

## Lavendon Village Hall



Lavendon Village Hall is strongly supported by the MK Community Foundation  
Chair's AGM Report for the year ending 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2020

Welcome to this Lavendon Village Hall AGM. My name is John Salter.

The Village Hall has a charitable status and has 4 Trustees, myself, Nigel Stickells, Geoff Simmonds and Stewart Jones. It is our job to ensure that the Hall's activities and practices follow the guidelines laid down by its Constitution and those of the Charity Commission.

It also has a Committee, which is charged with the day-to-day running of the Hall.

The Trustees have developed a Strategic document which sets down some guidelines for the Hall Committee to follow.

The four pillars of this Strategy are:

1. *Maintaining and improving the fabric of the Village Hall* – you only have to look around you that to see evidence that we try hard to achieve this.
2. *Managing the Hall's financial affairs prudently* -we try to ensure that our income covers our expenditure - a very difficult task, given the current pandemic, when the income has all but dried up. Our Treasurer ensures that we adhere to good accounting practices as well as making sure that our charitable status is protected.
3. *Promoting the Hall's facilities to existing and potential users* - we do not have a promotional/advertising budget so we rely on using notice boards, web pages, Facebook, Phonebox magazine, MK Pulse magazine, leaflet drops, school book bags and so on – all relatively low cost. However, the major means of attracting users is through personal recommendation.
4. *Addressing "sustainability" issues* - which in our case means using resources like water, gas and electricity responsibly. We also try to ensure that we do what we can to contribute to and sustain village life in a number of ways - entertainment, education,

social (e.g. combating loneliness) and exercise – as well as keeping private hire costs as low as possible.

The Committee members are: John Salter-Chair; Nigel Stickells-Secretary; Geoff Simmonds-Treasurer; Barbara Adams; Monica Chapman; Sally Emes; Rev. Richard Lake; John Lay; Laura Murray-Carr; John Panter; Louise O’Boyle; Hazel Steels.

Sandra Alexander, the Lavendon Old People’s Welfare Committee (LOPWC) representative passed away on 18<sup>th</sup> May this year, having made a considerable contribution not only to the Village Hall but to other local committees and the various aspects of village life.

The year started with its normal number of events, but with the advent of the Coronavirus, it was decided in March to cancel all fundraising events until further notice. That “further notice” continues.

The dilemma facing the Committee was that the Hall’s running cost for heating, water, lighting, maintenance etc. continued but the income had dried up. In addition, we had a major problem taking full advantage of the state-of-the-art projector, electric screen, operating cabinet and loud speakers, which had been installed in 2019, because of poor acoustics, which resulted in the dialogue for the films being of inferior quality. We were advised that this was due to the “echo” caused by the sound from the speakers bouncing off the various surfaces i.e., the ceilings, walls, floor and pillars .

Various remedies were suggested and after much agonising we decided to go along with a recommendation from a firm called Universal Acoustics, that we fix sound absorption panels to the left, centre and right sections of the sloping ceiling area, in order to dramatically improve the listening environment and the subsequent experience.

Work was completed on this project after the end of the financial year covered in this report, but it is worth mentioning what has been done, and you can see the result as you look around the hall.

The cost for this project has been considerable, almost £14,000 and would normally be paid for from monies raised from our Fundraising Activities and Hall bookings. However, we have been fortunate in obtaining the following grants to pay for this and other ongoing expenses:

- Small business grant of £10,000
- Milton Keynes Community Fund Grant of £5,000 (specifically for the acoustic project)

- Matched funding of £1,000
- Milton Keynes Foundation Summer Spectacular Challenge grant of £1,000.

The other issues which have been occupying our time during this fallow period relate to dealing with the Coronavirus itself and they were:

1. Purchasing and installing the signage, sanitisers and a bulk dispenser, a Covid First-aid box with face shields, disposable gloves, aprons, masks etc to make the hall Covid 19 secure
2. Preparing overall Covid Risk Assessments together with the special T & Cs necessary to keep abreast of changing Government advice
3. Preparing posters and marking out the safe pathways for those attending events.

A big gratitude of thanks is due to Nigel Stickells, our Secretary, who has worked tirelessly to keep us up to date with the avalanche of information generated by Covid 19, as well as carrying out his normal secretarial duties in a diligent and thoughtful manner.

Now to pay tribute to the contributions that other members of the committee and non-committee members make to keeping the show on the road.

Geoff Simmonds, our Treasurer, whose concise monthly reports, experience, judgement and knowledge of finance and non-finance matters, makes him a valuable member of the team.

Bev Shaw, our Bookings Secretary, who has the tricky job of trying to convert enquiries into firm bookings and then trying to keep track of their changing needs.

Barbara Adams, Brenda Jones and Margaret Testro, who form the Fund-raising sub-committee team and before Covid 19 struck put an enormous amount of work into assembling an events' programme and then, at the time of the event, taking money, producing refreshments and doing the washing up.

Eddie Adams, our caretaker, looks after the heating, keeps all areas of the hall neat and tidy, prepares the hall for events, attends to any maintenance work that needs doing as well as keeping the hall clean and sanitised during Covid.

David Alexander, who produces eye-catching, colourful, imaginative posters for our events and has recently told me that he will have to relinquish this role.

Then there are those who have not hitherto had an individual mention, but their contributions are nonetheless valued and appreciated:

Monica Chapman; Sally Emes; Richard Lake; John Lay; Laura Murray-Carr; John Panter; Louise O'Boyle and Hazel Steels, not forgetting, of course a lot of people, like yourselves and others in and around the village, who support us in various ways,

particularly by coming to our fund-raising events and who contribute and keep the village hall going, in their own individual ways.

And finally, let me make an appeal for people to join a Committee, which will have enormous implications for the future of the hall's fortunes, when normal service resumes

The full complement of the committee consists of 8 positions, filled by representatives of village organisations, plus 6 elected members, for which there is only one current vacancy left, assuming all five existing members renew their interest and remain nominated/elected.

So, in addition to this one vacancy for an elected member, there are some other key vacancies, which need to be filled:

- Firstly, we need two people to join the Events Organising Sub-Committee, which will bring this Committee's numbers up to five. This team will be responsible for planning and organising the varied programme of fundraising events put on in the hall. One of the vacancies is occurring because Barbara Adams has decided to retire from this sub-committee and I would like to put on record the years of hard-working, invaluable service that she has given to this sub-committee, which has been reflected in the smooth way the events have been run.
- Finally, we need a Cinema Club Manager to put together and deliver a programme of films on our state-of-the art projection system, which will appeal to people who live in the village and the surrounding areas.

If you are interested in any of the above 4 vacancies, please contact John Salter. The Hall will not function effectively, if these positions are not filled.

To sum up: after a bright start, we were hit by the Coronavirus, which virtually put a halt to our activities. However, when we are able to open our doors again, we will be ready to hit the ground running.

John Salter ,Chair, Lavendon Village Hall Committee

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11<sup>th</sup> November, 2020

**Note: the full report will appear on the Village Hall's Webpage**  
**[www.lavendonconnection.co/home/villagehall](http://www.lavendonconnection.co/home/villagehall)**