

**Chair's Report
for
Cornish Hall End Village Hall's Annual General Meeting
on
05 October 2023**

Welcome and thank you all for attending this Annual General Meeting of the CHE Village Hall.

This past year has seen the continued growth in the use of the Hall, despite the challenges of increasing costs and the reduction in people's disposable income. The events we and other hirers have put on and the positive feedback and word-of-mouth from those that have used the hall, have all contributed to a successful year; but also, and in no small part, due to the hard work of those who have volunteered to clean and keep the hall maintained and organise and support events, meetings etc. for the community.

As a reminder, to accord with our charitable status, the Village Hall is held in trust ".....for the use of inhabitants of Cornish Hall End, Essex and the neighbourhood, for the use for meetings, lectures, and classes and for other forms of recreation and leisure-time occupation, with the object of improving the conditions of life of the said inhabitants."

Over this past year, thanks to the hard work of the Trustees and other supporters of the Village Hall, this has been successfully achieved, reflected in the number of lettings and use of the hall over the year.

We, as Trustees, I am sure, shall continue to do all we can to encourage the Hall to be put to good use, but it has become clear that not all our villagers are willing to engage with the hall and its events; the lack of response to our proposed celebration of the coronation of King Charles III and the winding-up of the Community Club earlier this year, seem to be a reflection of this.

However, on a more positive note, in the past year, we have had 9 Trustees who have given their precious time to keep the hall open and available for our local community – my thanks to them.

This year has seen Lynn Cadman and Jenna Sturt step down as Trustees, but Jamie Bright and Ashleigh Heirs have kindly joined as new Trustees. Anne Dacey also stepped down as our booking secretary after a stint of 3 and a half years – my thanks to all of them for their help.

Ashleigh heirs kindly took on the position of booking secretary and seems to be well on top of things as bookings are going well - my thanks go to her too.

Alex Good (living in California, but who has close links with Cornish Hall End) has also taken over from Jenna Sturt in keeping our web page updated. My thanks to them both for keeping this essential part of our on-line presence in such good order.

However, sadly, after over 10 years as Treasurer I have received notice from Jane Blewett who wishes to stand-down from that position. I am sure all the trustees would

like to offer our thanks to her for her sterling work in keeping our finances in order, which I know has been a challenge at times.

We are now looking for a volunteer to help us in this regard, and I know Jane will be there to offer advice and support to whoever kindly takes over the position.

As well as the Trustees we have several other volunteers who have helped to help run and look after the hall. Their help and involvement are very much appreciated. Thanks too, to the Parish Council, and in particular our ward councillors for their continued support for the hall.

The hall continues to be in a sound financial position, and this year has made a good surplus over expenditure, which fulfils our remit to 'pay our way' with income we make over the year. Thanks to the Parish Council for reimbursing our insurance premium. Our surplus funds have been invested now that savings rates have become more favourable which will, in turn, help our general finances.

Regarding maintenance of the hall, we now have a dehumidifier to assist with steam and moisture build-up in the kitchen area; paving is planned to be laid to the front area to tidy it up; and the installation of acoustic panels in the main hall are also being mooted, to help reduce back-ground noise during gatherings. Routine checks on fire safety equipment, and air-conditioning have also been carried out, and slipped roof slates have been re-fixed.

The hall will hopefully also benefit from use of an over-spill car park that the Parish Council will be constructing at the end of this year on the playingfield adjacent to the hall.

The Community Club unfortunately was wound up due to lack of interest in its weekly meetings, but kindly donated its surplus funds and equipment and also a heart defibrillator for use by users of the hall – a very generous gift.

For the past year the hall has been used by a regular weekly singing group, the bookswap and coffee meet, occasional use by a children's karate class, and has more recently been hired by a personal trainer for her classes. This is in addition to numerous birthday parties, hire of equipment, and use by the Parish Council for their meetings. Our own events have included a successful Christmas fair, a free-to-all Christmas cinema event, and a great pie-and-mash event and a lovely Caribbean food evening.

Unfortunately, whilst the hall attracted interest as a potential work-space hub, this had to be declined due to insurance issues.

Further events already being planned by the Hall include a Quiz Night, Christmas fair, a boot sale on the playingfield in the summer, and further cinema and food nights.

I am pleased to report that use of the Hall continues to grow after its refurbishment and Covid closure, which is a credit to the Management Trustees and other volunteers who look after the hall, and we look forward to another successful year.

Peter Dacey

Chair, CHE Village Hall Management Trustees

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