**Elford Village Hall annual report May 2020**

A) Opening remarks

This report is being prepared under the surreal conditions of the pandemic lockdown. Therefore, for obvious reasons there is no parish meeting this year and consequently only a written report will be submitted.

The first nine months of the year were extremely busy for the Village Hall with both letting and the organisation of events. Needless to say, the last few months has seen the necessity for the hall to be closed and “mothballed “

B) Administration

Again the committee has held regular meetings on a monthly basis up until the lockdown.

The members of the committee together with their contact details are clearly displayed on the external noticeboard, in the Village Hall newsletter and on the website and can be contacted at any time with problems or to bring any issue to the monthly meetings.

We have also formed an alliance with the neighbouring Village Hall committees in Harlaston, Edingale and Haunton and more recently Clifton Camphill and intend to meet up periodically to share information procedures and tips.

C) Maintenance, repairs and upgrading

The re-gravelling of the car park was undertaken this year with the money ring fenced from previous years.

Furthermore there have been a large number of small and even large repairs/maintenance: some planned and some emergency breakdowns. This involves the Committee in a lot of time in either undertaking these repairs themselves or arranging for quotations and access. For example August 2019 saw one of the central heating boilers and the dishwasher breakdown in the same month costing over £1200 to repair.

We had a full Survey on the trees within the curtilage of the Village Hall early this year. One tree was found to be dangerous having rotted from inside: planning consent was obtained to significantly reduce the weight of the main trunk to make the tree safe and for significant pruning to several of the other trees within the grounds.

Usual cyclical maintenance has included external decoration which proved more costly as it was delayed from the previous year when the scarecrow festival was cancelled. This has been completed together with various internal works during the lockdown taking advantage of the hall being empty.

However of considerable significance was the irrepairable breakdown of one of the ground source heat pump exchangers. The cost of replacement is in the tens of thousands of pounds so the committee are considering various options whilst this part of the hall has been reconnected to the original heating system.

Various planned projects have therefore been put on hold until the cost of these repairs have been resolved. Furthermore the five yearly check of the electrics is also due in 2020 at a cost of over £1000.

D) Events

It has never been a role of the Village Hall management committee to provide entertainment as such. However mindful of their responsibilities of balancing the books and improving the hall this has become an integral role for the committee. Indeed some 75 events have been organised over the last 19 years.

We welcomed back to the village the well-known and popular “Dandy“: a good night, well attended by villages with a license bar and meal.

In July 2019 we arranged a fundraising/memorial event commemorating the centenary of the celebration of the return of many of the First World War soldiers back to their homes in Elford: this began with a re-enactment of the march from the “Institute“ down to the church, a magnificent duplication of the church service followed by a Pimms reception at the Village Hall and Sunday lunch prepared by the crown. We were entertained by “Morag and mates“ and re-enacted the various toasts.

The scarecrow festival returned in 2019 with another glorious weekend with fantastic weather. This event takes a lot of organisation and we presently have a 50 Page plan demonstrating the extent and organisation of the festival: many thanks as always to the scarecrow subcommittee.

In September 2019 we held our first “comedy night“ with a licensed bar, compere introducing three different comedians with refreshments at the first break.

In March 2020 we held a “Elton John“ tribute band with a full meal provided yet again by the crown: this was to prove to be one of the last events held before the “lockdown“

As always thanks to all the committee and especially those helpers who stay behind after events and help us clear up.

Needless to say plans for the rest of the year have been somewhat curtailed with the “Lockdown“ and have yet to decide whether we will be able to proceed with the planned “skittle night“ and “murder mystery night“

E) Marketing and communication

The committee has always taken communication with the village very seriously. As stated previously details of the committee and their contact numbers together with new dedicated Village Hall email addresses are readily available and we have a further superb network of representatives from various village organisations.

Two written reports are produced annually extending to 3 or 4 pages and presented to the village within public forums.

We have produced regular news letters which are hand-delivered to every house within the village: with the increase in social media we have agreed to reduce this to 1 per year (February)): This was prepared and printed in February 2020 but it was decided not to deliver as within days the content became obsolete due to the lockdown.

We were grateful a few years ago for the revamping and re-launch of our website. This is well used and accounts for a large percentage of our bookings from outside the village as well as further information for parishioners.

We are also grateful to Richard Embury for revitalising our social media: this has become a very active and important part of communication and marketing to the village and beyond.

F) Financial

We’ve been extremely lucky over the last 19 years to have two superb treasurers. The present incumbent Adrian Viles ensures that there is a full set of cash flow and profit and loss spreadsheets available prior to every meeting: his budgeting is uncannily accurate.

At the end of the year he produces a full set of annual accounts which are then audited. These accounts are then approved by the committee and past to the Parish Council who in turn approve the accounts and forward them on to the charities commission.

Further information is available from Adrian directly.

G) Committee

The committee comprises a group of hard-working villagers who come together to manage, maintain, police, market and fund raise for the Village Hall.

Furthermore, there are a group of representatives from the various bodies in the village who act as a two-way conduit for information.

The main committee are a diverse group of parishioners ranging in geographical location in the village, an age spread of over 35 years with new and long-standing members and a range of different skills.

H) Pandemic lockdown.

This has been a surreal time for all of us during a national lockdown. Needless to say all immediate and short-term bookings have been cancelled in the Village Hall which has been closed and “mothballed “

Nevertheless, the committee are working hard in the background with regular inspections, ongoing maintenance and financial management.

Various events had been organised and will be monitored as the situation progresses.

I) Thank you

I’d like to take this opportunity in this report to thank the many people who supported the Village Hall and indeed myself as chairman of this committee over the years. To all the members of the committee for their continued hard work and commitment together with the support of all the representatives of the various organisations in the village.

Gregory J Watkins

Chairman: Elford Village Hall management committee (2001–2020)