



Lavendon Village Hall



Lavendon Village Hall is strongly supported by the MK Community Foundation

Chairman's AGM Report for the year ending 30th September, 2023

Introduction

This report should be read in conjunction with the Strategic Plan, which is an attachment.

The Lavendon 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 Management Committee, which is charged with the day-to-day running of the Hall. The Committee members are: John Salter-Chairman; Nigel Stickells-Secretary; Geoff Simmonds-Treasurer; Monica Chapman; Sally Emes; Rebecca Garratt; Rev. Richard Lake; John Lay; Alex Mountcastle; John Panter; Judith Slinn-Jones Panter; Toby Stone.
Bev Shaw, although not a committee member does an invaluable job as Booking Secretary.

The Trustees have developed a Strategic Plan which sets down some guidelines for the Management Committee to follow (see attachment).

The four pillars of this Strategy are:

1. *Maintaining and improving the fabric of the Village Hall* – including the inside and outside of the Hall. You only have to look around you that to see evidence that a lot of effort has gone into this.
2. *Managing the Hall's financial affairs prudently* -we try to ensure that our income covers our expenditure - a very difficult task, but one which we are managing to achieve, despite having to cope with the after effects of the

pandemic. 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.

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The plan for scheduling one film a month with bingos and quizzes interspersed between was put into place, but the numbers attending have continued to be disappointing, particularly for the films, apart from the film “Matilda”, which was shown on a Saturday afternoon, because it was thought that it would attract a younger audience -and it did! Another Saturday matinee film, “The little Mermaid” attracted only 10 people, 5 children and 5 adults!

So why the poor attendances for the other films? Promotion for the films was fairly wide spread; the write-ups on the films were very favourable; the weather on most occasions was reasonable. The village is expanding in size, so there is an increase in the size of our potential audience.....was it that the punters are now becoming used to watching films on TV and streamed programmes...who knows?

What we do know is that the cost of the film licence for putting on these films is £104, so we are still making consistent losses in this area and the investment in the equipment to show the films has yet to pay for itself. However, the DVD/Blu Ray player is making a significant difference to sound and visibility quality.

Rebecca Garratt has taken on the responsibility for choosing, hiring and showing the films and we wish her all the best in this role.

Fortunately, the number of users for other events in the Hall have increased significantly as described in the Financial Report.

As you will have seen from that Report, the financial position is very healthy and this is due not only to the money generated by income from hall events but more so from the significant grants that we have managed to obtain for the period covered by this report, particularly a development grant of £25,000 received from the MKCC, following a 106 application to carry out roof cladding, to reduce the heat loss in the building and thereby reduce the heating costs.

Rubbish disposal is causing some problems. The present arrangement is that we ask users “to take their rubbish away with them” and this is working reasonably well. Any residual rubbish - and we hope there is very little of this - is then picked up on a Sunday by John Lay, and put out with his own house rubbish, to be picked up from his own home. However, this is not a viable long-term solution.

The Hall itself is impressive as are its facilities - the film projection capability, the size of the screen, the stage, the kitchen, the oven, the storage areas, the car park, to name but a few.

But like every facility, equipment etc. needs servicing, upgrading and replacing from time to time and this process will need to continue and cost money.

For example the stage needs a major overhaul and will need totally replacing, partly because of woodworm. It is not totally useable at the moment and when it is used, great caution is needed. Plans are in hand to replace the stage.

Health and Safety matters are very important and a considerable time has been spent by our Secretary, Nigel Stickells, writing procedures to cover this subject and Sally Emes has been charged with carrying out regular first-aid checks.

The departure of Eddie Adams as caretaker left us with the problem of replacing him, which is proving difficult. A cleaning company has been hired to fill the gap on a part-time basis, with committee members covering other days on an as-and-when basis, which is not a satisfactory long-term solution.

In addition to the Committee members already referred to, I would like to thank firstly, the other members who make a valuable contribution and secondly, people like yourselves and others in and around the village who support us in various ways, particularly those who support the various events we put on.

Finally, I would like to make an appeal for people to join the Committee. The full complement of the Committee consists of 7 positions filled by representatives of village organisations, plus 6 elected members, who present themselves for re-election at the AGM. John Salter will be giving 2 months' notice of resigning as Chairman, as from November 30th.

If you are interested in any of the above vacancies, please contact the Secretary, Nigel Stickells.

To sum up: after a barren spell due to Covid, last year started to pick up and that improvement continued during 2023.

There are more people living in the village, which is expanding all the time.

However, we do not seem to be reaching out to this potential audience, for some reason or another. Let us hope that we can do something about this, during the next 12 months.

As this will be my last Chair's report, let me say that I have found it a very fulfilling experience. When I took over in January 2013, I discovered there was a lot of opportunity for changes and I hope that the majority of those changes have taken place and improvements have made a significant difference.

I have been tremendously lucky to have had the invaluable assistance of Nigel Stickells-Secretary, Geoff Simmonds- Treasurer, Stewart Jones and the other members of the Committee, who I have served with.

May the Lavendon Village Hall continue to flourish and go from strength to strength.

John Salter, Chair, Lavendon Village Hall Committee.

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Note: this report will appear on the Village Hall's Webpage
www.lavendonconnection.co/home/villagehall

12th November, 2023