

PETT VILLAGE HALL REPORT – DECEMBER 2020

1. In normal years the Pett Village Hall Management Committee would now be publishing the agenda for their meeting scheduled for the first Monday in January. But as everyone knows, this has not been a normal year by any stretch of the imagination and the move of Rother into Covid tier 4 in December means that the meeting will not now take place.
2. We did think (briefly!) about holding the meeting by Zoom but we thought that would be too much of a challenge for the limited IT skills of some of the Committee, especially me. So this report is being issued to update the community on the state of play at the Village Hall at the year's end.

Finances

3. Compared to some village halls in Sussex, we are fortunate to be in a relatively strong financial position. We have had some income from activities this year, albeit down significantly on 2019.
4. We had normal income until lockdown in March then hardly anything until July when we reopened. From August through to November things were picking up quite nicely, although some of the more lucrative money-earning functions such as parties and wedding receptions sadly could not take place. We then had to close again in November, opened again at the beginning of December, and then had to close again when Rother moved into tier 4. Nobody knows at the time of writing when we may be able to open again.
5. We have been able to secure some valuable financial help from the Government through Rother District Council by way of the Retail, Hospitality and Grant Fund. We are very grateful to Rother DC Councillor Andrew Mier for his help in pointing us in the right direction for these grants. We secured £10,000 in respect of the lockdown from March until July, and a further £1,334 for the November closure. There is the possibility that similar financial help may be available for the current tier 4 closure.
6. As a result, we have assets of about £30,000 and we also have the 500 Club to call on if we need to. The Committee are very grateful to Philippa Strickland and Carol Pecorini for all their hard work in administering the 500 Club scheme and for drumming up new business. Before this year, the current Committee had spent some £20,000 on maintenance and improvements to the hall since we took over in 2018, and fortunately we have no planned items of major expenditure in the pipeline. We should therefore be able to weather the financial storm until business can return to normal, hopefully sometime in the Spring.

Trustees

7. I am delighted to report that we now have two new trustees on the Pett Village Hall Management Committee, Caroline Turner and Clare Walker. This brings the number of trustees to eight, but under the constitution we do have space for two more. Do let me know if you would be interested.
8. Caroline and Clare will bring a new perspective to our activities and are full of enthusiasm and great ideas for moving our work forward.

Administrative Officer

9. As you may know, the Committee decided in September to appoint a paid part-time Administrative Officer to undertake a range of duties, especially those of Bookings Manager. We advertised the post and had a very positive response, with 16 high quality applications. Representatives of the Committee interviewed four candidates and after very careful consideration appointed Clare Walker, who started with us on 1 November. Something of a baptism of fire for Clare in the circumstances! Clare joins us after jointly running her own highly successful business for over 20 years.
10. Clare has already settled really well into the role, and now handles all the bookings and related matters. Although the hall is not open at the moment, the bookings work does not stop as people are looking to book events once we are able to hold them again. The diary for 2021 is filling up fast and so if you have a special event in mind to hold at the hall in the coming months it would be a good idea to contact Clare as soon as possible at village.hall@pettnet.org.uk

Archive Resource Centre (ARC)

11. It has been agreed that the newly-formed Archive Resource Centre (ARC) for Fairlight, Guestling and Pett will have its office in the Gallery at Pett Village Hall. Some work needs to be done to convert part of the Gallery into an office, and this has been carried out during the Christmas break and the current closure of the hall.

Thanks

12. What has been a difficult year for the hall has been made easier by the enthusiasm and support of the Committee and our team of helpers. As Committee Chair, I am very grateful to them all. Richard Smith, our Treasurer, has kept a watchful eye on our finances and our insurances and has ensured what income we have has been forthcoming, including the grants we have been able to obtain. Fran Pitts has as ever done a sterling job as our Secretary and Carol Glasson and Carol Pecorini have worked hard as Committee members and as support for the Coffee Mornings and Community Library when we have been able to host them.
13. Terry Cornish, as well as serving on the Committee, has worked wonders as our maintenance specialist, always ready at the drop of a hat to attend to the problems

and niggles that inevitably occur. As well as giving us a ready repair service, Terry has saved us a lot of money! And of course, Lu and Richard Cooke have been magnificent as always with their dedicated work, ensuring the hall always looks spick and span and this year, above all, ensuring that it has been safe to use. We are so lucky to have them. And Philippa Strickland, as well as her work on the 500 Club, continues to give us excellent help and advice on all things health and safety.

14. I am also grateful to Councillor Judith Dean, the Pett Parish Council representative, for her continuing support for the work of the Committee and for tolerating our rather unusual and informal style of Committee meetings!
15. Above all, thank you to all our users for their support, tolerance and understanding during this (hopefully) unique year.
16. Although things have been challenging in 2020, the Committee are optimistic about the viability and future of the hall and let's hope by this time next year we are able to look back on a year of increasing activity and fresh ideas.

Tim Rothwell
Chair, Pett Village Hall Management Committee
December 2020