

**Blennerhasset and Baggrow Village Hall**  
**Annual Chair's Report Jan 2021 to May 2022**

## **1. Introduction**



It has been a very strange year and a half not just for myself, as Chair of the Village Hall Committee but for all in the villages, with Covid keeping its grip on us for far longer than we thought possible. I took up this role in the darkest days of Covid, indeed the whole committee stepped up in January 2021. The previous Officers of the Committee had worked incredibly hard at keeping things going, risk assessments, fund raising etc but, when they discovered a hole in the back wall of the hall where the timber construction had rotted, they felt, understandably, exhausted and unable to continue. It was at this point that I, and my fellow officers stepped up. Whilst we have described ourselves as a 'reluctant committee', I would clarify that what this meant was, that none of us had aspirations to be officers on the committee, but we recognised the central part that the Village Hall should play in village life. We all felt it was important that someone stepped in to attempt to save it, a task that we recognised as vital. When I took the role on it was described to me as a 'poisoned chalice' and, whilst I never saw it as any kind of chalice, I certainly knew there would be challenges ahead and I would like to think that, as a committee, we faced them full on.

## **2. The Previous Committee**

I would like, firstly, to take the opportunity to extend our sincere and heartfelt thanks to Judi Merricks, Chair; Alex Merricks, Secretary and John Fletcher, Treasurer along with the wider committee and supporters. Without their hard work over the previous years, we would not be in the positive position we are now.

## **3. The Current/Recent Committee**

*Emma Bozier (formerly King), Chair*– I moved to Blennerhasset in February 2019, from Scotland, managing a whole year of freedom before lockdown- but what a marvellous place in which to be locked down!

*Lesley Douglas, Secretary* – Lesley is the only one of us that has been around forever and, although she does not live in the actual village(s) at the moment, her history in the village and her knowledge of the local community and area was invaluable and she has been a great support

*Iain Tullie, Treasurer* – Iain moved to Blennerhasset in May 2018 and we could not have asked for a more thorough and committed treasurer. He has kept us 'right' even since having secured a job which has meant increased travelling and less time in the village.



*Jayne Whitfield* – Jayne moved to Blennerhasset in August 2017 and she and her husband Joe run a smallholding- she can be regularly seen shepherding sheep through the village and is kept very busy. Jayne has been a pillar of the committee, brilliant on the day to day running, supporting in events and tasks and has organised and overseen the Defibrillator checks

*Iain Bozier (former member)*– Iain also moved to Blennerhasset in February 2019 from Maryport. Iain has overseen the fabric of the building supporting the changes and doing an inventory of what was needed, he is also the current licence holder for any events where alcohol is to be served. He too has been a pillar. Iain stepped down from the committee in early April (2022).

*Charles and Ainsley Wood (former members)* – Charles and Ainsley moved to the village in October 2019 and left the village in December 2022. It is absolutely the case that without their support we would not have raised the money to get the repairs completed.

*Sarah Kay* -Sarah moved to the village in August 2017 and joined the committee in February 2022. She led on the village show in the Grey Goat which was wonderfully managed by Ros and Tony too. Sarah has willingly stepped up to support in all day to day tasks and does so with enthusiasm and humour

*Chris Clarke*- Chris moved to the village in July 2019 and joined the committee in March 2022. His organisational expertise is un-paralleled and his enthusiasm has been infectious and invaluable to the committee and the village as a whole. Chris said he would take on organising the scarecrow competition which we can all agree was a resounding success. He has also created the village hall website which will increase the visibility and accessibility of the hall to the wider community in West Cumbria and beyond.

#### **4. Other Support**

*Shirley and Dave Muir*- Without Shirley and Dave we would not have a village hall to open. They supported us in funding applications, being incredibly patient, attending finance meetings and ensuring we gathered and supplied the necessary information to raise money. We are eternally grateful.

*Ed Brown* – Ed has been a work-horse where things needed taken down or built up, carried or moved he was a marvel. Ed took the lead on the demolishing of the shed at the back of the hall, where the rot had set in – it was raining and it was hard work but he kept us motivated with his big hammer (!!).

*Sharon and Iain Forshaw* – When we asked for help with cleaning the hall ready for re-opening they were at the ready – thanks especially to Sharon who spent hours locked in the loos with a cloth, a mop and bucket!

*Angela Bowe* – Angela has consistently kept us right through the Christmas and Easter Show and ensured that things run smoothly. Her knowledge is irreplaceable and wide-reaching, not least in explaining to the rest of the committee what egg-dumping is! Angela has been an asset to us

*Jean Bowe* – Jean runs the bingo every Tuesday evening with all the money going back into the village hall to support it, she regularly attends the tea and cake on Friday and our other events. Jean has also been an asset to us

*Ros McColl and Tony Smith* – The village show and raffle was a huge success and their support has been invaluable

*You!* – There are too many of you to name, those of you who have baked for events and attended and supported and sold and bought raffle tickets and donated and generally been stars – thank you, thank you, thank you- we hope you will continue to support and see the village hall as an essential part of village life.

#### **5. What we have all achieved**

The consistent message at Committee Meetings, which started on Zoom and now continue in person on the most part, has been the desire of all the members to see the Village Hall at the heart of the village(s) and that, along with the pub, it should become and remain somewhere where we can come together as a community with all who live in the locality retaining a sense of ownership. This is, we believe, the direction for the future but there has been some significant work required to get us to where we are now. Below is an overview of some of the events that have taken place in or hosted by the Village Hall in the last year (and a bit).

*Chair: Emma Bozier (formerly King)*  
*Secretary: Lesley Douglas*  
*Treasurer: Iain Tullie*

*Blennerhasset Social and Educational Centre*  
*Charity Number: 1067562*

### **5.1. The Hole in the Wall which was letting in water....**

It appears that no one had been aware that the back wall was internally of timber construction. Between the wooden bookcase attached to the back wall and the stone/concrete lean to outside it was the perfect situation for damp to get a hold and the wall rotted through completely. Our first task in stepping up to manage this was to form a sub-committee for fundraising and, as noted, supported by Shirley and Dave and also Ainsley and Charles we secured funding from a number of sources and were able to arrange for the work to be done. To keep costs down we took the



bookcase in the hall out ourselves and also spent a very soggy morning taking down the stone shed at the back. By October 2021 repairs to the back wall were complete; the bookcase, which had been constructed within the hall did not survive the removal, but we finally had a hall which was weather-tight!



### **5.2. Is it Cold in here?**

The old oil heating system was no longer fit for purpose and needed to be replaced. The previous committee had arranged for the village gas supply to be extended to the hall. We obtained quotes which offered various solutions; one which involved taking out and refitting the kitchen- and one which did not. We chose the latter! Work was completed at the end of 2021. We now have a cosy hall with a combi-boiler allowing for hot water when needed. We were able to put some initial Christmas events in with Father Christmas visiting the children and mulled wine and mince pies. To be clear the mulled wine was not for the children (🙄).



### **5.3. Keeping Fit**

Shirley Muir was the first to step forward and runs weekly Yoga classes and Dance-Fit classes in the village hall on a Thursday evening and soon after this Cherry Peel restarted her Seated Yoga on Wednesday mornings. Chris Clarke also stepped up and runs Keep Fit on a Monday lunchtime, Step & Tone on a Monday Evening and Circuits on a Wednesday evening. All these classes have been hugely successful and it's been wonderful to see the Village Hall come alive again.

### **5.4. The Village Show**

The Village Shows predate all of us. The shows are an integral part of village life and have, to my knowledge, always taken place in the pub. A chance to show off baking and crafting skills in the competition followed by a raucous auction with the homemade goods being sold to raise money for the village hall. The shows are largely facilitated by Angela Bowe with Peter Turner our talented auctioneer. Donations to the raffle are made by all of you and we are so in awe of the commitment shown!



### **5.5. The Scarecrow Competition**

We have run two scarecrow competitions. The first in 2021 was a small event- we weren't able to hold anything in the village hall itself as we were still subject to Covid restrictions but were keen to do something! Ainsley Wood headed it up and the committee, walked around and scored the 18 Scarecrows individually to decide the winner.



We had hoped to do something 'bigger' this year including tea and hot cross buns in the hall, but we couldn't have imagined what a success it would be in 2022, with Chris Clarke at the helm; 26 Scarecrows, bacon rolls by the dozen and hundreds of slices of cake and a

phenomenal amount raised – can't wait to see even bigger and better next year!



### **6. What next..?**

There is always more to be done. We have a lengthy list of repairs and ongoing work that needs to be undertaken to ensure the hall remains fit for purpose. We currently have pending grants to repair and revarnish the floor and to replace the static tables with folding ones and the chairs with more easily move-able ones. We also need a pull-down ladder to the loft area, decorating and maintenance and electrical checks and repairs to the toilets. An urgent task is to improve disability access. In terms of events, you need to keep your committee informed with what you want to happen or hire the hall for your own groups and events. Most importantly we need you to support the events that interest you – remember the hall does not belong to the committee it belongs to the village!

### **7. Final Statement**

As a committee we are immensely proud of what we have achieved but it's important to say loud and clear that we achieved it with you and for you and that we want to see the hall continue to thrive. We don't pretend to have been perfect or to have done everything right but what we have done in the last year and a half is pulled together as a team, encouraging each other, communicating regularly through our WhatsApp group, meeting through Zoom when we couldn't in person and keeping our focus on opening the hall and improving it. As the three committee officers stand down I would like to offer my thanks to Iain Tullie and Lesley Douglas for their invaluable work; they have become friends as well as committee colleagues and they have been an immense support. Whilst myself and Lesley, and others, have been willing to continue as members of the committee, we are acutely conscious that any incoming Chair and Officers may wish to do things their own way and that if they want a 'clean sweep' we would be willing to step down and let others with more time and energy take the helm.

It has been a privilege to stand as your Village Hall Committee Chair, it's a village and a community that I love and am proud to be part of.



**Emma Bozier – retiring Chair**

*Chair: Emma Bozier (formerly King)  
Secretary: Lesley Douglas  
Treasurer: Iain Tullie*

*Blennerhasset Social and Educational Centre  
Charity Number: 1067562*

**BLENNERHASSET & BAGGROW SOCIAL CENTRE****RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS ACCOUNT 2020 - 2022****06 APR 2020 - 05 APR 2021****RECEIPTS**

ALLERDALE COVID GRANTS	£20,636.57
SALT SPONSORSHIP (VIA GREY GOAT)	£500.00
EDF ELECTRICITY REBATE	£167.25
WATERPLUS REBATE	£48.92
CUMBRIA CC COMMUNITY GRANT	£4,500.00
BUILDING SOCIETY INTEREST	£3.41
SUNDRY CASH INCOME	£200.00

TOTALS £26,056.15

BROUGHT FORWARD FROM 2019/20 £10,775.99

£36,832.14

**PAYMENTS**

ELECTRICITY	£317.00
WATER	£203.78
FUEL OIL	£203.70
INSURANCE	£609.28
WINDOW CLEANING	£72.00
DISABLED BATHROOM	£928.94
FLOORING	£193.00
GAS CONNECTION	£2,661.94
PREMISES LICENCE	£70.00
PRINTER	£50.98
CHRISTMAS EXPENSES	£134.78
SUNDRIES	£252.80

TOTALS £5,698.20

BALANCE AT BS CARRIED FORWARD £31,133.94

£36,832.14

**06 APR 2021 - 05 APR 2022****RECEIPTS**

ALLERDALE COVID GRANTS	£10,667.00
PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL DONATION	£200.00
GREY GOAT DONATION	£500.00
CHRISTMAS EVENTS	£325.50
JANUARY & FEBRUARY EVENTS	£178.49
BINGO	£295.93
SUNDRY INCOME	£240.96

TOTALS £12,407.88

BROUGHT FORWARD FROM 2020/21 £31,133.94

£43,541.82

**PAYMENTS**

ELECTRICITY	£206.00
WATER	£234.11
GAS	£271.04
INSURANCE	£642.99
BUILDER - NEW BACK WALL	£26,500.00
CENTRAL HEATING INSTALLATION	£7,650.00
PREMISES LICENCE INCL. CHANGE	£192.50
CHRISTMAS EXPENSES	£388.17
FIRE SERVICE & CERTIFICATE	£120.24
MUSIC LICENCE	£128.40
FOOD FOR JAN/FEB/MAR EVENTS	£285.34

TOTALS £36,618.79

BALANCE AT BS CARRIED FORWARD £6,923.03

£43,541.82





Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/  
members of

Charity Name

Blennerhasset and Baggrow Social Centre

On accounts for the year  
ended

05/04/2021

Charity no  
(if any)

1067562

Set out on pages

1

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 05/04/2021

Responsibilities and  
basis of report

As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent  
examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:

*Carole Carre*

Date:

12/06/2022

Name:

Carole Carre

Relevant professional  
qualification(s) or body  
(if any):

Retired as a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales.  
BSc. MBA

Address:

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