

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

Chairman's Report for the Annual General Meeting to be held on Tuesday 28th February 2017

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 those living in the parish of St Mary Bourne and surrounding area. We want our Village Centre to be and remain first rate and serve the needs of local people. The views of local people are very important to us because we want to know whether the facilities are what our community wants and will use. Our AGM is an opportunity for us to hear those views so thank you for coming.

We are lucky in St Mary Bourne to 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 "human face" of the committee for most users of the Village Centre and they do a great job. Angela manages the diary and all bookings and enquiries with quiet efficiency and always with a smile and Ray (now ably assisted by Carol, who has proved to be a great addition to the team) takes care of the fabric of the building and its cleaning.

Michael continues to offer us the benefit of his many years of experience and he and Angela have again made sure that our income is collected promptly so that we have no unpaid lettings at our financial year end, a commendable result. Jo has set up a reporting procedure for health and safety matters and our Treasurer, Mel, has efficiently managed our finances over the year. Mike has been heavily involved in securing grant funding for us this year (more of this below) and Kevin has been looking at options for possible future improvements of our facilities, as well as managing the sound system. Gib Hancock has kindly joined the committee this year and has done a great job setting up the community library (more on this later).

I am sure the whole community would wish to join me in thanking 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. Anyone who might like to become a trustee would usually serve on the management committee for a period first. This arrangement has worked well and gives newcomers a chance to learn about our 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. At present we are looking for someone to take on the role of secretary as I am struggling to chair meetings and record them!

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 trustees have met three times since our last meeting and the management committee has met quarterly.

Whilst applying for grant funding in 2016 it became clear that we would need to adopt a number of policies and procedures. Accordingly in November we adopted the following policies and procedures, all of which can be viewed on request:

- Reserves Policy (more on this below)
- Equal Opportunities Policy and Procedure

- Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable groups policy and procedures
- Health and Safety Policy

These policies and procedures will be reviewed periodically (mainly annually).

Chrissie Henderson and her team are to be congratulated on the continued success of the Film. The challenge as ever is getting people in, but over the year these screenings do produce income for the Village Centre and are a valued service to the local community. Chrissie's dedication to the Film is admirable and we are most grateful to her for continuing to run these evenings. Please do what you can to support these film screenings, bring your friends, have a glass of wine and enjoy the show.

Gib Hancock has done a sterling job getting the St Mary Bourne Community Library up and running in the Club Room each Saturday and I would like to thank both Gib and his wife Lorna for all they have done and continue to do to provide this service to the community and fill the gap left by the mobile library service ceasing in the area. I would also like to thank our county councillor, Tom Thacker, for his support of the community library and Hampshire County Council for the financial assistance they have given. Through Tom, Gib was able to secure grant funding from the council for the setting up of the community library and this money has been used to convert cupboards in the Club Room to accommodate the books and to purchase covers to give paperback books a longer shelf life. Gib cannot be here tonight but has asked me to pass on this message to you. Since opening on 3rd December, Gib and Lorna have issued a total of 212 books to 40 different people who between them have made 112 visits to the library. In this period the library has been open on 10 Saturdays. Gib is hoping to introduce jigsaw puzzles to the library's product offering now some space has been cleared to store them. I would also like to thank Pauline Chance for stepping in to run the library whilst Gib and Lorna are away on a well-earned holiday. The library is open from 10.30am to 12.30pm each Saturday and operates on a swap shop basis (take as many books as you wish initially and then you can borrow the same number that you return). There is a large selection of books and you can have a tea or coffee whilst you browse.

2016 was not quite as busy as previous years have been but nonetheless the Village Centre continues to be well used, with overall lettings reaching 92% of our budget for the year and our total income reaching 87% of our budget (which, on reflection, was probably a little too optimistic on the income side). We are very appreciative of the consistent support we receive from our regular hirers and hope that occasional hiring will continue to increase. The regular income we receive from the Parish Council represents a significant proportion of our revenue and we are most grateful for this steady income and their regular use of the Club Room. Angela continues to manage the bookings with great efficiency and we have a reasonable level of forward bookings for 2017.

Our Treasurer's report explains our financial position as at the year end and Mel will cover that in some detail. We ended the year with a deficit of £674.29 whilst we had budgeted for a very small surplus of £20. Although we can bear an occasional deficit of this nature, this is not something which we want to see becoming a trend. It is the committee's responsibility to manage and run the Village Centre so it can be used and enjoyed by our community but not to run a profit-making business. That is why we budget to make only a small surplus and any surplus we do make is invested in maintaining and improving the facilities.

Lettings income has decreased since the peak in 2013 whilst our running costs have been steadily increasing and prudence dictates that our income must be at a level to cover those ever-increasing running costs. Our hire rates have remained the same since September 2013 and we have done well to manage our expenditure to date, but our hire rates need to reflect the costs we incur just to keep running. Of course we also want our rates to represent good value and be competitive with rates charged by other halls locally. With this in mind we are currently looking at a possible small increase in our hire rates with effect from 1st October this year. No such increase would be effected

without giving our regular users plenty of advance notice. A decision will be made on this very shortly and we will be keeping our regular users informed.

We continue to hold a prudent level of capital as we know that in the reasonably short term there are capital projects that this will be needed for, especially as the hall is now approaching its quarter century and the need for repair/replacement and improvement becomes more likely. In November 2016 we adopted a reserves policy. The charity's "reserves" represent that part of our funds which are not required to meet commitments or planned expenditure or subject to other restrictions. Our adopted policy is to maintain reserves at a level to meet at least 6 months operational expenditure. As part of our monitoring of that 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 a prudent level of capital that we will be in the fortunate position of being able to meet that necessary expenditure.

In 2016 the main item of equipment we purchased was a new floor cleaning machine and the polisher was repaired. In addition to the usual routine maintenance and servicing, the main hall floor surface has been treated and sealed, the toilet corridor flooring replaced with tiling and door curtain tracks repaired. We also had a large bill to pay for an electrical survey.

The hall is generally in good shape but a number of things will be needing attention this year. We will be replacing the three sets of external doors in the main hall and the main entrance doors this spring and now that the vicarage wall has been replaced by fencing we can replace the oil tank and look at improvements to the area around it. We also anticipate some decoration will need to be done this year and we will continue to look at options for replacing the main hall lighting system.

Mike Case has done a great job securing us grant funding from Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council for the majority of the cost of the replacement doors and we very much appreciate the Council's support. I would also like to thank all bidding companies for their help in providing quotations and advice. They will all be informed of our final decision shortly.

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.

Karen Crofts
Chairman