

Biddenham Village Hall Chairman's Report – 2011

This is my first report as the Chairman of the Village Hall Committee.

To set the scene, the last twelve months has been a period of maintenance and improvement rather than one of major change and over the period we have continued to invest in the hall with the aim of providing a good quality, well maintained facility for the use of the local community.

In particular:

- Bookings continue to be managed well with the burden on the Bookings Officer kept to a manageable level through the booking system on the website.
- Finances continue to be managed well by the Treasurer and control of costs key, with initiatives being adopted by the Treasurer, the Secretarial team and the Technical team.
- Regular maintenance and inspections are carried out by the Technical team, supported by all Committee members, to ensure the Hall remains fit for purpose.
- The performance of our recycling efforts is monitored regularly by the Recycling Officer and opportunities to promote the scheme are always acted upon.
- The role of Environmental Officer is working well, encouraging aspects of the environment to be considered as integral in the way the Hall is run. Furthermore an audit is carried out annually.

Committee structure

There have been a number of changes to the management committee over the period.

- This time last year, I took over as Chairman, replacing Richard Hall who moved away from the area.
- Martin Hosegood joined as a new Vice-Chair, Debbie Higham joined as the new representative of St James School PSA, Tracey Matthews left the Committee as Toddlers Representative and was replaced by Sam Mahoney.
- The position for a Representative from the Parish Council remains open.

The Committee ended the year with 14 members, 1 short of the maximum. We met on 6 occasions and on average 11 members were in attendance. Committee business continues to be managed between meetings with the good use of email and sub-groups when necessary.

Finance and usage

Finances continue to be well managed and we ended the year with a balance of £16,223, deposited as follows:

NatWest Bank Account: £1,177, CAF (Charities Aid Foundation) Account: £5,046, Fixed Bond: £10,000

In line with recent years, the Committee proposes maintaining reserves at a level suitable for dealing with emergency repairs. Therefore at the end of the 2011 financial year the objective is for the level of reserves to be around £12,000 plus the cost of major repairs and improvements planned for the forthcoming year

The year has gone well with a new regular booking from a Zumba class, continuation of the Guides and expansion of the Yoga classes. Generally usage is at a high level, with the potential for more usage on a Saturday.

Recycling credit was lower than last year, although the previous year was abnormally high due to payment phasing.

Maintenance & repair costs were higher than last year with significant costs of woodworm treatment to the roof timbers, installation of a fire wall in the barn stores and electrical testing. Improvement costs included the purchase of new chairs and a replacement fridge-freezer.

Grant Funding

The Committee was very grateful to Pat Osborne for the receipt of £1,430 from donations at David Osborne's funeral. It was decided that the money would be put towards the purchase of new chairs for the Hall, something that was very much needed and would have been welcomed by David had he still been with us. In memory of David we have a commemoration to be made at the end of the AGM.

We are also grateful to Roger Gwynne Jones for securing a grant of £2,500 from Bedford Council, which together with the David Osborne donation has made the purchase of new chairs possible.

The Committee was pleased to receive the remaining funds of the Biddenham United Charities which has been wound up. In total £2,505 has been added to BVH reserves. In accordance with the wishes of the Trustees of Biddenham United Charities, the Committee will ring-fence this money to be used for a specific project sometime in the future.

Health and Safety

I am pleased to report that there were no accidents reported this year involving Village Hall equipment.

The programme of regular inspections has been undertaken (including the monthly checks done by members of the committee), and all repairs required have been completed.

An independent audit of health and safety performance was undertaken in December. A number of minor issues were identified. The report was discussed by the committee, and those issues requiring resolution were identified and have been rectified.

Repairs and Maintenance

The main expenditure this year has been on the roof. A thorough inspection of the roof revealed that a few of the roof timbers were showing signs of rot due to water ingress. These have now been treated and strengthened. In addition some woodworm activity was noticed. As we could find no record of when the roof timbers were last treated for woodworm, it was decided that both roof spaces should be treated. This was done in February with no disruption to regular activities in the hall. Finally more repairs were completed on the lead on the roof and, with a number of broken tiles being replaced, it is believed that the roof is now in a good state of repair.

A plaster wall was built between the paper store and the next-door garage—now rented out—to reduce the risk of fire spreading.

Repairs were carried out to the drains and the regular unblocking is no longer required.

As usual many minor repairs have been carried out during the year.

Many thanks to those who helped at the annual maintenance weekend, when again we completed many tasks.

No major maintenance/improvements are planned for the year ahead.

Plans for the future and concluding comments

The chairman's job is the easiest job of all the committee members because of the commitment and professionalism of the committee members that actually do the work to run the place. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the committee members and also members of the village, and the parish council for their support in helping with the smooth running of the Hall.

There are no major projects identified and it is expected that the theme for the next 12 months will be one of consolidation and maintenance to help secure the long term future of Biddenham Village Hall as a facility that is of use to the community and a something we can all be proud of.