

Linton Village Hall Charity AGM
Charity Number: 520967
Tuesday 6th April 2021
7 p.m.
on
Zoom

1. Welcoming remarks and apologies for absences

Carol Wood, the Chairman of the Linton Village Hall Management Committee welcomed all those who had joined the meeting on Zoom and reported that no apologies had been received for absences. She introduced the other serving officers of the committee before she moved on to item 2 of the agenda.

2. Minutes of the previous AGM meeting on 25th January 2020

She drew attention to the publication of the minutes of the last meeting on the LVH website and asked whether all those attending the meeting were happy with the minutes. The meeting agreed that they were happy for the minutes to be signed off as an accurate record.

3. Matters arising from the minutes of the last AGM

Carol asked whether there were any matters arising from the minutes of the last AGM, which anyone would like to raise. No points were raised.

4. Chairman's report

I'd like to begin with a reminder of the main purpose of the village hall. Our governing document states that the hall is intended *'For the use of the inhabitants of Linton and the neighbourhood and, in particular, use for meetings, lectures, classes and other forms of recreational and leisure time occupations with the object of improving the conditions of life for the said inhabitants'*.

Of course, this turned out to be a year quite unlike any other and we have found that much of the time we were unable to fulfil our main purpose due to the Covid pandemic and the restrictions that were put in place to protect our community. But let's begin at the beginning.

Our year began, in November 2019, with our regular user groups in full swing and our planned events going ahead on cue - coffee morning, community lunch, music night as well as a fundraising quiz and our annual winter fashion show – impossible now to imagine that we fitted so much into one month!

December saw the hall used for the Community Christmas lunch and the Christmas Coffee Morning, a Willow Weaving Course and on 12 December we were fulfilling our role as the

polling station for the Election. And then we were into the New Year. User groups and regular events were all falling back into place after the Christmas break and early February saw the return of the hugely popular Music Quiz, hosted by legendary local quizmasters - Steve Jones and Ben Casson, and the February music night featured local artist Alice Earll.

In March we managed to fit in a coffee morning and our annual Jumble Sale was held on 14 March. And that was the last event held at the village hall before we entered the first period of Covid restrictions that lasted from the middle of March until the beginning of July.

At this point we found ourselves facing a completely new set of challenges in terms of helping our community. Together with St Mary's Church, we co-ordinated a group of volunteers from within the community. These volunteers responded to our request for helpers to care for those of our friends and neighbours who, due to age and health issues, had been advised to self-isolate. We offered to shop, collect prescriptions, we kept in touch by phone, and delivered paperback books and jigsaws to help relieve the boredom. We also joined forces with The Alma and arranged for volunteer drivers to deliver hot lunches once a week throughout the lockdowns to those not able to get out and about.

We became the contact point for Herefordshire Council's Covid Response Team and through our newsletters and website we tried to keep folk connected and informed.

Come July, with the relaxing of lockdown, we were able to open up the garden area to hold coffee mornings whilst meeting the Covid Secure Environment requirements and following the guidelines to protect those wishing to attend.

On August 21st, following a storm with heavy winds, the beautiful beech tree that had graced the garden for many, many years, suffered severe damage and had to be felled. This caused the garden area to be inaccessible to us for some weeks whilst this work was carried out. Indeed, the garden is still in a state of recovery following the removal of the extensive root stump that was completed in November. So unfortunately our use of this area for coffee mornings was curtailed. Until that point we had very much enjoyed hosting get-togethers in the garden, making the most of the lovely summer sunshine.

Going forward, Covid 19 continued to determine the level of activity at the hall but by observing guidelines and ensuring a Covid Secure Environment we were able to hold a coffee morning inside the hall during September. The proceeds from this event were combined with the proceeds from the earlier coffee mornings and we made a donation to Macmillan Cancer Support of £216.

Entering the final month of our financial year - October saw a limited return of some user groups who were able to meet in the hall following government guidance and observing social distancing. The hall had by this time been allocated a QR number to facilitate contact tracing. And we did manage another coffee morning before the return of lockdown in November. Although numbers needed to be monitored at these coffee mornings, not only did they provided an opportunity for friends and neighbours to gather together in a safe, protected and familiar place, but they also gave us cake bakers a most welcome opportunity to get baking!! It was a pleasure for us to see folk again and we are thankful to those who attended and those who volunteered to bake and serve at the tables.

Some general comments on the past year –

Whilst we were closed during the first lockdown we had the hall repainted and also carried out our five year electrical inspection.

We hope very soon to have settled the insurance claim in respect of the final repairs to the car park area following the damage caused by the fallen tree – being the replacement and repair of the manhole covers and the repair to the stone wall. Meanwhile our thanks to John Lancaster for temporarily replacing the stones and clearing the pathway. And many thanks also to the chaps from Lydney Surfacing who kindly carried out the repair to the damaged car park surface.

Our commitment to consider environmental causes was borne in mind when in January we offered the village hall car park as a drop off point for Christmas trees to be recycled – local tree surgeon Geoffrey Urch kindly volunteering his services to turn trees into woodchip.

Mid-February saw us hosting an eco-presentation by Charlie Kingswood, ‘Can Do Something About Plastic’. This was well attended and much valuable information was shared with the audience.

And we are talking with Linton Climate Group about an idea to have a recycling opportunity for those ‘awkward to recycle’ items.

Also in the spirit of recycling (or Make Do and Mend!) we are sincerely grateful to Nigel Pealing and Peter Elliott who volunteered to repair our garden shed during the summer and who did a fabulous job for us, enabling us to continue to make good use of this vital storage space. Nigel continues to help us with diy tasks (such as burst tap pipes!) and we are very lucky to have these helping hands on standby. Many thanks.

In fact, as always, we say a huge thank you to everyone who has helped us through this very strange Covid year – to those who have helped to ease the stress and relieve the boredom, to those who provided support, attended our gatherings and continued to use the hall when able. And to the Parish Council, VoLT and West Mercia Police & Crime Commissioner for coordinating a supply of PPE equipment when we couldn’t buy any, to the team of Wednesday Lunch drivers and to Clair for her Wednesday quiz, to Community First for invaluable advice and for interpreting Government rules (and translating them into something understandable for us village halls). And to our friends at St Mary’s who have always been willing to join in and help.

The pandemic has impacted not only on the events and attendance at the hall, but also on some of the plans we had been considering. We had been exploring the possibility of installing a wi-fi connection in the hall, with much help and advice given by Ian Hobson, but decided to postpone taking this further until the full impact of the pandemic had been faced and closures and restrictions had passed. We do hope to look at this project again in the near future.

So, let’s look ahead at how we hope to use the time that is left to us in 2021 now that we are moving towards life beyond lockdown. Although we are not certain yet of when we will be able to host events, we do have plans and ideas in mind for when it is safe for us to gather together again, so please rest assured that we will let you know as soon as that time comes around. Meanwhile, we continue with the ongoing tasks that are undertaken to ensure that the hall is a venue fit for activities and these cover both Health & Safety aspects and maintenance reviews to keep the hall in good repair and fit for purpose.

In line with the requirements of our Health & Safety Policy, we continue with our commitment to training in key compliance areas and have a number of on-line courses covering Food Safety, Fire Safety Awareness and First Aid available for those committee members and volunteers who may need to update their skills in these areas. However, if you run a user group and would like to consider the advantages of training in these areas for yourself or members of your group then do please speak to a committee member and we may be able to help with details and information.

So, it has been an unusual year but we feel sure that we can now look forward to a return to a more familiar way of life. We are looking forward to welcoming our user groups back to the hall as soon as restrictions are lifted and they feel happy to return. We will continue to offer a safe place for folk to gather, to enjoy their activities and meet friends and neighbours. We, the committee, cannot wait to return to a more active role within the community and to see the hall back at the centre of village life.

Finally, a thank you to everyone who contributes to the running of the village hall - I am grateful to have a brilliant team of committee members who work hard to keep the hall on track but we also rely on those volunteers who always step up and help when they are able. And a thank you also to all those chair persons and committee members who have served in the past for it is their hard work that has led to us having this beautiful hall to use for our benefit.

5. Treasurer's report

The accounts for the financial year November 2019 to end October 2020 have been produced, agreed by the management committee at our 19 January meeting this year and independently examined by an accountant. This information is on the village hall website. I have also updated the annual return on the charity commission website with the final accounts.

As of beginning of November 2020 we had a healthy set of reserves of around £48,818.

£24,866 of these have been allocated to a fund to be set aside for future refurbishment projects for the hall. This is slightly down on last year due to spending on internal decoration and beech tree removal over the financial year and no transfers back into the fund over the year due to the lack of fundraising because of the pandemic.

In terms of income and expenditure, our income exceeded expenditure this year by around £9,478, up on last year considerably and great considering the circumstances, but this was directly due to the generous government grant we received totalling £10,000.

It was not thought necessary to produce a budget this year because of the pandemic and continuing uncertainty regarding the fundraising situation. We have continued to receive financial support from the government since November 2021 as a result of the hall being closed.

A full set of accounts can be viewed as a separate document on the Linton Village Hall website.

6. Secretary's Report

Changes to the Committee Officers:

There are three changes to report in the Village Hall Management Committee since the last AGM:

Julie Houston has replaced Denise Pegrum to run the 100Club, but did not join the committee.

Ken Downham retired from the committee as the representative of the History Society (sadly he has passed away since) and Ernst Zillekens agreed to also represent the History Society.

Jenny Steel decided not to join the committee to represent the Brownies

The composition of the current Village Hall Management Committee is as follows:

Chairman and Bookings Officer: Carol Wood

Treasurer: Jane Reeves

Secretary and Parochial Parish Council and History Society Representative: Ernst Zillekens

Media, Communications and Event Coordinator: Clair Hodgson

Weavers Group: Liz Davies

WI: Irene Tuttiett

Coopted Members: Sally Boyland, Denise Pegrum

Meetings:

Regular Meetings were held following the last AGM on 25th January 2020, at which a quorum of committee members was present on the following dates:

10th March

5th April

22nd June

8th September

24th November

Charitable Status

We remain a registered charity and an annual report is submitted to the Charity Commissioners.

7. Election of the officers for 2021

The chairman informed the meeting that she as Chairman, Jane Reeves as Treasurer and Ernst Zillekens as Secretary were happy to continue to serve in their current positions. Roger Davies proposed that they should be re-elected for 2021 and this was seconded by Charlotte Newton. They were then duly elected unanimously by all those present.

8. AOB

The chairman invited the meeting to ask questions or put other matters forward for discussion.

Julie Houston raised the issue of the 100 Club as it was due to restart during April with subscriptions being collected, and it was agreed to hold a discussion on how to start this off.

When no new points were raised she invited Clair Hodgson to proceed with her photographic presentation of events that took place between November 2019 and November 2020. It illustrated how much had taken place in the Hall before Lockdown had closed the Hall for most of the remainder of 2020. At the end of the presentation Clair had included a very nice tribute to the late Ken Downham, who had been a very loyal supporter of the Hall for many years.

9. Close

Carol thanked Clair for the lovely presentation she had put together seconded by all others present and then thanked everyone for joining the AGM on Zoom.