

Cheswick Green Village Hall Management Committee

Chairperson's Annual Report

May 2018

At the first AGM of the newly formed Village Hall Management Committee I feel it right to initially report on how and why we were formed.

The Parish Council are Trustees of the village hall and historically the daily management of the village hall has been the responsibility of the Cheswick Green Residents Association. Back in September 2016 the roof of the hall required some extensive emergency and essential repairs at an overall cost of £47,700. This was paid for out of the Parish Council's reserve funds. This period of great expense highlighted that although the Residents Association were successfully managing daily village hall business this management lacked formality and would potentially fail any scrutiny. The Parish Council wanted to appoint a specific village hall management committee, especially as part of their precept increase pledge was to invest a further £10,000 into renovating what was becoming a very tired building.

The Parish Council informed the Residents Association of their concerns and intentions and invited two of its members to join them in an initial discussion. Mark Woodman and I, both being Resident Association Committee Members at the time, met with Mick Swain and Steve Hall to discuss and progress the forming of a new Village Hall Management Committee. As a result of this a first meeting date was set for Monday 3rd July when a committee was formed to take over the management of the hall.

Although at the initial meeting in July I was elected as chair, due to personal commitments I was unable to fully commit to this role until our October meeting. I would personally like to thank Mark, our vice chair, for deputising in my initial absence.

At this stage I also feel it good and proper to formally recognise and thank the Residents Association for all their efforts and hard work during their management period of the hall. I know that on many occasions they undertook general maintenance and improvement works including regular painting of the halls, all in their own time which has without doubt saved considerable amounts of money over the years being spent on contractors etc. I would also like to thank Ian Sill for all the unpaid general day to day maintenance work he has conducted over the years ensuring the hall is in a ready state for its hirers.

Back in January I presented the first of our quarterly reports where I summarised planned expenditure, maintenance and improvement updates along with general managerial decisions and topics. This report was formally sent to both the Parish Council and the Residents Association and will eventually be published on our new website for the community to view. This report also set out the aims and objectives of the committee. The village hall is for the benefit of the residents of Cheswick Green Parish and the committee has committed to managing it in a proper and business-like manner and are responsible for all matters listed in the constitution.

One of our first projects was to write a new up to date and fit for purpose constitution. This has now been completed, presented and accepted by the Parish Council. I would like to thank Peter for his hard work in preparing this document.

The first maintenance project was to restore the internal ceiling down lights back to 100% functionality. This involved the purchase and fitting of 42 replacement tubes and 6 starters. We

have now upgraded the fluorescent tube lights in the small hall to led fittings. LED bulbs are the most efficient lighting choice, using only a third of the energy of fluorescent lights and have the potential to reduce the lighting energy consumption by up to 80%. We are reviewing the success of this installation and in due course will consider the same for the large hall.

We have engaged with the local authority and the village hall is now on a local cadre and available for use as an emergency rest centre in the event of a local major incident or disaster.

Following the tragic sudden death of a young male in the village in November, the use of the village hall was offered to the community free of charge to be used as a focal point for local teenagers to safely meet and talk in the warmth at a time when many of them were grieving the loss of a great friend. Local residents provided hot and cold drinks and snacks to further promote this facility. I am pleased to report that there is now something developing for the local youth that is more formal on a weekly basis which as a committee we are keen to support and help get established.

A group of local residents laid on a free community pantomime in the hall on the run up to Christmas. As this was the largest community event of the winter we offered them free use of the hall for their rehearsals and performances. Not only was £200 pounds raised for charity but many members of our community got to enjoy this festive event.

You will have noticed that we have now replaced the three external doors. This not only makes the hall more secure but has also updated the very old and tired fire escapes. The reduced measurements of these doors do not impact on the capacity and of the hall, they are of a higher safety specification than the old ones including the anti-finger trap hinges for our younger users. These doors were agreed and funded by the Parish Council and not the VHM funds.

To comply with Health and Safety the Hall requires a current fire risk assessment. Having taken advice from a few sources, including West Midlands Fire Service, we are in the final stages of completing this document. I wish to formally thank Mr Roger Barnes, a qualified fire safety officer, for his free assistance with this and his contribution to this community asset.

We have investigated our responsibilities around the current CCTV system and the storage of the images and are happy that we fully comply with the data protection legislation.

The village hall was historically advertised via the Residents Association website. During the transition period Ian Sill, on behalf of the Residents Association, agreed to maintain this service whilst we developed a new bespoke website. Due to the new data protection legislation, this facility was withdrawn in March. We are in the final stages of completing our website which we hope will be up and running in the next few weeks. I would like to thank Sam Sedgley one of our local Councillors, who has given her time and expertise free of charge in the development and building of this site.

24 electrical items have recently been PAT tested, this will continue to be an annual health and safety scheduled event.

Following a recent service of the fire alarm system several actions were generated to comply with current legislation such as an upgrade to the emergency lighting, break glass points and other administration requirements that have now been completed.

Although occasional hirers are given conditions of hire, contract hirers have either never received one or have been hiring the hall for so long that their initial conditions of hire are outdated. We are in the process of reviewing all conditions of hire and all contract users will receive an updated version in the next few months.

During March and April we experienced several failures of the heating system and had reports of irregular temperatures in the radiators across both halls. Professional advice was sought which resulted in us getting the system power flushed and the purchase of a new pump, zone valve and magnetic filter. We have now also replaced the old original radiators in the small hall to make the heating more effective and efficient in this room.

All users now have access to free Wifi when using the hall. This is routed from the Parish Council Office and the access code is advertised on the main notice board.

We have recently had to deploy the flood barriers (30/03/18) as a precautionary defence measure during the heavy persistent rain at the end of March. Fortunately the flood water in the park did not reach any of the external doors. Members of the committee are registered with 'floodline' to receive early warnings via text message if the river water levels rise significantly.

The logistics and administration behind the majority of the mentioned projects has been the work of Denise, and as chair of this committee I thank you for continued efforts with this.

In conclusion, our first almost year of management has been very busy and I thank the committee for all their hard work during this period. We have made great efforts to ensure the general housekeeping issues are updated and fit for purpose along with addressing several Health and Safety shortfalls. I am happy that all these areas of management are making good progress and will hopefully soon become business as usual. We are beginning to look at short and long term maintenance projects to ensure that this community facility is not only fit for purpose but also will be there for many more generations to enjoy. We have and will continue to support the residents and the community of Cheswick Green Parish.

Martin Williams

Chair of the Village Hall Management Committee