

Brookthorpe Village Hall

Chairman's Report 2020/2021

Comprehensive reports from Both Nigel and others cover the events and other matters during this difficult Covid period stretching back to 23rd March 2020. It was hoped that we would be back to normal from June onwards but that was not to be and now wait with bated breath a welcome return to some form of general freedom and unrestricted use of the Hall from June 21st onwards.

Of course this is subject to the Governments Road-path going to plan, so fingers crossed! Bookings will be taken from June 21st unless further restrictions prevent us from doing so. Most of you will not be aware that apart from the Government restrictions we are also required to comply with the onerous guidelines as stated by our insurers. In line with many other similar establishments we have found it impossible to open up even a little.

My sincere thanks to all the Trustees who have regularly attended Zoom meetings over the past year and wherever possible within the guidelines managed to put on several events around the Hall for the enjoyment of parishioners and passers by.

The Grounds of the Hall have been meticulously maintained by Paul Gaze, who takes great pride in its appearance, ***so thank you as always Paul.***

In-between Lockdowns Paul and I managed to finish the refurbishment of the Phone Kiosk which now houses the defibrillator and our paperback swap library. My thanks to the Parish Council for fully funding this and to Martin Gaze and Jeremy Prout for their assistance in re-locating the Kiosk to its new home in the Hall grounds. Inside the Hall we have added further hygiene and hand sanitising facilities in preparation for future opening. I said in my last report that I wanted to establish the Hall as a destination in its own right and believe we have done just that regardless of COVID, so please enjoy it! The location of the Hall makes it a real centre piece of the Village of Brookthorpe and is constantly on view to locals as well as those passing through, many compliments have been received.

Thank you!

We are as you you are no doubt aware Trustees of the Hall's Charitable Trust, there are currently seven of us but there is always room for one or two more. Sadly but not unexpectedly Nigel Bone (our secretary) will be retiring next year so we will have a vacancy for secretary. Nigel has formed a large part of the backbone of the Trust for many years and has played a crucial role in our well-being, providing the booking contact, liaising with numerous organisations and authorities and promoting evening events as well as taking and producing the minutes. He will be missed but I know he will still take an interest in the future. ***Thank you Nigel its been a pleasure working with you.***

In 2019 we began producing a Newsletter funded by the Parish Council. Due to Covid this petered out in 2020 but will start again this year with a May edition. It will cover news and articles and be produced every two months. A simpler version may appear in-between should something special come up. We have also contributed articles to "Village Voices" over the last 18 months and will continue to do so. I mustn't forget the splendid day-to-day News/Warnings Nigel provides to all of us by email as and when! This is of course something he has always done and not part of his Trustee role.

Many years ago as an former Parish Council Member/Chairman I set up a website for the Parish Council which displays minutes, articles, reports etc. for all to view. They are in the process of adopting a new website platform in order to conform with the latest guidelines/regulations etc. As a result we are in the process of building our own new and exclusive website that will be launched at the end of May. The address will be www.bvhtrust.uk so keep an eye out for all the latest from us from then on, including the new Newsletter!

So where do we go from here? Well given a return to freedom we will be organising some events for the Parish ASAP and looking for quality entertainment to put on in the Autumn/Winter. Together with the anticipated return of our traditional and hopefully new hirers we hope to be fully back in business again very soon. Fundraising for the Halls extension can begin in earnest to enable us to make this a reality in the near future.

Now during the closure of the Hall you may be wondering how we have managed to survive with very few if any hirings throughout. Well we are all volunteers so we don't get paid and our bank balance was relatively healthy at the start of lockdown. Fortunately our **empty running costs** are low, general maintenance and upkeep is managed basically free of charge by myself and Paul Gaze. There are other costs which are incurred by employing qualified professionals where and only when required. We were able to attract some Government Grants designed to ensure that facilities such as ours do not fold so we are currently in a good position to move forward with our plans for the future.

May 6th will see the Hall being used by Stroud District Council as a Polling Station for local elections. This has been cleared by our insurance company and all Covid regulations will be in force, the responsibility resting with SDC. The Hall has been approved for use, there will be one way in and one way out and social distancing/hygiene rules coordinated by their staff. **This does not signal the official reopening of the Hall!**

So Finally I'd like to thank everyone who has supported the Hall and events in the past and plead with those who have not supported in the past to make an effort to support us in the future. We are a Charitable Trust totally reliant normally on hirings and event support to remain a viable entity. Our profits are small but we exist to provide a service to the community around us. The trustees give of their time and expertise for free and go to great lengths to make things happen in and around this Village owned historical asset, **one we should all be proud of and make a special effort to support.**

Thank you everyone!

Eric Hibbert – chairman of the trustees

16th April 2021