

CHAIRMANS REPORT FOR PARISH ASSEMBLY - APRIL 2018

It has been an active year for the village hall. The committee would like to thank Sarah Shorthouse and Kate Lewis for agreeing to join us. Also Graham Inskip has come on board as treasurer and Bev Barker as our new bookings manager. Their time, input and ideas are much appreciated.

As we reported last year, in November 2016 the VH Committee conducted a survey of the village in respect of the current use and facilities of the village hall. This survey demonstrated that the village felt very strongly that the village hall was a valuable community asset. The responses also indicated, however, a general feeling that the hall lacked ambience and that it should be refurbished, modernised and made fit-for-purpose. In particular, it was felt that the look of external areas, the kitchen, stage and storage all needed a careful rethink.

Following this the VH Committee resolved to set up a sub-committee, the Village Hall Refurbishment Committee (VHRC) and in July last year we did just that. Those involved in this project now are Patrick Heneghan, Ingrid Burt, Rosie Cardoe and Graham Inskip.

The VHRC interviewed and obtained quotes from 3 architectural practices. In September 2017, we engaged Paul Gorringer of Katz Vaughan as we felt his ideas were the most compelling as well as being one of the more reasonably priced. We also liked the fact that he is a local man and has had much experience in community buildings.

During the discussions with the architects it became apparent that it was strongly advisable that an asbestos survey should be carried out on the village hall as a matter of urgency. The results gave the VH a clean bill of health save for a very low risk of asbestos content at the soil stack on the front elevation which can be dealt with during future building works.

Late last year we carried out a bat survey. Unfortunately, some bat droppings were found and as a consequence we now have to have an emergence survey which will take place in May this year to provide scientific evidence to support mitigation proposals.

In October, the holding trustees of the village hall, Brian Standfield, Geoff Butler and Daniel Busk, were invited to a meeting to bring them up to date with the project and our intentions. Geoff Butler announced that he would like to stand down as trustee but Nick Harding kindly agreed to replace him.

The VHRC informed the trustees of their intentions and brought them up-to-date with the costs involved in getting the project off the ground. The first stage was to develop plans sufficient to make a pre-planning application to TVBC and to prepare an estimate of the costs supported by a quantity surveyor. In order to do this we have had to bear in mind the following costs: the architect's initial stage, an asbestos survey, a bat and ecology survey, a quantity surveyor and the fee for the pre-planning application. These costs were estimated at approximately, £15,000. The village hall had some funds to get the project going but we also approached the Parish Council who had been given Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) payments from the recent developments that have taken place in the village. This money is to be spent only on infrastructure in the village and therefore the PC have kindly agreed to help us with this project at this stage.

In November, a resolution was signed by the committee members and holding trustees authorising the VHRC to secure funding to progress the initial design and for the treasurer and chairman to become signatories.

In January, the first plans were produced which were promising but the QS informed us that they exceeded our proposed budget. Part of our brief to the architect was to keep costs around the £250,000 mark (to include fees and surveys) so Mr Gorringer is now working on a scaled down

version. Once we have the nod from the QS that we are within budget, we will submit the plans to TVBC as a pre-application to see if they are an acceptable proposal. After this we will listen to comments and seek approval from the whole village itself.

The VHRC should be in a position at this stage to approach third party funders to raise money for the remainder of the project. There are many people we can approach for grants as well as doing our own fund raising.

With regards to other matters, the monthly coffee mornings are more popular than ever. Many villagers have raised very good money for their chosen charities and we encourage people to come to this event to socialise, meet newcomers and hear about village projects.

We hosted the annual drinks party in December and the Mango dance in February which raised money for the hall. However, we also have to thank the PCC's contribution with their annual events too, namely the Harvest supper and Houghton Trail Event. All these events are not only great fun but also contribute to the running and improvements at the hall. Regular bookings are up on recent years and we hope, especially once the refurbishment programme is finished, that we receive more bookings for social events. Finally, we would like to thank Nick Harding for all his hard work in organising the very successful Village Hall Draw.

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