

## **Darsham Village Hall Management Committee**

### **Annual General Meeting**

**October 23<sup>rd</sup> 2023**

**Present: Heather Ballantine & Jill Edwards - Joint Chair, Paul Diamond - treasurer, Mark Hemingway - secretary, Annie McPhail, Michael Shipp, David Taylor, Alan Holland and approximately 40 members of the Village.**

- 1. Apologies for Absence** – Max Edwards and Christine Redgrave
- 2. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2022 (distributed in advance and available at the meeting)** – These were duly agreed as an accurate record and were signed by the chairpersons.
- 3. Appointment of Elected Members** – There were 6 nominations which had been proposed and seconded – Paul Diamond, Jill Edwards, David Taylor, Mark Hemingway, Becky Ling and Philip Robinson. They were all duly elected by those present.
- 4. Appointment of Representative Members from the Village Groups** –
  - Alan Holland – Table Tennis
  - Ronald Clark – Petanque
  - Heather Ballantine – Crafty Club
  - Michael Shipp – Carpet Bowls
  - Anne McPhail – The Church
- 5. Chairperson's Report – from Heather Ballantine and Jill Edwards**

#### **Introduction**

It would be fair to say that this year has had its high and lows. The lows are now behind us and we continue to move forward in many areas.

This is the first time that the DVHMC has had co-chairs, it has been a valuable experience for both of us and the ability to talk over the issues has enabled what we hope has been a balanced approach. It has certainly worked for us and we hope it has also benefited the committee.

#### **Playground**

Having set up the PWG it became apparent that the internal difficulties were hampering progress. Despite attempts to mediate between the differing parties it became necessary to bring the whole process back into the hands of the committee. Since this has happened we

have carried out the public consultation, obtained quotes for the groundworks and equipment, received quotes for the landscaping and held an information evening to share the playground designs with the village.

### **Policies**

As part of the grant application process we have reviewed and written many different policies covering all aspects of the work of the committee. Those which have been agreed and ratified are available on the website for all to read.

### **Solar Panels**

In collaboration with the Parish Council the idea of having solar panels on the roof was explored. Having looked at the quotes the Parish Council agreed to fund the solar panels and a back up battery for the village hall. Although it is early days we think it is fair to say that they will save a considerable amount of money for the committee. With the battery it means that if the village hall is needed as an emergency centre we will have access to a limited amount of power as needed. Any money made via the buy back tariff will go into the Parish Council funds to enable projects around the village to be supported.

The village hall has dragged itself into the 21<sup>st</sup> century with the installation of a smart meter, and apps to remote control the heating and lighting. We now have online booking and online diary which is accessible to all, along with the Facebook page which gives up to date information to everyone. All of these have been set up with the support of various people in the village.

### **Other achievements**

All of the internal doors have been decorated, we are pleased to say that a local decorator was used. A new shed has been installed after the old one was blown across the car park in one of the many storms.

Fencing has been installed on The Street along with a pedestrian gate and pathway.

### **Events and Functions**

A very rainy village fete was held in August, despite the reticence of some it was very well supported by the village and raised money that was split between the church and the village hall. We introduced a monthly Film Night which has been well attended and has just started its' second season. The quiz night was a resounding success and again was well supported by people from the village and a team from outside of the village.

The wine tasting evening was very well attended and gave an insight into the daily issues faced by wine growers in Suffolk. Nothing to do with the tasing of the wines and the fantastic food to compliment the wines!

A second walking market encouraged a lot of people into the village and was hopefully a success for those who were selling goods from their driveways.

The various coffee mornings have continued to benefit the various organisations within the village and maintained a necessary point of contact for many people within the village. Many crates of food have been delivered to the foodbank thanks to the generosity of our villagers. Most importantly we now have the final Land Registry document which gives us the ownership of the village hall. Our thanks go to Keith Rolfe who stayed on the committee just to see this process through.

## **Moving Forward**

Playground; we have to submit planning permission for the chosen design, apply for grant funding, agree dates for the groundworks and playground installation and complete the landscaping. There will be a shout out to the village for help with the hedge planting to try and save money. We will promise free homemade soup and bread for anyone who volunteers to help out.

Alan is working with a Cheyney Green resident to look at how we can make the best use of the field. He would welcome anyone else who might have ideas and would be willing to share them. We are always looking for new events to organise for the village and also to fundraise. The race night on November 25th is one such example and will be limited in numbers to allow the smooth running of the event. Another innovation is the live streaming of a pantomime from a theatre in Ipswich in December. As always we will be organising the Christmas lights switch on with community singing and mulled cider as another way to bring the village together.

During the next year we have to pollard the trees on The Street, landscape the area around the petanque court, get the curtains re-fireproofed and continue the maintenance within the village hall.

## **Conclusion**

The committee have been very busy this year and have given their time freely and will continue to do so. Don't forget everyone on the committee is a volunteer and receive nothing in return for their time.

We have had two resignations from the committee this year and we would like to take the opportunity to thank Heather and John Meggison for their hard work.

We would also like to thank all of the committee members, their partners and all of the helpers and volunteers without whom we could not continue to run the hall.

We appreciate the support that the villagers give us and would like to say that if there are any ideas or suggestions that people would like to develop we are happy to listen and try and make it happen.

## **Comments on the Chair's report**

- John Meggison wanted to be reassured that the DVHMC were taking the correct steps in terms of the layout of equipment in the proposed playground to minimise the potential disturbance to neighbouring properties. The Chair replied that this point as well as a number of other points raised during the feedback session would be of course considered.
- John Meggison also wanted to know if any further consultation was going to be made with the residents of Cheyney Green before the DVHMC went to Planning. The Chair replied that we would be consulting further on the make up of the planting of the border hedgerow, but further elements would of course be available to be viewed as part of the planning process.
- Peter Darby also raised a question as to whether the DVHMC have made allowances for the ongoing upkeep of the playground. The Chair and Treasurer replied that this would be covered in the Treasurers report under the Sink fund.
- Clive Beaumont also appreciated the progress that has been made, although he found the various quotes shown at the village evening difficult to follow as

they were all in different formats. We explained that it is impossible to dictate to different companies how they should produce their quote material and it was up to us to determine the best option for ourselves.

- Helen Reeves asked whether we had decided upon the size of the playground further to our questionnaire. The chair replied that the size was 180 sq/m and that this has been published in many places including the village hall notice board.
- Simon Manning expressed that he appreciated all of the hard work that had been done by the Village Hall Committee in the past year, this was followed by a very welcome round of applause.

## **6. Treasurer's Report: Paul Diamond**

### **1st March 2022 to 28th February 2023**

In summary financially the Village Hall started the year with: £4397.70 in the HSBC current account and £27810.45 in the CCLA deposit account. So £32208.15 in total.

#### During the year the income included:

- a. 100 Club received £4057.00, and paid out £1975.00.
- b. Hiring the Hall income was £11374.50.
- c. Events and Donations - £2887.13.
  - a. March LOL – £500.00.
  - b. May Sai Grace Trust - £200.00.
  - c. August Summer Fete - £1142.81.
  - d. Feb 23 Quiz night - £231.82.
  - e. Christmas event £103.44.

#### Our outgoings included:

Cleaning - £1808.20

Licences - £514.71 incl PRS, 100 Club

Works for village hall of £13517.24 which covered:

- Audio set up £2713.20
- Shed - £462.00 planning and £4728.00 for shed
- Defibrillator - £460.20
- Plumbing - £391.93
- Signage etc £1327.00
- Heat Controls £347.18
- Ditch £781.62

At the end of the year (28th February 2023) there was £5834.06 in the current account and £20332.25 in the deposit account. So in total £26166.31.

These figures have been audited and will be submitted to the Charity Commission shortly.

### **1st March 2023 to date – summary and budget to close**

Currently as at 1st September 23 we have £3617.46 in the current account and £20841.23 in the CCLA account, totalling £24,458.69.

Looking forward to the end of the financial year... We are in a sound financial position and potentially a £6k surplus by the end of the year.

We will be changing electricity suppliers and this will result in a £1.2k refund from EON and new supplier with solar panel installation will significantly reduce our costs.

We look to review our hire costs in the new year.

We have recently formulated a revised Finance Strategy paper and also Finance and Procurement Policies and Procedures. These align with up to date ACRE and Charity Commission guidelines.

We have a £5k maintenance sinking fund and £10k fund for depreciation.

Allowing for our current financial position we are more than able to cover ongoing maintenance needs without village funding. We will continue to look for grant funding when possible.

### **7. Bookings Report: Jill Edwards**

On behalf of the committee I am very pleased to be able to report that the village hall continues to be extremely well used.

We have a great range of bookings which

- bring people together socially whether that be coffee mornings and/or & Film Nights;
  - provide the opportunity to share knowledge & skills - Crafty Club, Textile Temptations & Bible Workshops;
  - whilst not forgetting those activities which provide us with the opportunity to exercise our bodies - TableTennis, Carpet Bowls, Petanque, Pilates & Yoga;
  - and of course the 3 Horticultural Shows in the year and the village lunches/celebrations
- In addition to all the activities hosted and run from within the village we also have excellent support from a number of outside groups:-
- DASH Astro who hold observing sessions & run meetings throughout the winter months
  - Carole Gardner's group of sequence dancers who use the Hall two afternoons a week
  - Earthdance Nia use the Hall monthly to run their Soulful Sunday sessions
  - Suffolk Coastal Beekeepers – regularly use the Hall to run training sessions & host their AGM.

We have also had a number of private bookings ranging from birthday & christening celebrations through to sadly a number of funeral wakes.

Musically, we have enjoyed performances from the Darsham Dogs & Diss Ensemble.

In summary we have a great asset here in Darsham which offers different things to different people by providing a wide range of activities thus giving the opportunity to join local events and meet friends.

## **8. Any Other Business**

1. Question from the floor on what our proposed development activity on the playing field was going to be. Alan Holland replied that the investigations were at very early stage and that a number of factors would have to be considered including the cost of upgrading the surface and indeed what the Village would like to use the field for. Any offers for ongoing help would be gratefully received.
2. Question on why we have not retained the water heater in the kitchen? The Chair responded that the last heater had reached a terminal state and was not worth repairing. In the meantime we have received a number of requests for larger kettles, which is what we have ended up purchasing. Going forward we would consider buying another water heater/urn depending upon demand.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 7:30pm.