

Chairmans Report to AGM - 28 March 2022

Forward Look

The nature of an AGM is to report on things that have happened in the past.

I now want to spend a few moments looking forward.

As well as the continued provision of the existing facilities, the Charity has the following main aims for this year

They are :

1. Firstly to finish the external refurbishment of the Hall and upgrade the interior, again using funding obtained as a result of our successful grant applications.

In February 2021 we were successful in our application to the Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) Village Hall Improvement Grant for £14,049. The Grant scheme was part of a government backed venture to commemorate 100 years since the end of the first world war – and was to assist charities running village halls with capital improvements to their buildings

This was a competitive process and I understand that we were the only village hall in Worcestershire to receive a grant.

And then in September 2021` we were successful in securing our biggest grant to date - £70,950 from the National Lottery – Reaching Communities Fund.

This enabled us to finish the external cladding work to the sides of the Memorial Hall, replace the timber framed windows, entrance doors and disabled access doors and also provide funding for the internal refurbishments that we are in the process of carrying out.

Together with the Grants of £51k in the previous year, this means that the Charity has been successful in obtaining grants of £136k for the refurbishment of the Memorial Hall.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all those Grant funding organisations for their financial support.

As you have seen the exterior of the building has been significantly upgraded and is now watertight and draught-free. Umbrellas and thermals are no longer required!

Now that has been achieved, we have started work on the inside of the building.

The cost of contractors and new equipment, being funded by the grants, is being supplemented by a group of volunteers all giving their time, labour and assorted skills for free –we are enjoying learning new skills in the process!

We aim to complete the work this Spring, with minimal disruption to the use of the Hall.

We will be redecorating throughout, replacing flooring, moving the Bar into the Hall, creating a community café in the old bar area, upgrading the toilets and creating 2 more meeting rooms.

All this will improve the internal environment and allow better, more flexible use of the whole building.

[PAUSE]

2. We will also be improving the surrounds of the Hall – replacing the old broken paving and improving the route to the disabled access doors.

We are currently reviewing the arrangements for the maintenance of the Children's Play Area and grounds so we can put a planned rather than reactive programme in place; so we can be proactive rather than responding to complaints about overgrown hedgerows, blocked pathways etc.

[PAUSE}

3. Once the refurbishment work is completed, the Charity will be in a much better place with the building and grounds than it has been for a long time.

We want 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 enhanced facilities for the benefit of Wolverley residents.

Our new booking officer, Leigh Salter, has made a great start on increasing the numbers of bookings for the Hall. I suggest if you are thinking of booking the Hall for a weekend children's or adult party you contact Leigh quickly!

The refurbished Hall with more rooms offering greater flexibility in a much-improved environment will hopefully make the Hall a more attractive venue for current and future regular hirers and encourage increased use by local residents.

[PAUSE]

4. As Richard has mentioned, now we are hopefully past the pandemic restrictions, it is intended that the Wolverley Memorial Project Group will relaunch its fundraising events to build on the monies that have already been raised, to fund the future replacement of the ageing facilities on the site with one community facility incorporating all the organisations using the current site.

The Charity Trustees acknowledge that, whilst the life of the existing Memorial Hall has been extended by the external cladding, the Hall, Sports and Social Club and the Pavilion are all timber framed buildings that will need replacing within a generation.

The purpose of the Project is still valid and fundraising is still required so that future residents of Wolverley can continue to benefit from the activities currently provided from the Memorial Hall site and hopefully even more in the future.

{PAUSE}

5. It will obviously take time for the Project to come to fruition.

In the meantime, 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 providing the bar services in the Memorial Hall when hirers request the use of a private bar for their parties.

[PAUSE}

6. 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 heard this evening a lot of really good work has been going on we've not been very good at telling people about it.

We now have a volunteer who will be taking the lead on communications and over the next few months we will be upgrading the Charity's website and improving our use of social media and local publications.

Hopefully this will improve our communication with local residents and also given residents a means of letting us know what they think – good and bad.

[PAUSE}

7. Our final aim is to recruit new volunteers and Trustees. None of us are getting any younger – as you can see by looking at some of us!

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 the committee or to become a Trustee. If anyone is interested, please contact me or one of the other Trustees at the end of the meeting.

[PAUSE]

Thank you for your patience while we have gone through the formal business of the Charity's AGM and provided a look into the aims of the Charity in the future.

10. Any Other Business notified in advance of the meeting

There was no other business notified in advance of the meeting so we can move straight on to questions.

11. Questions from Wolverley residents

It is now your opportunity to ask questions about anything you have heard tonight or any other issues relevant to the Charity.

We will try and answer your questions now but if we don't have all the information to give a full answer, we will take a note and get back to you as soon as possible.

Please give your name (and organisation or group, if your question is on their behalf) so we can make a record for the minutes

Questions raised and answers given to be recorded in the minutes

Thank you for your questions.

12. Close & Dates for diaries

Thank you for coming to the Annual General meeting, I hope you have found it interesting and informative.

Just before we finish, I have a few dates of forthcoming events, which you may be interested in:

The monthly Saturday Car Boot Sales start again next month - the first one being on 23 April

The Wolverley Carnival will be held here on Saturday 2nd July

We are planning to repeat last year's successful Children's Funfair again this year – the provisional dates for it are the weekends of the 9th&10th and 16th&17th of July

And looking further forward, the Wolveley Village Players will be putting on the annual pantomime here in the Hall in the last week of January 2023.

There will be other fundraising events organised for the year

All the dates will be advertised on the Charity's website and Facebook page

Thank you again for coming

Hopefully we will see you again for the next AGM in September.

Have a safe journey home.