Village Hall Chair’s Report April 2022

Spring 2021, taking full advantage of being closed during the pandemic, saw our internal refurbishment plans completed - relocating the kitchen and toilets and removing the internal dividing wall, a new heating system installed, the path finished at the side of the hall along with redecoration and new curtains and the feedback on the transformation has been extremely encouraging. We were then fortunate enough to receive further funding at the beginning of this year which means, as I write, the last phase of improvements we proposed to make to the hall - removing the old lean-to kitchen, creating a decking area, improving the storage area at the side of the hall, including installing the old kitchen sink outside and installing bi fold doors in the end wall of the hall, creating more light and access to the decking, are being completed. This means we have fulfilled our ambition to complete all work by September 2022 when the hall will have been on site for 100 years and thank the administrators at the Augean Community Fund for funding this final phase and again Carl at Phoenix Construction for bringing the vision to life and Malcolm Foulkes - Arnold for his professional support. We also thank the village who continue to support us donating at coffee events and through the Charities Aid Foundation. Everyone has had a part in revitalising this valuable village asset.

When we reopened on 7th June 2021 we started back slowly over the summer months with the Stay and Play sessions, Pilates and Friday library teas. Fika Saturdays were started on the second Saturday of the month building on the community spirit the Rural Communities Council coffee van visits kicked off during the pandemic. By September we also had Zumba classes, Tai Chi, Yoga, a Parent and Toddler exercise class and Nia Dance as regular weekly events along with occasional hire from Willowbook Recorders, the Parish Council and for private parties. The Church have continued to support use of the hall holding their Harvest Supper, Mulled Wine and Burns Night events as they did pre pandemic and we have organised a Summer Picnic with cream teas, the Macmillan Coffee fundraiser, the Ninebarrow concert and the Christmas Quiz Night.

In November we were honoured to be chosen to host an event for ACRE to celebrate their network members providing 100 years of advice to village halls, the event was live streamed across the country, there was a magnificent Village Hall cake and Simon Fisher talking on the history of the hall.

The regular timetabled classes, private hire and events have brought life back into the hall post pandemic and looking forward, the village Jubilee celebrations in June and our centenary day on 24th September will be highlights in the coming months.

Due to the resignation of Carole Pearce-Smith we now have a vacancy on the management committee which we are yet to fill, but we thank Carole for her valuable contribution to the running of the hall and as a member of the previous management committee aiding in our transition 3 years ago. Her contribution will be missed but knowing Carole she’ll still be getting involved!

Even though the major refurbishment work is coming to an end we are relying on the community to keep breathing life into your village hall and know that with your support, attending classes, coffee mornings or events, the hall is set to stay a focal point in South Luffenham for the next 100 years.

Tracy Steward 12 April 2022