

Appledore Village Hall. Chair's Report for the period April to March 2020.

Firstly, I would like to apologise for the delay in preparing and publishing this report which should have come to you in June 2020. The hall has been in lockdown for the greater part of 2020 and with almost no activity I have become complacent in keeping you up to date.

We have compared bookings in 2018/19 with 2019/20 (to March). This showed a good increase in monthly "regulars", Pilates, tai chi, etc from 20 classes to 28 classes per month. This is line with the trustees' policy of trying to increase "regulars". These hirers provide a wider benefit to the Appledore community and are easier for the hall to administer. Another difference has been the increase in indoor markets, with monthly markets on Friday, Saturday and (antiques) Sunday.

Adult parties were up from 2 to 7 as were social events from 2 to 5. Children's parties down one to 5. History society down one to 2. Wakes remained reassuring stable at 2.

The usual stalwarts remained such as Quiz nights, parish council meetings and annual events, village show etc. The film club had a mixed reception but has run at a small profit. The film and food themed evenings have proved very successful. We managed the harvest supper and Christmas lunch.

The hall supports the Ham Street surgery with weekly collection of prescription medicines and the annual influenza vaccination. We may see more of this!

In 2019 the trustees and the volunteers reviewed the mechanics of running the hall. The consensus was that while the volunteers were happy helping to run events they did not want to sit on entertainment and management committees which were seen as too many, often unproductive, meetings. Since that time the volunteers and the trustees have met when necessary to discuss new ideas and iron out any problems. The trustees have specific areas of responsibility such as Health and Safety etc but the formal committee meeting structure has gone.

The financials outcome for the year April 2019 to March 2020 is that we made a loss of about £900 on a turnover about £10,000. This has been due, in the main, to the problems with the heating system. The heat exchangers, which have been teetering on the edge, have now failed. The electricity (heating) bill alone was over £2,000, with running repairs to heating just shy of £600. There is further spending on heating which will appear in next year's accounts.

Since March 2020 the hall has, save for a short period, been in lockdown. At the end of the first lockdown the trustees carried out a COVID-19 risk assessment. Hand sanitisers were fitted, signs procured and a "one way" operating procedure instituted. We reopened briefly only to find Kent in tier 3/4 and now in the latest national lockdown. However, having done the work we are well placed to reopen when allowed.

Though not strictly in this year I can report that although we have lost income from hirers, the hall has had government grants. So overall, perhaps sadly, the hall has benefited financially from lockdown.

There is a complete redevelopment of the hall planned. This will give us more, and more flexible, spaces and improve the infrastructure. It will result in a modern attractive hall which will be economically and environmentally more sustainable, particularly in terms of heating and insulation. It is estimated to take about six months. Unfortunately, I cannot yet tell you when it will start.

I would like to finish, on behalf of myself and my fellow trustees, by thanking everyone who has had a hand in helping run the hall including our volunteers, our hirers and our users. The hall is there for the benefit of the residents of Appledore and its hinterland. I would urge to use and support it.