

NORTHAM VILLAGE HALL TRUST

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2019/20

1. YES, WE CAN!

Firstly, credit must go to Pete Sargent who, this time last year, effectively rescued the Village Hall from closure. There was a significant depletion in the number of Trustees willing to serve on the Committee but thankfully, due to Pete's powers of persuasion, a number of serving Trustees agreed to stay on and were joined by new faces to form the current Committee. The remarkable aspect of this is how well we have all gelled and worked together as a team and, most importantly, the all-prevailing 'yes-we-can' attitude.

It was a steep learning curve for the newcomers to the Committee as there was little or no handover from the previous incumbents. The upside of course was that meant we started with a clean sheet! Of the many challenges the newcomers faced, the priorities were getting to know how the Hall was or could be run, understanding the requirements of the wide variety of Hall users and ensuring a sustainable financial base.

2. WHAT HAVE WE ACHIEVED?

The Village Hall finances are in a far more robust situation than this time last year, but more detail of that can be found in the Treasurer's report.

Meanwhile, the Famous Five – they know who they are – have worked tirelessly to ensure the grass, hedging and shrubbery outside the Hall is cut and kept tidy. In addition, they have looked after and maintained the services inside the Hall and had a serious clear-out and rearrangement of the Storage Barn.

Also of note is that Christine's monthly Coffee Mornings are attracting more and more attendees and proving a real social gathering for village residents. These coffee mornings also providing a valuable income stream for Hall funds.

Other achievements include:

- Increased revenue from hire of the Hall and fundraising activities
- Replacement of the Hall chairs – thanks to the generous financial contributions from the local community and local businesses and also the sale of many of the old chairs
- Installation of the front entrance ramp - thanks to a generous grant from Sports England and again contributions from local businesses
- Update of our Premises and Alcohol Licence

- Refurbishment of the Jenkins Room – with thanks to the Conservation Society for both their financial contribution and the finishing touch of the photos around the walls depicting village scenes in past times, both in this room and in the Main Hall
- Installation of additional smoke detectors
- Installation of a WiFi system
- Automation of the lighting in the Storage Barn
- Transfer of the accounts from Sage to Excel spreadsheet, for ease of use and transparency
- Revision to the Booking Form, Hire Agreement and Alcohol Licence

3. WHAT OF THE FUTURE?

Some of the projects planned or in progress are:

- Upgrade to the heating controls, to allow for more flexibility, lower costs and a reduced carbon footprint
- The refurbishment of the entrance lobby and toilets
- Refreshment of the Village Hall website
- Improvements to the booking and invoicing procedure
- Cleaning and rehangng of the Hall curtains

So, thank you from the Northiam Village Hall Trustees' Committee for the support you have given us over the previous 12 months and, subject to re-election, we look forward to your continued support for the coming 12 months.

End Note:

Since writing this report the Coronavirus Pandemic has struck and understandably hall users have been forced to cancel their bookings in order to reduce the chances of personal contact spreading the virus. So, it is with great regret that the Village Hall Committee have decided that, for both health and financial reasons, it has become necessary to close the hall and cancel all future events from mid-night 20th March 2020 until further notice. This has also resulted in the Village Hall AGM being cancelled and the current Committee agreeing to continue for a further year.

Going back to the start of this report "yes-we-can". Yes we can and will have a ***Grand Reopening*** of the hall at the earliest possible SAFE opportunity. We will keep you posted.

Keith Whiting

Chairman -Northiam Village Hall Trust