

(Registered Charity No. 301936)

## **Chairman's Report for the Annual General Meeting to be held on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2021**

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. Our goal is to provide local people with facilities that they want to use so our AGM is a good opportunity for us to receive and discuss feedback and new ideas, as well as to let people know how we are doing and what we are planning to do.

This is also an opportunity, for me personally and on behalf of the local community, to thank the people involved in the running of the Village Centre and also those who run activities in it on our behalf. They are the backbone of the Village Centre and we are truly grateful to them.

The Village Centre is run by a management committee of volunteers. There are currently seven committee members, four of which are the charity's trustees (myself, Mel Cavell-Wells, Mike Case and Oli Madge) plus Michael Widén (who manages our invoicing), Angela Cook (who manages our bookings and enquiries) and Ray Randall (our caretaker). Mel is our treasurer and manages our finances, Mike is our secretary and Oli is our health and safety officer. Thank you all for everything that you do.

The trustees are ultimately responsible for the running of the charity, but most decisions are made by the management committee as a whole. All trustees have first been members of the committee to find out what it is all about before taking on the responsibilities of a trustee. We are always on the lookout for new committee members and would love to hear from anyone interested in joining. The management committee meets quarterly, and the trustees have a couple of additional meetings, so there is not a large time commitment and joining the committee is a good opportunity to give something back to your community. Trustees are elected for a 5-year term and Mel is up for re-election tonight. It really would be good to have some new candidates before any of us is up for re-election again (2025)!

Lorna Hancock has again done a sterling job running the Community Library operating in the Club Room each Saturday morning. This is a valued community service now that we no longer have a mobile library and particularly so in a year when people have wanted to stay local. Thank you Lorna for coping so well with this on/off year and the extra safety measures we had to put in place to stay Covid safe.

Claire Gervat again did a great job organising, publicising and running the Film for the short season that we were able to run. Claire has decided that it is time to hand over the reins to someone else and until someone comes forward the committee is planning to keep these screenings of current and popular films going. All being well, screenings will re-start in September and full details will appear in Hill and Valley. Thank you so much Claire, we really appreciate what you have done.

As we all know, 2020 was a year unlike we have experienced before! The Village Centre was closed for a large part of the year from 17 March, with limited activities possible at various points after the first lockdown started. Up to 17 March we were doing well with lettings and, as ever, a good proportion of our income came from our regular hirers. We appreciate their continued support and look forward to welcoming them back as and when they are good and ready. The Parish Council's year-round hiring for their parish office was a welcome lifeline and we are very grateful for it. We were also fortunate to receive a £10,000 grant from Basingstoke and Deane to see us through a period of seriously reduced income.

Limited activity was possible during the remainder of the year. We provided space for sorting and packing sewing kits for people sewing scrubs for our local NHS and we were able to support the Village Shop by providing storage space for the extra stock they carried to keep us all supplied in difficult times. We were pleased to be able to provide a COVID secure venue for the Village Shop's

pop-up Christmas Shop, which was greatly appreciated in a year when the usual Christmas fairs and markets were just not possible and being able to shop locally was such a bonus

We budget to make a small surplus each year as we are a charity and not running a profit-making business. Any surplus we make is invested in maintaining and improving the facilities. Our budget for 2020 was shot to pieces by the pandemic but, largely thanks to the grant from Basingstoke and Deane, we ended the year with a surplus against budget of £4,419. Not being able to get planned maintenance and repair work done during the pandemic was also a factor in this number and we continue to try to get this done. We are looking to overhaul the exterior of the Club Room and external woodwork generally, improve the area around the oil tank, replace the curtains in the main hall and buy more chairs.

We continue to hold a prudent level of capital as we know that there are capital projects like these that we will need this for in the relatively short term. We have identified that a large part of that 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 free reserves. Replacing the main hall lighting system is likely to be one such major expense when we can find dimmable LEDs that will light the whole space adequately! It is because we have maintained that prudent level of capital that we will be in the fortunate position of being able to meet much of the necessary expenditure ourselves.

We have the Watermill Theatre bringing their outdoor touring production of The Hound of the Baskervilles to the Recreation Ground on August 17<sup>th</sup> and we hope to be able to put on more productions in the future. Thanks to Michael for managing the box office and front of house for this and to the Parish Council for allowing the use of the Recreation Ground and the Pavilion. I think we are all ready for some entertainment!

June 2022 sees an historic royal first with HM the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and we are keen to host village events over the extended holiday weekend to celebrate in style. With this in mind we want to coordinate ideas and planning so if you want to get involved please let us know.

This is the community's facility and could be the perfect venue 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. Our website ([www.stmarybourne.co.uk](http://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.

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.

Hope to see you soon!

Karen Crofts  
Chairman