

## **BRANDESTON VILLAGE HALL MANAGEMENT AGM for year 2024**

**Meeting held on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025**

### **Present:**

Chair: Mary Ketley

Vice Chair: Michael Cousens

Secretary: Kathy Churchill

Treasurer: Andrea Bays

Together with all other members of the committee – Terry Robinson, Cara Duffy, Jan Baldwin and Connie Grimwood, plus several residents of Brandeston.

**Apologies:** Committee members Sue Fisher, Tim and Marian Randall, and Ruth Garret plus David Russell, David Risk, James and Roz McKenzie and Phil Bays.

### **Minutes of the 2023 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** - 2024 -2025 has been my third year as chair of the VH Management committee, together with the vice chair, Michael. Firstly thank you to all the committee members who have worked tirelessly to ensure the upkeep of the hall and it's smooth running. None of us could have done so without other villagers who have given their time, hard work and support, whether for regular commitments or on an ad-hoc basis - from the pop up pub, coffee morning, lunches, fund raising events, maintenance jobs, sponsorship - the list goes on. If I don't mention you by name, forgive me - you know who you are, you know you are appreciated. I should also mention the support of Brandeston School, who cut the grass of the playing field for us and with whom we would like to forge closer links in future.

2: **Hire of the Hall** - Cara will be speaking to you about the hire of the hall, which raises funds and ensures the hall offers other regular activities activities later. A great deal of hard work from Cara behind the scenes goes into running this.

3: **Village Fete** - The committee works with the Church to present a village fete, held on 22nd June last year. For the second year running it was held on our own playing fields, with all the popular stalls, games, a tea tent, a barbecue on the terrace and the Churchill Arms in the Hall itself for refreshments of a more alcoholic nature. Sadly, Elvis was unwell and could not attend this year, but we had his tunes over the loud speakers to finish the afternoon. It really is a community effort, with lots of planning and hard work from a whole group of villagers - again, if I don't mention your names, know that you are appreciated, from those of you who lend marquees, put them up, take them down, prepare and run stalls, deal with the electrics, flip burgers in the heat, those of you who collected donations for the raffle - and that's the tip of the iceberg!

4: **Horkey** - The annual Horkey, originally planned for the 5th October, was moved to the 19th October to accommodate the cooking team. Sadly, I couldn't be there then but by all

accounts the change of plan turned out well, even without me! with our dedicated lunch team providing the food, 'Flaxen' (Vince Langden -Morris, councillor, and chums) playing after supper and the pop-up bar supplying the refreshments!

5: **Bulb Planting** - November was busy, with a volunteer (many thanks those of you who pitched up) bulb planting session on the 24th, We had applied for and were lucky enough to get further bulbs from ESC to add to those we planted in 2023, and the result can be seen around the village and the hall grounds. The day of planting was a bit chilly, but the hot drinks and biscuits shared in the hall afterwards made up for that.

6: Pudding & Prosecco - Then in November, on the 30th, we had the Prosecco and Pudding evening. Never has the hall seen such a cornucopia of trifles, tarts, cakes, puddings of all sorts, thanks to the skill of the volunteer patisserie chefs, and for those of us with a less sweet tooth there were excellent cheeses, biscuits and accompaniments. Neighbours and friends tucking in (third helping anyone? And another glass?) And a jolly good evening for all.

7: Christmas and New Year - Because The Wine Society, run by Kathy Churchill and Michael Cousens, had their big dinner/Dance in December, there was no VH celebration over Christmas.

8: Early 2025 events - In the New Year the Passion Talks, organised by Darryl Morgan, re started, always interesting and popular and thought provoking. Most recently, we have had a brilliant bingo bonanza evening, with Jess's vintage Bingo machine, our very own bingo caller Paul Baker with vintage number calling (at least partly updated for modern sensibilities), and a raffle sponsored by Clarke and Simpon and TG Plumbing. Good old fashioned Fun!

9: Pop-up Pub - The Churchill Arms, our very own pop-up Pub, has continued to run on the third Friday of every month, and into next day activities where appropriate, such as the fete and the Horkey. Darryl/Helen are going to speak more about that later. I should mention that the village Hall has its own bar manager in Michael Cousens for those occasions when the pop-up pub isn't in operation, - a role he takes on, on top of his other VH responsibilities.

10: Fundraising - Fundraising is a very important part of the committee's work, which together with grants, (and here we thank also the Parish Council who assist financially with projects) allows us to maintain the fabric of the hall and to make improvements, either materials when tasks can be undertaken by Terry and volunteers or to pay for contractors.

11: Updates from 2024 - As you all know, we had planned the installation of solar Panels on the hall, a major expense, and these were duly installed and we are now able to see the financial benefit, as Terry will report later. We are also always conscious of our environmental impact, so proud to have made this contribution in that way.

The siting of the defibrillator outside of the hall means monthly maintenance, another task undertaken by Michael, and it has been called into use so has already earned its keep We were also fortunate to have been offered training by Will Elson and a friend of Ruth's , Cathy, for which we offer our thanks. If you missed that, we could possibly arrange further sessions.

We are always conscious of Health and Safety and are fortunate to have a designated Health and Safety member of the committee, who unfortunately is not able to be here this evening. Tim not only checks this but also the Playground and equipment. More of that in Plans for Next Year!

### **Committee:**

We run a management committee of 12 members, holding regular meetings, the minutes of which are circulated in the village email and posted on the website.

We are Trustees, registered with the Charity Commission. Decisions are made on maintenance of the hall and field, fund raising, purchases, and all matters relating to the hall. We welcome comments and suggestions from the community and it is our aim to be as inclusive as possible and serve the village by making the hall a well-run, well-maintained, welcoming place. We have policies in place covering all aspects of our duty to the village, including safeguarding. Our discussions can be robust, but always respectful, and everyone's voice is heard. Please do feel free to contact us and if you feel you would like to join the committee (places do come up) and certainly if you would like to be on any of the roles of volunteers for regular activities or can offer one-off support.

We work closely with the Parish Council and the Church, each of whom have a representative on the committee and both organisations are thanked for their continued support for our work. Individual members of the committee have certain roles, and some are 'ministers without portfolio', called upon when a particular need arise.

This last year we have said goodbye to Paul Baker, the PC representative, although he continues to work tirelessly in support the hall as a volunteer on an ad hoc basis- he was the bingo caller only last week! In his place we welcomed Marian Randell representing the PC.

We have also recently said goodbye to Sue Fisher, sadly and with thanks for her support and hard work and are looking for her replacement.

I will also be stepping down as Chair but will continue to be part of the committee and Michael will replace me for the next year.

*Michael thanked Mary for all her hard work and dedication as our Chair for the past three year, which was echoed by all members of the committee present.*

*Charles Freeman also took this opportunity to offer his thanks to the whole VH Committee, stating that the hall was a wonderful asset to the village and that all the events were well organised and good fun.*

### **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 Fisher: Member without portfolio

Connie Grimwood: Member without portfolio

Marian Randall: Representing Parish Council  
Ruth Garrett: Representing Church

### **Financial Report: Andrea Bays**

Another sound financial year with a surplus of £6,257 from activities, events and hall hire.  
Total funds held at 31.12.24 = £27,286

Value of Stock Held:

General Wine Store = £ 265

Beer & wine for Pop Up = £824

Oil = £600

Our main expenditure during the year was investment in Solar Panels and batteries.  
It was agreed that £9,300 is transferred to replenish the maintenance account following this purchase and a transfer of £1000 as a reserve for annual maintenance.  
With the installation of the Solar panels, our electricity costs have reduced from\* £2,829 in 2023 to £1,426 in 2024. In addition, we have received our first cheque £19 being electricity exported to the grid during December- March. This will hopefully improve during the better weather!

(\*Electricity cost for 2023 = 2,829.30 and we received an utility compensation of £2,282)

Once again the Pop Pup Pub contributed a significant £5,597 and held £824.00 of stock at the end of the year.

Other fundraising and social events during the year achieved a surplus of £4,226.

The Fete, Pudding and Prosecco, Eastern Angles, Horkey, coffee mornings and Passion talks.

We have seen an increase in the use of card payments and the Bank charges relate to Zettle card processing fees for all events. Previously this was shown as cost to the relevant event.

All in all another successful year, thanks to everyone generously donating their time.

The accounts have been examined by Persephone Booth - with thanks.

### **Maintenance Report: Terry Robinson**

#### **General Condition of Hall:**

The Hall is 20 years old this year – to be celebrated on 12 July – and inevitably there are some signs of wear. However, no major maintenance expenditure was required last year nor is any expected in 2025. For this reason, the Committee was comfortable with a transfer of £1,000 from the General to the Maintenance Account for this year. The Maintenance Account balance now stands at about £17,000, excluding the cost of the solar panel system which has been charged to the General Account. We will review how much should be transferred to the Maintenance Account at the end of 2025, and increase the annual transfer figure if appropriate.

#### **Wear and Tear Items:**

The kitchen is standing up to regular use, and the tables and chairs – now nearly ten years old - are wearing well: the upholstered seats and backrests will require replacement at some point

(they are designed for this to be possible) though not yet for a few years. The curtains are generally in good condition and, again, should last for a few years yet. The large curtains have been repaired and cleaned (at a very reasonable price of £160) and they now open and close properly.

### **Routine Maintenance Items:**

There are a number of items which require occasional servicing to maintain their safe operation. They are: the moving wall partition; the kitchen roller shutters; the boiler and central heating system; the dishwasher; the water softener; the audio-visual system; and the main door opener. Call outs for servicing and/or repairs are now as much as £150, plus parts, but these items do require specialist attention. We are fortunate in having a local electrical contractor, Aaron Nobbs Electrical, which does a valuable job maintaining and certifying our electrical installation.

### **Solar panels:**

The new solar panels, installed by Aaron Nobbs Electrical, have now been in service for just over a year and are surpassing expectations: last year, about 70% of our electricity came from the panels and only 30% from the grid. Additionally, we are returning a substantial amount of electricity to the grid, at an export price of 15 pence per kilowatt, thanks to the new supply contract which Michael Cousens has arranged with British Gas. And we are also saving a little on oil consumption thanks to the new central heating controller, which allows the heating to be on only when the Hall is occupied.

### **Outside Drive and Car Park:**

Finally, the outside surface between the driveway from the road and the car park has been repaired by a local company, Paragon Services, with a hot tar and fine gravel treatment. Also, several loose flagstones on the patio behind the Hall have been stabilised, and the patio steps re-cemented. Many thanks to David Russell for doing this job. Also a thank you to Roy O'Brian for putting the bins out every week.

### **Hire of the Hall: Cara Duffy**

Cara reported that it has been a steady year for hall bookings and all was going well.

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 Passion Talks proved popular and have been resumed for 2025 with an interesting line-up, The Wine Society holds regular meetings and a Christmas Party, and the WI East Suffolk Group also meets at the hall.

The hall is also used for a variety of regular classes including Pilates, three yoga classes and Art club, all of which are well supported.

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

Jan Baldwin commented that the new website will help attract more bookings and advised that the committee have plans to redecorate the main hall as some of the paintwork is looking tired.

Kathy Churchill commented that in the past there used to be a Children's Committee and they

would run a number of events throughout the year – film nights, kid’s discos, Christmas Party etc. It would be good to reinstate this if any people in the village with young families would be interested in volunteering.

**Pop-up pub: Darryl Morgan and Helen Fletcher**

This report will cover The Churchill Arms pop up pub for the calendar year 2024 during which we had 12 monthly and one extra opening for the village fete. Andrea will provide the account for the village hall year.

The pop up continues to maintain its primary objective of providing a friendly, welcoming meeting place for our residents in a pub-like atmosphere while the Queen remains closed.

We have been really well supported over the year by a steady and loyal core of residents along with regulars from Kettleburgh, Earl Soham, Cretingham and other neighbouring villages, along with visitors and people staying here giving us an estimated average attendance of at least 80 adults plus children per session.

Our busiest month by far was December when we hosted the annual carol singing for St Elizabeth Hospice that traditionally was held at the Queen. Maybe we’ll try to persuade Father Christmas to return this December. We also ran the January 2024 pop up for St Elizabeth Hospice donating all our takings to that charity after paying the hall’s hiring and credit card charges – the donation was £830 which also included a cash collection.

As for numbers, a total of £14,381 went through the till providing £7017 in donations – about £760 more than 2023. We maintained our prices once again for the whole of the year and it is still the case that someone can have any of our food offerings and a pint of beer or small glass of wine for £9 or less.

We like that as well as their parents, children enjoy the social freedom of the hall and playing field with all its facilities, especially over the summer months when we cook on the terrace.

We have a team of willing and supportive volunteers helping us week on week. We try to run as slick and professional an operation as we can with our two shifts of bar, food preparation, cooking and tidying teams. On a typical night, we have at least a dozen people helping on top of the team setting up and clearing the hall before and after the event and we thank them all for their huge commitment to the Churchill Arms.

It takes a village to run The Churchill Arms and we are grateful to everyone who has and continues to support us. The January charity donations aside, all the money goes to maintaining and improving the village hall and playing field for the benefit of all residents and visitors.

The financial account for each opening is very complex and we thank Andrea, the treasurer, for her patience. We also thank Earl Soham Brewery in Debenham and Revetts of Wickham Market for their support. Finally, thanks also to the village hall management committee for supporting the pop up.

Helen Fletcher  
Pat and Darryl Morgan

Michael Cousens commented that recently David Wolffe from Charsfield attended the pop-up and said it was brilliant and the most supported he had seen.

Mary Ketley offered thanks on behalf of the committee, commenting that it was incredibly special to have this regular opportunity for people to come together. The pop-up continues to offer a meeting place for different groups within the village and also for people to make new connections.

### **Plans for 2025: Mary Ketley**

#### **Playground:**

This has had work undertaken, but requires more.

A further layer of bark is needed but is very expensive (circa£8k) and we are pleased to have the promise of some funds, circa £1500, by way of a grant from the PC and are working on applying for further grants.

#### **Fete:**

Planning is starting and we need volunteers. The date is set for 21st June and as always this is a joint effort with the Church. All ideas/offers of help are welcome.

#### **20th Anniversary:**

We have only been in the village for 8 years, but I am told that the this 'new' - still - village hall is 20 years old, being rebuilt on the site of the old village hall following fund raising by the village and grants and a massive amount of sheer determination and hard work.

Something worth remembering and celebrating and we are planning a garden party. Further details in the newsletter, in due course but we hope the whole village will come together to remember just what strength there is in unity and to count ourselves amongst the fortunate.

Darryl Morgan offered to send a list to the committee of past events that were popular and a success – ie the French Evening, Olympics, Nobody's Wedding etc.

#### **New website:**

Still in progress, watch this space!

Kathy and Cara and Jess Bradley have worked on the new design and layout and are now working on the content. There will be an online booking system which will hopefully streamline this process.

Darryl asked if this would be linked to the existing website. Kathy said it would have a new URL but anyone searching the old website would still be pointed to the new site.

**Action: Kathy to talk to Darryl re transferring the details across.**

#### **AOB:**

Helen Fletcher asked about the Tennis court and whether funds this now came under the Maintenance account as it used to have a separate account. Andrea confirmed that this has now been incorporated into the Maintenance account.

Helen asked if there were any plans to bring back the booking system so you could guarantee a slot. Mary asked for this to be added to the next BVH agenda for discussion.

**Action: Kathy to add this to the agenda.**

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.