

St Mary Bourne Village Centre (Registered Charity No. 301936)

Chairman's Report for the Annual General Meeting to be held on Tuesday 27th February 2018

The Village Centre is a registered charity that was established by a trust deed in 1952 with the object of providing and maintaining a village hall for the use and enjoyment of people living in the parish of St Mary Bourne and surrounding area. We want our facilities to be first rate and serve the needs of local people so the views of those people are really important to us. Our AGM is a good opportunity for us to receive and discuss feedback.

We continue to be lucky in St Mary Bourne in that we have a hard working and dedicated group of volunteers managing and running the Village Centre. The management committee comprises the trustees (of which there are currently 4, myself, Mel Cavell-Wells, Mike Case and Kevin Wilding) and five other committee members, currently Michael Widén, Jo Boxer, Angela Cook, Ray Randall and Gib Hancock. Angela Cook handles all of the bookings and enquiries and Ray Randall is our caretaker, assisted by Carol Wall. Angela and Ray are the committee members who come into contact most with the users of the Village Centre and they do a great job all year round. Angela efficiently manages the diary and all bookings and enquiries and Ray and Carol take good care of the fabric of the building and cleaning.

Michael continues to offer us the benefit of his many years of experience and he and Angela collect our income promptly and with great efficiency. Jo keeps us on track with health and safety matters and our Treasurer, Mel, efficiently manages our finances over the year. Mike has once again successfully secured us grant funding (more of this below). Kevin has kindly taken on the role of Secretary, is looking at options for replacement of our lighting as well as managing the sound system and organising events, and has been a great help stepping in for me recently. Gib does a great job running the community library.

On behalf of the community, I would like to thank each and every one of them for all that they do.

Whilst the trustees are ultimately responsible for the running of the charity, most decisions are made by the committee and all trustees serve as members of the committee, typically having been members of the committee before becoming trustees. This arrangement has worked well and gives newcomers a chance to learn about a trustee's responsibilities before becoming a trustee. We are always grateful to anyone who is interested in helping or joining us and there is no requirement to join the committee if that is preferred.

Trustees are elected for a 5 year term. I, Mike and Kevin will be up for re-election in 2020 and Mel in 2021. The management committee has met quarterly and the trustees have had additional meetings.

After many years dedication to the Film, Chrissie Henderson decided that it was time to hand over the reins to someone else and Claire Gervat very kindly volunteered to take this on. These screenings of current and popular films are a valued and enjoyable community event and we are keen to keep them running. We are most grateful to Chrissie and Claire for organising, publicising and running the Film and hope that the local community will continue to support and enjoy these film screenings. It was great in December to see the return of Proteus Players for their excellent production of A Christmas Carol and profits from that show have helped to support the costs of providing the film screenings. Thanks to Kevin for organising that show and hopefully we may be able to offer more theatre productions in future.

Gib continues to do a great job running the St Mary Bourne Community Library in the Club Room each Saturday and I would like to thank both Gib and his wife Lorna for all they do to provide this service to the community, which I am sure is particularly appreciated now that there is no longer a mobile library service. There is a large selection of books to borrow and you can have a tea or coffee whilst you browse.

The Village Centre was well used in 2017, particularly the main hall, with lettings showing a surplus against our budget for the year. We are very appreciative of the consistent support we receive from all of our regular hirers, including the Parish Council which provides a significant proportion of our income, and occasional hirings have been at a good level.

Our Treasurer's report explains our financial position as at the year end and Mel will cover that in some detail. We budget to make a small surplus each year as we are not running a profit-making business, and any surplus we make is invested in maintaining and improving the facilities. Having budgeted conservatively for 2017, we ended the year with a surplus against budget of £2,176, which will be applied accordingly.

Following a downward trend of lettings income since the peak in 2013 and faced with steadily increasing running costs, we took the decision in 2017 to increase our hire rates with effect from 1st October. Hire rates had remained the same since September 2013 and, whilst we want to ensure that they represent good value for money and are competitive with rates charged by other halls locally, they need to reflect the costs we incur just to keep running. Historically, hire charges have been held at the same level for a number of years and then increased in the order of 10% in a single step to cover year on year running cost increases (which have generally been approximately 3%). In order to move away from this and to allow everyone time to plan accordingly, we will be reviewing our running costs and hire charges annually so that any necessary future price increases should not be at a level to cause any problems. As has always been the case, no increase in hire rates will ever be effected without giving our regular users plenty of advance notice.

We continue to hold a prudent level of capital as we know that there are capital projects that this will be needed for, especially as the hall reaches its quarter century this year. As part of our monitoring of our adopted reserves policy we have identified that a large part of our capital will be needed to fund planned/expected expenditure on the fabric of the building and replacement equipment in the next few years and so is to be regarded as expected expenditure and not "reserves" for the purpose of that policy. It is because we have maintained that prudent level of capital that we will be in the fortunate position of being able to meet necessary expenditure.

The three sets of external doors in the main hall and the main entrance doors and the committee room window were all replaced by KJM in the Spring of 2017, mainly using grant money provided by Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council. In addition to the usual routine maintenance and servicing, curtain tracks on the main hall doors and one of the windows and entrance matting in the foyer were replaced, more efficient hand dryers were installed in the toilets and a new floor polishing machine purchased.

Mike has again done a great job securing us grant funding from Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council for the majority of the cost of replacing the oil tank and improving the area around it and we are most grateful to the Council for their support with this. I also wish to thank all bidding companies for their quotations and advice and we will be able to inform them of our final decision shortly. We also anticipate some decoration will need to be done this year and we continue to look at options for replacing the main hall lighting system and other improvements.

This is the community's facility to use and enjoy so please bear us in mind if you are planning a party, meeting, recreational activity or other event that the Village Centre could accommodate. We welcome feedback or other comments or suggestions about the Village Centre so if you have any please let me or another member of the management committee know.

Our website (www.stmarybourne.co.uk) shows the facilities we have on offer and what they cost to hire, lists clubs currently using the Centre and has all necessary contact details. You can also find us on Facebook. There are frequently notices in Hill and Valley too.

Finally, a big thank you to all of our hirers and users and to all of you for taking the time and trouble to come to this meeting about your Village Centre. This year it is 25 years since the new Village Centre opened and we hope you will join us in marking our "silver anniversary" by coming to one or more of the celebratory events over the weekend of 27th – 29th April.

Karen Crofts
Chairman