

Old Village Hall Annual General Meeting

May 2011

It is difficult to believe that a year has passed since my last annual report. So much has happened in the last twelve months and the time seems to have sped.

We spent much of last year overseeing the building of the new hall - initially frustratingly slow, but suddenly walls appeared and the roof was on. In no time the building was weather proof and our attention turned to the inside. The Village Hall Trustees paid regular excited visits to watch its development, carefully choosing tiles, colours, kitchen units, fixtures and fittings. Our Project Manager, Tim Acott, was a constant guide and support throughout, and the construction company, Steele and Bray maintained quality workmanship with patient problem solving along the way. We eventually made it to the nail-biting finishing date at the end of November and hand-over date on 3/12/10.

Plans for the opening weekend were well ahead, and despite the exceptionally cold weather, the doors were officially opened by Mike Dilger of BBC's "The One Show" on 4th December at 12 noon. Many people came to see the opening and to raise a glass of bubbly to the future success of the hall. An ongoing buffet helped to provide a warm welcome to the many villagers who continued to cross the threshold over the next two days.

Our first official booking was fittingly by Old Cricket Club for their annual Dinner and Awards Ceremony, which took place on Saturday 4th December. Lee from The White Horse provided the Carvery and Bar and the many attendees enjoyed the whole evening, looking over the new changing rooms, eagerly anticipating the new cricket season.

Our first booking with Northants Touring Arts followed on Wednesday 8th December with Farnham Maltings "Miracle on 34th Street". The staged-seating system had its first outing and the play was greatly enjoyed by 70 adults and children.

A Celebration Dance was held on Friday 17th December, with a Young Peoples Disco in the early evening followed by Dr. Marshall's Remedy holding centre stage. Again we had a great evening with 20 children and 80 adults in the hall.

The first of the regular bookings was, of course, Wold Short Mat Bowls Club who had their first roll-up on Monday 6th December who have continued to book the hall twice weekly ever since. Other clubs and organisations have followed suit and we now have regular bookings for badminton, yoga, table tennis, a film club and keep fit. With the coming of spring, Old Cricket Club and Kettering Cycle Club are also using the Changing Rooms. My thanks go to all the volunteers who have come forward to organise these groups. I hope they will come to us with any problems that might arise and with which we can help.

I cannot pretend that the hard work is over - but it has certainly changed. There are many bookings for parties and social events, and we shall continue to hold occasional fund-raising events. We desperately need to replace tables and chairs but this will take some time and we now have this as our main objective.

We are also very aware that we need to continue to manage the perceived parking problem. There are about 30 spaces on site, enough for most needs, although occasionally hall users overflow

into Charles Close, understandably causing great annoyance to neighbours. And this is despite signing a hire agreement not to do so. Even more annoying for neighbours is when the outside lights are left ablaze at night. I have just taped over the switches in an attempt to prevent this from happening again and hope for success!

It has given us great pleasure to see the hall become a reality - but the greatest pleasure is to see its being so well-used and enjoyed by such a wide cross section of villagers.

We are still waiting for the landscaping to be completed - and for the grass to grow on the extension car park. I am now told it is too dry to expect this sort of miracle - but it will happen before too long, I am sure.

I would like to conclude by recording my sincere thanks to all my fellow Trustees, who have given me so much help and support in the past year and I look forward to continue to work with them in the next year. We would very much welcome some new committee members - we need some new energy, ideas and support from any of you who are prepared to lend a hand in any way - it really is great fun!

Katie Lindenbaum

Chairperson Old Village Hall Charity Trustees