

**PETT VILLAGE HALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE  
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: SEPTEMBER 2020  
CHAIR'S REPORT: 2019-2020**

**Introduction**

1. This is my report to the Annual General Meeting of the Pett Village Hall Management Committee for the year 2019-2020. The last two or three months of this year have been extremely difficult and challenging because of the Covid-19 pandemic.
2. Because the Hall had to be closed on 17 March 2020 owing to the Covid-19 activity, there has been very little income for the last three months of the year. This has been offset by a very welcome Retail, Hospitality and Leisure (RHL) grant of £10,000 received from Rother District Council. We have also received invaluable advice from the Activities in Rural Sussex (AIRS) advisory service which we joined last year on how to manage during the lock-down and to start opening the Hall again.
3. I am happy to stand for re-election as a member of the Committee and as Chair and Bookings Manager.

**Thanks**

4. There are a large number of people I would like to thank for their work, help and contributions during the past year.
5. I am immensely grateful to all the **members of the current Committee** (who are also trustees) for their hard work, enthusiasm and support during the past year: Terry Cornish, Carol Glasson, Carol Pecorini, Fran Pitts (Secretary) and Richard Smith (Treasurer).
6. We are also grateful to other members of the community who regularly attended our meetings, including Ann and David Nicholls from POPP, Alan Kenworthy from the badminton group and Philippa Strickland, who gives valuable advice on health and safety matters. Members of the community are always welcome to attend Committee meetings and to contribute. I am also grateful for the valuable support shown to the Committee by Councillor Judith Dean, who has been the Parish Council's observer at meetings and has attended these on a regular basis, making a valuable contribution.
7. We have also been very fortunate to be able to call on the services on a regular basis of **Terry Cornish** in respect of day-to-day electrical, plumbing and general maintenance tasks, especially when a panic call is received saying that there is no

heating in the Hall, which fortunately is a far less regular occurrence than it used to be following the replacement of the boilers in 2018/19.

8. We have had of course wonderful support from the members of **our maintenance team** without whom the Village Hall simply would not function. **Lue and Richard Cooke** have given dedicated service throughout the year and it is thanks to them that the Hall always looks brilliant – we receive many compliments from users and potential hirers about how the Hall always looks spick and span. They both go the extra mile – changing light bulbs, testing the fire alarms, etc etc. During lockdown, along with Terry Cornish, they have been amazing in keeping the hall clean, and even undertaking decorating! In particular, they have been instrumental in getting the Hall ready for reopening by installing sanitisers and making sure we have all the necessary equipment to enable us to open. I cannot thank them enough for everything they have done.
9. **Paul Turner** has continued to give us his usual very high standard of help in maintaining the grounds and outside areas of the Hall.
10. We also get excellent support from a number of **suppliers and specialists** including Alan Farnes (Electrician), Conquest Cleaning (Hall floor), Booker and Best (Heating) Steve Holmes (Pest Control) and Emma Goodsell at Rectory Interiors.
11. Although the principal source of income for the Hall comes from the fees paid by hirers, we are also very fortunate to be able to call upon additional funds provided by other supporters. Their contributions mean that we are able to meet maintenance and replacement costs without having to raid our balances too much. These include the **500 Club** run untiringly by Philippa Strickland and Carol Pecorini – their funds have helped enormously in the last year which has seen a high level of expenditure on maintenance and improvements to the Hall. **Chris and Robin Hutt** who very generously donate 20% of their income from garden openings at Fairlight End during the year to the Village Hall, in return for visitors being able to use the car park and toilets. **Anne and Tim Jury** make regular donations from the proceeds from their monthly coffee and community library mornings; and **fundraising events** organised by members of the Committee, especially Carol Pecorini and Carol Glasson for the craft fairs.
12. Above all, I would like to thank the many organisations and individuals who have hired the Hall over the last year on a regular and one-off basis. It is a great sadness to the Committee that we have had effectively to close the Hall since the middle of March because of Covid-19. We do hope that we will soon be able to welcome all users to the Hall once again: we are already seeing the return of most of our regular users since 25 July 2020 although current restrictions make activities such as parties very problematic.

## **Maintenance Issues**

13. Fortunately, this year has seen far fewer problems arise in respect of the maintenance of the Hall compared to the year before, especially in relation to heating since the installation of the new boilers in 2018/19.
14. The most serious, unexpected and expensive issue has been the need to empty the sewage sump and replace certain parts. The cost was over £4,000 and the help of funds from the 500 Club was most welcome.
15. Expenditure decisions on minor day-to-day issues are made by the Chair and Treasurer, whilst major items of purchase and/or repair are made by email consultation with the Committee without the need for additional formal meetings. These decisions are reported at Committee meetings and in the interests of transparency also on the Pett Village Hall Committee pages of the Pett on the Net website.

## **Improvements to the Hall and Services to Users**

16. Thanks to the relatively healthy financial state of the Village Hall and the continuing increase in the number and range of bookings, we have been able to make a number of improvements to the facilities over the last year.
17. These include:
  - Superfast Broadband and WiFi which is now available throughout the building.
  - With the invaluable help of Chris Saint, there is now a sound system in the main hall.
  - LED lighting has been installed throughout the building, which not only improves the lighting but also significantly reduces running costs.
  - A curtain and blinds have been installed in the main hall which enable the room to be blacked out when necessary as well as improving the atmosphere for certain activities such as yoga.
  - The floor in the main hall has been re-sanded.
  - Thanks to Richard Smith, we now have a BACS facility in our bank account which makes the purchase of items for the Hall much easier, and also enables us to refund bookings deposits by BACS rather than by cheque. This has proved a very welcome facility for those hiring the Hall.
18. Overall we have spent some £10,000 in improvements this year, but our financial position remains sound with healthy reserves, despite the loss of income because of Covid-19. The Treasurer's report gives more details.

## **ARC**

19. Finally, discussions continue to take place with the Committee for establishing an **Archive Resource Centre (ARC)** for Pett, Fairlight and Guestling. The ARC Committee are still finalising necessary funding, but it has been agreed that in principle by the Pett Village Hall Management Committee that ARC will use part of the Gallery for their operation.

## **Conclusion**

20. This has been a most unusual year. Until the end of February, there was an increasing flow of bookings and the Hall was in great demand. But as already mentioned, our income stopped suddenly when the Hall had to be closed.
21. But most of the regular activities have returned since 25 July, and we are taking a growing number of bookings for 2021, including several wedding receptions. Slowly things are getting back to something like normality, and we are confident that although income may be significantly down for the financial year 2020/2021, the Hall will go from strength to strength from then on.
22. Finally, I would like to thank all our users and the community in general for their continued support and understanding during these unprecedented times. We look forward to providing an even better service in the years to come.

**Tim Rothwell**  
**Chair, Pett Village Hall Management Committee**  
**September 2020**