

AGM – 24 October 2022

Forward Look

The nature of an Annual General Meeting is to report on things that have happened in the past. This evening's meeting has focused on activities up to the end of December 2021

I now want to spend a few moments updating you on progress over the last 10 months and the Charity's plans for the future.

Firstly, the internal refurbishment of the Hall.

In summary, we have redecorated throughout, replaced flooring, moved the Bar into the Hall, created a Community Café in the old bar area, upgraded the toilets, created 2 more meeting rooms and replaced furniture and equipment.

It doesn't sound a lot when you say it quickly.

It has been 6 months of hard but enjoyable work. The end result has made it all worthwhile and I'm sure you will agree that the old place is certainly looking better for it.

At this point I would like to thank Wolverley Village Players who have agreed to locate their new Sound System in the Hall. As well as being used for Pantomime rehearsals the system will be available to all users of the Hall.

All this work has improved the internal environment and allowed much improved and more flexible use of the whole building.

Now the refurbishment work is just about complete, the Charity is in a much better place with the building and grounds than it has been for a long time.

So - we want to continue to change, what in the past has had to be a pre-occupation with building maintenance and repairs to ensure the Hall stayed open, and shift the focus to working with the local community to extend the scope and range of services that can be provided from the Hall and grounds for the benefit of Wolverley residents.

The benefit of the refurbished Hall, with more rooms offering greater flexibility in a much-improved environment is already resulting in increased bookings, demonstrating that the Hall is a more attractive venue for current and future regular hirers and is encouraging greater use by local residents.

Our Booking Officer, Leigh Salter, has been doing a great job in promoting the Hall and dealing efficiently with the increased number of bookings.

We are pleased to have Wolverley Rainbows and Brownies, more exercise classes, a regular slimming club and a children's play group all now using the Hall.

The Hall is now just about fully booked for children's or adult parties for every weekend until Christmas. Quite often we now have 2 children's parties on a Saturday.

The refurbished Hall has also been used recently for christenings, wedding receptions and wakes – literally a community “cradle to the grave” facility for local residents.

We are very proud of the new look Hall and I would like to thank the small group of volunteers who have been a big part of that success for all their efforts over the last 6 months.

We calculate that in addition to the Lottery Grant Funding and the £12,000 made available from the Charity's own operating account, the contribution from the volunteers is equivalent to another £13,000.

The Group of volunteers was excellently led by Andy Gould, whose project management skills were only surpassed by his continuous supply of coffee, tea and biscuits.

I would particularly like to thank Colin Edmunds, Richard Punt, Chris Hughes, Neil Hardwick, Adrian Warwick and Robert Lawrence for their hard work.

I would also like to thank Gil Hancox for the generous daily provision of sandwiches for the workers.

A significant part of the refurbishment work was to transform the old bar into a smart fully equipped new kitchen area which is already being used for private functions.

We also want to make the area available as a Community Café, with WIFI and internet access to provide a meeting place for local residents.

We will initially be looking to open the Café for 3 afternoons a week around school pick-up times staffed with a working manager, supported by volunteers, with the intention to extend the opening times if the demand is there – which we hope it will be.

We will be advertising the Manager's post before the end of the month.

In March we also said we would improve the surrounds of the Hall.

Since then, we have replaced the old broken paving around the Hall and significantly improved the disabled access to the rear of the building. We also have planted flower beds at the front of the Hall which are being carefully tended to by Neil and Maggie Hardwick.

A new "Wolverley Memorial Hall" sign will be fitted to the gable end of the Hall next week and we are looking to improve the lighting to the Car Park.

The Trustees have given a commitment to explore how the Charity can work more closely with the other organisations on the Memorial Hall site.

We want to work with everyone on this site to optimise the use of all the facilities to give the maximum benefit to local residents.

All of us are working against a background of limited resources and increasing costs and the Trustees are committed to finding the most cost-effective way for all the organisations on the site to interact with each other within the legal frameworks and rules under which each of us has to operate.

This has already started with the Sports and Social Club. The Club now provides the bar services in the Memorial Hall when hirers request the use of a private bar for their parties.

We have also worked together to help deliver the two Food Festivals held on the site this year. We hope there will be similar events to follow.

We are also discussing the future relationship between the Charity and Wolverley Tennis, following their recent change to charitable status.

As I said in March, the Charity has also recognised that it needs to communicate better with local residents.

Whilst, I'll hope you will agree from what you have seen and heard this evening a lot of really good work has been going on but we've not always been very good at telling people about it.

We now have a volunteer, Owen Parry, who is taking the lead on communications for us and has already started to improve our use of social media and is working on modernising the Charity's website.

Our aim is to improve our communication with local residents and also give residents a means of letting us know what they think – good and bad.

Our final aim is to recruit new volunteers and Trustees. None of us are getting any younger.

As I said earlier, the Charity is always looking for volunteers who feel they can contribute their time and skills to the Charity and may wish to join our group of volunteers or become a Trustee. If anyone is interested, please contact me or one of the other Trustees at the end of the meeting.

Graham Wallis

Chair of Trustees

24.10.22