

VILLAGE HALL REPORT FOR YEAR 2011-2012

I am sure that many will have seen the extensive report in a recent Biggleswade Chronicle regarding our Village Hall and its pending developments. In general, improvements are needed to meet with Health & Safety requirements, building maintenance & repair requirements while others relate to cosmetic improvements that users are requesting.

To be more specific, building maintenance is to cover problems with the leaking roof, dangerous concrete surrounds that are creating an H&S problem, safety handrails to meet with regulations and the correct degree of emergency lighting demanded for public buildings. Some of these points were raised in my report last year but because of repayments with the outstanding ACRE loan it had not been possible to carry out anything other than vital work. The only way we could continue was to maintain the tight degree of financial control started in the previous year, to get even more bookings and to obtain a further grant.

Fortunately the activities we had organised during 2010-2011 were now proving more successful than ever. Villagers are appreciating the need to carry on with 'good works' and are being very supportive. I sincerely thank all who have been involved and helped with many of the various projects. The '100+ Club', was not just profitable to the hall but also to all members. As such, extra prizes were introduced during the year to show appreciation. Having our own premises licence really proved a winner. Apart from being able to offer customers a bar facility at a moment's notice, it has taken away much of the hassle with the old TENS system. We regularly have been able to offer highly profitable bar facilities to many hirers to full mutual advantage. Once a month Bingo is now also up and running and highly popular. All this has amounted to converting a steadily increasing deficit that could have depleted our funds to almost zero within a year to realising a profit of £3,777.56. By holding several major functions with entertainment and a multi-choice 2 or 3-course hot meal we have now managed to fully pay off the ACRE loan.

Still looking for a grant for major work and improvement, we thank all those from the village who have continued to give their support and help. I thank the Parish Council for paying the Insurance premium for 2011, which greatly helped to keep things on the right side. If members of the Parish Council have not already heard I also thank them for their input of around £2000 needed to furnish the requirements of our WREN application. I am pleased to say that as a result of this, we now have the grant approved and contractors for the specific areas of work are primed such that work hopefully can begin during April and May.

I am pleased to say that we have learnt how to run our new heating system to its best advantage and this winter temperatures in the hall have been very comfortable. Actually keeping it ON at low level 24/7 is cheaper to run than the old storage heaters were and allows more heat to be switched when required. The old storage heaters have not been used for well over a year now and will shortly be removed to help make way for improvements to the hall's décor.

Again, as last year, I thank all committees, village societies, friends and the Trustees for their help and enthusiasm for our plans to make this hall the envy of many.

Chris Bashford (Chairman)