free, veggie and vegan people and meat eaters!

As burgers in their various forms proved so popular over the summer, we bought an electric griddle in November. Cheeseburgers are our bestselling item followed by the meat and veggie specials. Depending on attendance, we sell from 60 to almost 90 dishes a night. We have a slick operation at the bar and in the kitchen with a really good interface between them.”

Helen Fletcher reported that they currently have 30-40 helpers on the rota who she thanked and also stated that it takes a village to make it happen. They have a regular Friday set-up team, a core team who work in the kitchen or behind the bar, and a take-down team. The whole thing works very efficiently now. Helen also thanked Earl Soham Brewery, who have been incredibly supportive and generous. She noted that over the months they have noticed that people are now staying longer, and that there is always a mix of families, friends or just people on their own – in the absence of the pub, it is definitely meeting the needs of the village.

Questions:

Mary Ketley stated that it brings people together, both by being involved with the setting up, cooking and serving, and for those coming to enjoy a sociable evening.

Darryl Morgan added his thanks to Andrea who has helped sort out the accounts.

Will Elson commented that it is always great fun to either come along for a drink or help serve behind the bar.

Plans for 2024: Mary Ketley

Mary reported as follows:

“On the heels of the defibrillator, we would like to look at training and are also considering general First Aid/resuscitation training sessions.

Tim Randell will continue dealing with the food hygiene training - everyone who cooks or handles food in the hall needs this (private hirers are a different matter, that's down to them!).

Continuing the Green Theme (Solar panels and bulbs from last year), we are putting in a cycle rack, more bulb planting (already applied to East Suffolk scheme for more bulbs, this time a 'native bulbs' mix) and hoping to establish a working party to promote a sustainability agenda - a Green Village if you will.

All ideas and prospective members of the working party welcome!

We did look at installing electric charging points in car park but this has been shelved as there are currently no grants.

We have been donated a bicycle rack, to be placed in the covered area, and Connie and Kathy have been working on repainting it.

Fete - now Spring again - June 22nd - already lots of support and ideas but more welcome.

Talk to us, email us, come to 15th May meeting. Keep an eye on messages in the newsletter.

Fund raising events - planning a season now and details to follow in the newsletter. These will be co-ordinated with the Churchill Arms monthly openings so there is no clash of Big Nights Out!

Terry, Tim and I looked at the children's playground and some work has been undertaken - removing rotten wood and so on - but we will need to do more this year. The bark also needs replenishing.

We would like to arrange a working party soon to tidy up generally and, specifically, the garden needs clearing. We need a regular volunteer or two to commit to keeping the garden outside the terrace in order.

New website - still in progress, watch this space!"

Mary invited questions from the floor:

Helen Fletcher had noticed that there was an uneven patio slab on the terrace and that now this was going to be used for summer events it would need looking at.

Action: MK to ask David to have a look at it and make good.

Darryl Morgan advised that the draining tray in the kitchen slants the wrong way, so water gathers in the corner.

Action: TR to see if it can be lifted slightly to correct the angle.

Jan Baldwin volunteered to look after the terrace garden.

Cara Duffy wanted to officially thank Richard Fairbanks for auditing the Hall accounts this year.

Mary Ketley thanked everyone for coming and reinforced that anyone is welcome to get in touch with any questions or issues that they would like to raise with the committee.