

Horsley Village Hall Chair Report for Annual Meeting 2024

In last years report I commented on the success of the Hall in 2022, in the first regular year since we opened the new Hall and following Covid. I am pleased to say that 2023 has been a year of consolidation and all aspects relating to the Hall have seen success.

The introduction of Emma Crooks and Laura Ryder to the Committee has been an asset with Emma taking over the Treasurer role from June and Emma, managing regular bookings.

This is the 11th AGM since the retirement of the previous committee, and we have seen many Trustees during that period. Only four – Carole McBride, Debbie Tansley, David Pinion, and I – have sat continuously.

We still need more help and would encourage anybody with a few spare hours to contact us. This is even more relevant as David Pinion indicated early in 2023 that he wanted to reduce his commitment and has now confirmed he will retire on 31 December this year.

The year saw bookings rise to over 600 with the hall busy through seven days a week. The popularity of the hall is seen by the spread of addresses of those booking over a 15-mile radius.

We reviewed the pricing structure for the first time since the building was completed and the increases will stand us in good stead through this period of heavy inflation.

The benefits of an early electricity supply contract from September 22 – September 24 has meant that our prices have been stable during the period when prices rose rapidly. Further, we have safeguarded the future with a contract to September 2025.

Bookings values increased by £4,000, but without Government Covid grants, donations reduced to just under £400. Our major fundraising/community events – the Monthly Draw, an Auction, Race night and Fun Run brought in just under £6,000.

This meant an operating surplus of just over £17,000. From that we took the opportunity to bring in additional heating to warm the hall more quickly in winter which will also reduce energy bills, at a cost of £4,995.

We also paid off another nearly £9,000 to Horsley Parish Council to reduce the loan from PWLB which they took out on our behalf. Incredibly that loan has now reduced – since September 2019 – to just £21,000 from its original £75,000. An incredible feat.

So, our reserves increase to nearly £25,000 with £3,500 of that earmarked for a further payment towards reducing the loan. We believe a reserve of £20,000 is sufficient to meet the requirements of repairs as the hall gets older.

With the hall running through 365 days a year, we assisted Chris Gregory, Hall Manager, by ensuring that he has 10 weekends off a year – meeting and greeting bookings is now part of that a committee group and has taken over the cover role for cleaning the hall. Is now fulfilled by Andrea Thomas.

Most of the Committee have been active – essential to the Hall running smoothly – and I thank them all for the many hours they have committed. As this will be David Pinion's last AGM as Secretary, I also put on record our thanks to him. He has indicated always be available to us with the considerable knowledge built on this journey that we have taken.