

St Mary Bourne Village Centre

(Registered Charity No. 301936)

Chairman's Report for the Annual General Meeting to be held on Tuesday 26th February 2019

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 strive to keep our facilities first rate and to give local people what they want so the views of those people are really important to us. Our AGM is a good opportunity for us to let people know what we've been doing and to receive and discuss feedback.

We are lucky in St Mary Bourne to have a hard working and dedicated group of volunteers managing and running the Village Centre but we do need more to join us. The management committee comprises the trustees (of which there are currently 4, myself, Mel Cavell-Wells, Mike Case and Kevin Wilding) and four other committee members, currently Michael Widén, Jo Boxer, Angela Cook and Ray Randall. Angela handles all of the bookings and enquiries, supported by Michael who also takes care of our invoicing and they collect our income so promptly and efficiently that debtors are very much a thing of the past! Ray Randall does a sterling job as our caretaker, assisted by Carol Wall who kindly gives her time to clean the hall. Angela, Ray and Carol are the face of the committee to users of the Village Centre and they do a great job all year round. We are greatly indebted to them.

Michael is to be congratulated on his considerable dedication and he continues to give us the benefit of his many years of experience. Jo keeps us on track with health and safety matters and our Treasurer, Mel, efficiently manages our finances over the year. Mike has applied himself to securing grant funding and is becoming something of an expert on the planning process in connection with our plan to replace the oil tank. Kevin has been a very organised and efficient Secretary and has also managed the sound system and organised events as well as finding time to investigate our options for replacement lighting and possible audio/visual systems.

Sadly this year we have lost one of our committee members, Gib Hancock, who died in December. Gib made a great contribution to the village in the time we were lucky enough to have him with us and we will miss him and his enthusiasm for village life and his care for other people. His wife, Lorna, helped him to set up the Community Library operating in the Club Room each Saturday morning and Lorna has kindly continued to run the library, which is a valuable community service now we no longer have a mobile library service. Thank you Lorna.

We will also be losing another member of our committee after this meeting. Kevin has tendered his resignation as a trustee as he and Julie are leaving the village and moving to Cheltenham. Kevin has made a valuable contribution to the running of the Village Centre and has been a great support. He has done a lot of work to bring theatre productions back to the Village Centre, has willingly tackled many technical issues and will be very hard to replace. We wish Kevin and Julie every happiness in their new home.

Another person I must thank is Claire Gervat who took over the running of the Film and has done a sterling job organising, publicising and running the Film along with her team of helpers. These screenings of current and popular films are a valued and enjoyable community event and long may they continue. Well done Claire.

I am sure that the entire local community would like to join me in thanking each and every one of the people I have mentioned for all that they do to enable us to provide this community facility.

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 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. As we have been one trustee short for a considerable time and are now losing Kevin, we really do need to find new people

willing to become trustees soon and we are now also short of a secretary (who need not be a trustee). Trustees are elected for a 5 year term and Mike and I will be up for re-election next year and Mel in 2021. The management committee meets quarterly and the trustees have a couple of additional meetings so there is not a big time commitment and joining the committee is an opportunity to give something back to the community that we are lucky enough to be part of.

2018 was a good year for the Village Centre. We celebrated the 25th Anniversary of the opening of the new Village Centre and we marked this occasion with 3 different events over the weekend of 27th – 29th April. A Friday evening drinks party featuring many of the Village Scrapbooks (which proved to be a big hit!), an evening of live music and lots of dancing on the Saturday and a children's party on the Sunday afternoon, complete with 25th birthday cake and commemorative bookmarks.

After the success of the Proteus Players' excellent production of A Christmas Carol in 2017, we were lucky enough to have two professional touring company pantomime productions in December 2018. Forest Forge gave us an excellent Rumpelstiltskin (and uncovered Stephen Bennett's pantomime skills!) and Proteus' Scratchbuilt Puppets delivered an entertaining version of Hansel and Gretel. Thanks to Kevin for organising those shows and for setting up more professional theatre productions for later this year. Full details will appear in Hill and Valley soon.

The Club Room has had something of a revival this year through being used for art displays and the History Group's World War I exhibition. Thanks to Clem Jones and Tony Styles for having the vision and organising the display boards and thanks too to their painting friends who gave the walls a refresh. The curtains were replaced with neutral blinds and the work was done in time to set up the wonderful display of Richard Plincke's work to coincide with his memorial service. The boards were useful again for the History Group's moving exhibition in November honouring the First World War servicemen from the village.

The Village Centre was well used in 2018, particularly the main hall, with overall 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, and occasional hirings have been at a good level. I would also like to thank the Parish Council Clerk, Jo Exelby, for graciously giving way to allow for other bookings of the Club Room when required.

Our Treasurer's report explains our financial position as at the year end and Mel's report covers 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 2018, we ended the year with a surplus against budget of £2,840, largely due to not having spent as much on new equipment as we had anticipated (34% of budget) and to decent savings on a number of required expenditure items and balanced by slightly higher than budgeted income.

We continue to hold a prudent level of capital as we know that there are capital projects that this will be needed for in the relatively short term. 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.

In addition to the changes to the Club Room mentioned above, we have carried out routine maintenance and servicing throughout the building to keep to our commitment to maintain first rate facilities (repairs and maintenance came in at 106% over our budgeted figure of £3,000). Mike has continued to work on our project to replace the oil tank and improve the area around it and we hope to have planning permission to proceed with this soon. We are also planning a large spend on the exterior of the Club Room this year and some interior decoration 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 or other celebration, a meeting, a theatrical event, a sporting or recreational activity, an exhibition or any 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.

Karen Crofts
Chairman