



Dennington Village Hall

Report for Dennington Parish Council AGM, 27/7/19

Since the last PC AGM, the concentration of the hall committee has been on making the hall available to the community and the wider public, whilst also completing the final stages of the refurbishment. The hall has certainly been more active, but definitely not as active as we would have liked. The Lockdown has of course affected everything since March this year.

Last year we received £9978 from the Awards for All Team, part of the National Lottery Fund.

Sound system	£1,800
Curtains & blinds	£2,548
Chair & table trolleys	£192
Kitchen hatch & Mirror for toilet	£570
Storage container	£2,568
Entrance Porch	£2300
Total	£9978

So far, only a portion of that has been used. The container is now in place, we have chair trolleys and the kitchen hatch and mirror are in place. The new kitchen hatch is wonderful. The new chair pads are on order (earlier funding), but owing to the lockdown have not yet arrived and may take some time to come.

The Curtains and blinds are still incomplete, the main issue being how they will be hung. There are many ways to achieve this, all extremely expensive, but we may now have found a way, using timber and metal clamps that is much cheaper. The challenge is that with the Lockdown, our regular woodworker is so in demand that he hasn't been able to make it to give us a quote. The curtain price will remain the same. Since a decision was made to kill the idea of a porch, that money, with AWA approval, has been allocated to paying for the curtain hanging system. We are still considering sound systems, and that, too, is on hold. I applied for a further £10,000 for additional funding, but that was sadly turned down.

We had two major village events last year – namely the Art Show in the spring and the craft show in the Autumn, put together so well by Rosie McKenzie and Maggie Archard, not only giving the whole village a delightful 'lift', but also for allowing the hall to show itself off so well, and it really did look good.

We have had some very regular external hiring over the last year, i.e. pilates, dog training and a diabetes team who worked out of the hall and we had a number of good parties and weddings, as well as a great summer of activities on the sports field with the bar being active. The introduction of a card system for payment has almost doubled our bar revenue. There is however not yet enough usage of the facilities.

You may recall that we had hassles with our Rointe heaters- these have now all been replaced after considerable effort from Keir Wyatt and Allan Dyne. The system has since been further upgraded, but Allan and Keir have yet to physically upgrade the heaters in the hall. This will be done before they are next required. At the end of July, further insulation will be going in over the meeting room which will mean it will retain its heat better in future and require less heating.

Our rates have been reconsidered and simplified, as has our hire document. We intend to upgrade the website, which is currently built on a free template and as a consequence looks basic, no matter what one does with it, and thanks so much to Stephen Mortimer for all his efforts to improve it up till now. We hope to have that up and running in the near future, with a completely new integrated booking system as well which should dramatically improve how the whole booking and invoicing process is undertaken.

You will have noticed all the grit bins and the signs everywhere to alert people to the potentially dangerous car park when freezing. Kate Viscardi has done an excellent job in organising the gritting process, but we would still welcome volunteers who might be willing, when necessary, to come and grit the car park during the cold spells.

We welcome three new trustees - Kate Viscardi representing the Allotments, Dan Allison as bar manager, and Penny Evers representing the Horticultural club. Kate, along with our vice chair Jo Denton have performed all necessary risk assessments over the last few months as required under normal circumstances and as a result of the lockdown. Jo Denton as you know continues to produce an excellent quarterly village newsletter and has done an excellent job as vice-chair this year.

Sadly, we do not have accounts for the last year to offer you tonight. These are being processed by our bookkeeper, and I will forward a copy once available.

Now- the future

Covid 19 is unlikely to 'go away' for a while. Indeed it is likely to be with us for several years. It may eventually be controlled effectively or else it may just disappear; maybe both. What this means is that 'normality' as we know it may not return for a while – I think what we have to think about and consider is a 'new normality'.

As a consequence, we need to be thinking as a hall how we move forward, given the changes. The Govt gave us £10,000.00 (as it did for all small charities/community groups, including the Sports Club), and that will certainly be helpful, but we need to start reinventing ourselves in a way that will be attractive to users. We will start this process at our next trustees meeting.

As you will no doubt be aware, the Hall is officially open from today, but with very strong guidelines from Govt. These will be subject to change at any time, so be aware and keep checking the website.

A very grateful thanks to all on the committee for their continued diligence and especially to all those who help quietly in the background, like Keir Wyatt and Allan Dyne, Robert Wardley and Adrian Neil on the mower, the WI for the amazing flower tubs, Ray Dearing for strimming the grass and hedges, Maggie Archard and Catherine Blakeley for the coffee mornings, Roderick Roy for being an excellent secretary and Vashti Mouncer in her role as hall manager. Thank you all.

Thanks also to all the rest of you here in this room for all your continued diligence in ensuring our amazing village looks lovely and who help to keep it that way.

James Maberly

Chairman of Trustees