

WHO (the world health organisation) have recently announced the end of the Covid pandemic. Like many the duration of the pandemic caused great uncertainty for the village hall trustees. We were well supported by the government during this time but as life returned to normal we were uncertain as to how many of our previous hirers would return. Added to this the cost of living crisis put pressure not only on our costs but also on those who use the premises to run their sessions. We were extremely lucky in that our fixed price electricity contract ran through to March 2023 protecting us from the worst of the hike in energy prices.

With the cost pressures we were faced with a decision as to whether to put hiring rates up. The trustees decided in the interests of retaining as many hirers as possible we would maintain the pre Covid rates.

We have actually seen an increase in hirers, with local choirs in particular making good use of the facilities and it's amazing acoustics enabling us to reach the year end with a slight surplus.

This past 12 months has also seen us as a nation celebrate a jubilee, mourn a monarch and crown a new king and the village hall has been able to play its part in hosting these events on behalf of the parish. I want to pay particular tribute to the current board of trustees who whilst on the one hand battle with ensuring costs are covered and future costs provided for recognised the importance of these events and supported them all, allowing free use of the halls and kitchen.

Regular events that are held in the hall such as Arts Reach, Christmas Fayre and Burns night, are well supported and we thank those who volunteer to run these events. They are key fundraising events.

Unfortunately we have had to cancel the open gardens event planned for this year. We felt it was important that the event needed to be second to none if we were going to run it so not to impact attendance in future years. With my health not having been great this year and many other things to organise the trustees decided it was better to postpone. We do look forward to holding the event again in the future and thank in advance all those happy to open their gardens.

The village hall relies on volunteers to manage the building and raise funds for the running costs and saving towards the future cost of the thatch. As we approach our AGM later this month I'd ask members of the parish to give thought as to whether they could put themselves forward as a trustee, as they say Many hands make Light work

Stuart Chorley