

BRANDESTON VILLAGE HALL MANAGEMENT AGM 2021

Meeting held on the 28th February 2022

Present:

Chair: Sue Thurlow

Secretary: Kathy Churchill

Treasurer: Karren Piper

Together will all other members of the committee - Terry Robinson, Paul Baker, Mary Ketley, Michael Cousens, Ruth Garratt, Cara Duffy, Katie Tassell, Jan Baldwin and Jess Bradley plus 20 residents of Brandeston.

Apologies: Sandra Roberts, Lydia Freeman and David Russell

Minutes of the 2020 AGM:

Due to Covid the previous AGM was emailed to the village as we were unable to meet in person. These were signed as being as true record.

Matters Arising from the Last Minutes:

None were raised.

Chairman's Report: Sue Thurlow

2021 has been another strange year for us all with the restriction imposed by Covid. The village hall was closed again after Christmas 2020 and remained so until the beginning of May. The outside facilities were reopened on 29th March. All committee meetings were held via Zoom up to August when we held our first meeting of the year face to face in the hall.

During the lockdown time our Covid team (Mary Ketley, Cara Duffy and Michael Cousens) had frequent zoom meetings to interpret the Government's guidelines as to how these affected our hall helped by regular bulletins issued by Suffolk Acre.

Outdoor events were allowed from 12th April – our 1st event on the hall terrace was the litter pick and brunch. In May we joined the church in a fundraising event at the pub which included plants and a cake stall. All restriction were then lifted on 21st June which enabled us to hold an BBQ to celebrate.

The first bookings in the hall started with the election polling station on 7th May followed by Pilates classes on 18th May and the mother & toddler group at the end of May. Other clubs such as the coffee morning and camera clubs decided to restart again in September.

After discussion with the church, it was decided to delay the village fete until September. The layout was changed with more spaced-out stalls to try to discourage crowd bunching. This was a great success with a fine day and plenty of people coming along. If you add the takings from the plant sale in the spring and the fete together the total was (approx. £300) only 6% short of our best ever fete year in 2019. We viewed this as a great achievement as

people seemed to be only just getting used to socialising again. This split in events worked well and will probably continue for 2022 as June will be busy with the jubilee celebrations.

There was no Dunwich Dynamo in 2021 but we did carry on later in the year to hold the traditional Horkey and bus trip to Bury St. Edmunds.

Improvements:

Now I would like to move on to talk about the improvements that were completed in 2021 and what still needs to be done.

While the hall was closed the kitchen refurbishment was completed, the walls made good and redecorated. Although the grant of £10,000 towards this project was paid to us in the last quarter of 2020 the work did not start until after Christmas. This means that the cost is shown in the 2021 year's accounts which Karren will explain later. Only the deposit of £3,000 was paid in 2020.

There was a deficit this year of approx. £16,657 due to the cost of the kitchen refurbishment. This looks worse than it is as the £10,000 grant was paid in 2020 so included in the accounts for that year. Income from the reduced hirings + fund raising events + donations from the Brandeston clubs was £6009.95. If you exclude the costs for the kitchen of £15,601, the actual cost of running the hall in 2021 was £7,006. However, our reserves have diminished so we really need to put on some events in 2022 to try and build up funds again. It should be noted that we are still in a very good place financially despite the pandemic and loss of revenue due to the cancellation of regular classes and events.

With the sanding and resealing of the main hall floor and the decoration of hall, meeting room, foyer and corridor all completed in 2020, the interior is now fully upgraded and should not need any further attention for some time.

Outside the play area and zip wire etc. is subject to an inspection by RoSPa each year and this was carried out in October. Three things were highlighted as needing attention: -

- The area under the junior swings was very worn caused by increased use during lockdown. This would need digging out and a significant amount of bark to infill.
- The toddler swings area also needed the same procedure and some wooden obstructions removed.
- Also, the whole area needs another layer of bark applied. This was last done in 2019 and needs replenishing because of the increased use.

This work will be carried out in the spring of 2022 for which we have acquired a grant of £1,245 from Framlingham, Wickham Market and Villages Community Partnership for the work needed for the junior and toddlers' swings, and £850 from our local district councillor's Community Enabling Fund for the bark.

The play area is of some concern to the committee as we have spent over £15,000 in the last 5 years to keep it up to standard. The RoSPa inspector did point out other areas which will need

upgrading in the next few years which are likely to be expensive. To this end we are in the process of setting up a sub-committee to do fund raising for this specific project and will be looking for the support from young mums in the village.

Moving on to 3 other points I would like to mention.

1. We have had a great deal of difficulty dealing with BT who has been our broadband provider. We decided, therefore, to change to Fram Broadband which was achieved smoothly and is working well. Also, at this time we decided that the need for a landline was no longer required because of the use of mobile phones.
2. The mirrors on the post opposite the exit to the hall. A recent visit by Openreach inspecting the pole said that our mirror obstructed access to the higher area and if they were not removed, we would be charge for their need to use a cherry picker to do the inspections. We therefore have taken them down.
3. The committee decided that it was time to update our village website to give it a fresh look and to enable those booking the hall to do so online. This is being led by Michael Cousens and his team.

Committee:

We like to run with a committee of 12 members and we have been one short for some time. However, we had a volunteer come forward in the second half of 2021 and Katie Tassell has now joined the team.

I would like to thank all the committee for their support during the year and their commitment to getting things right in this quite difficult year.

I would also like to mention some special “thank you’s”

- The Covid team needs congratulating on their dedication for wading through all the regulations – thank you Mary, Cara and Michael.
- Terry for overseeing all the improvements made to the hall.
- Cara for organising the bookings and the endless amendments she has had to make to the hire agreements because of Covid.
- Karren for keeping our finances in order.
- Kathy for the precise and accurate minutes she has taken of all our meetings.
- Paul for organising the 100+ club and for cutting all the grass around the hall.
- Nick Hayward for keeping all the shrubs in trim on the terrace.
- Darryl Morgan for his extensive, interesting and humorous bulletins published weekly during lockdown.
- Brandeston Hall School for keeping our playing field cut and in good shape all year.

This will be my last report from the hall committee. I shall be now stepping down as Chair and from the committee completely. I have been involved with the hall since it was mooted in 1996. I was the first chairman when it opened in 2005 and have done a second stint amounting to 8 years in all. I have also done my turn as secretary.

Anyway, I think 25 years is enough – I have enjoyed my time being involved with the hall. I have a passion for the village as I was born here and will continue to help with fund raising events when needed and help from the side-lines.

I would like to wish the committee good fortune in continuing to care for this prized village asset. Mary Ketley will be taking over the chair with Michael Cousens as Vice-Chairman. We also have a new member who joined us at our January meeting – Jess Bradley who lives at West Hill Farm – so the committee will be up to the 12 members again after my retirement.

The management committee it now as follows:

Mary Ketley - Chair

Michael Cousens – Vice Chairman

Kathy Churchill – Secretary

Karren Piper - Treasurer

Terry Robinson – Improvements/Maintenance

Cara Duffy - Hall bookings

Jan Baldwin

Jess Bradley

Sandra Roberts

Katie Tassell

Paul Baker - representing the Parish Council

Ruth Garratt - representing the Church.

Financial Report:

Covering the period 1st Jan – 31st Dec 2021.

The bank account has been reconciled for this period and the accounts have been audited and signed off by Steve Williams.

The total income for 2021 was £6009.95

The total expenditure for 2021 was £22,607.46

This means that the hall was in deficit by £16,657.91

However, as ST mentioned in her report, this deficit is due to the cost of the kitchen refurbishment and the fact that the £10,000 grant that we secured to help pay the refurbishment was paid in the previous year. The committee also took the opportunity to have the hall redecorated and the floor re-sanded whilst the hall was shut.

However, overall, considering the fact that the hall has not been fully functioning this year due to Covid restrictions and that many classes have not yet returned, we still managed to raise just over £6000 on income.

The bank accounts are as follows:

Bank Current Account £14,771.61

Improvements/Maintenance Account £11,275.08

Tennis Account £3,109.31

As it stands we are still in a very healthy financial situation despite the pandemic but are aware that we now need to build our funds back up with a series of fund-raising events across the 2022.

Any other Business:

A member of the public suggested that we could make a donation to Ukraine due to the worsening situation. ST explained that unfortunately, due to the Trust Deed, we are unable to make donations to other causes as the money held by the committee officially belongs to the whole village.

KC reported that various collections points were being set up for people who wanted to make donations, Framlingham Dry cleaners being one locally.

At the end of meeting, Cara, on behalf of the committee, presented Sue with bouquet of flowers and a voucher for a meal at the Fox and Goose to show our appreciation of all the hard work she has put in over the years. Sue has been a part of the infrastructure of the village, both on the Village Hall Committee and the Parish Council, for over 25 years and has worked tirelessly to ensure everything has run smoothly and fairly. She has also been instrumental in securing numerous grants and seeking out pots of money that have allowed us to constantly improve the hall and recreational area. Her knowledge and good old fashioned common sense will be missed by us but we all wish her a very happy and well deserved retirement.

The meeting closed at 9pm followed by refreshments of wine and nibbles.