**ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

**Wednesday**

**11th. May 2022**

 **7.00 pm at Gresham Village Hall**

**GRESHAM VILLAGE HALL ASSOCIATION**

**CHAIRMAN’S REPORT**

To misquote the doyens of football punditry, 2021 was “a year of two halves”. During the first six months of 2021, the wretched virus kept us pinned back in our own half with little or no activity up front. Come July, however, we were able to push forward and fling open the doors, welcoming users (existing and new) back into the hall.

I am pleased to say that (with one exception) all our existing regular users have resumed their activities. Badminton, backgammon, bowls and upholstery are all again doing their respective things and we are delighted to welcome them all back. The only casualty of Covid has been the band who, for understandable reasons, have concluded that (at least in the short-term) they are unable to resume practicing in the hall. We are sad to see them go but hope that we might welcome them back again when circumstances permit. On the plus side, we are now very pleased to be hosting the monthly meetings of the North East Norfolk Bird Club.

Apart from our regular users, we have also seen an uptick in village residents and those from further afield booking the hall for parties and celebrations (both for adults and children) and we were very pleased to provide the venue for the Chapel Christmas Fair and two further Chapel charitable fund raising events together with the more secular part of the events celebrating the re-opening of the church following its prolonged period of renovation. The local Duke of Edinburgh’s Award Scheme, whose participants were camping on the park, also had use of the hall’s facilities overnight and we look forward to welcoming them back in due course.

With regard to personnel, we were delighted to welcome on board Steven Smith and Chris Hunter as new trustees. Both are firmly rooted in the life of the village and are very welcome additions to the team. We are also very keen to recruit more trustees with perhaps some of the younger members of the community joining us and broadening our perspectives in running this great amenity.

On the property/maintenance front, we have also been quite busy. The hall is now wi-fi enabled (my thanks to Chris Hunter for arranging and monitoring this) and there are plans afoot to set up a digital booking system. With a view to showing films in the hall and for the use by visiting lecturers etc., we have (together with the Friends of the Church) acquired a film projector and are in the process of identifying a suitable screen. We are also now the proud possessors of some staging. This was acquired at no charge from Baconsthorpe village hall (to whom we offer are great thanks) who were rationalising their storage facilities. A new shed has now been installed in which to store the staging on a permanent basis. On a more prosaic level, the illuminated fire exit signs within the hall have been replaced and the boiler has undergone minor surgery to ensure its continued functionality. The rainwater soakaways to front and rear of the hall have both suffered some subsidence and contractors have been engaged to replace the existing rubble based system with a more long term solution using a crate system. This work was completed in Jan/early Feb this year. We are now also in the process of extending the all-weather car parking area to the front of the hall.

We have again been the grateful recipients of grants from NNDC as part of the national government’s scheme to compensate the leisure and hospitality sector for loss of income arising out of the additional lockdowns and regulations prohibiting certain leisure and hospitality events. Thus we have remained satisfactorily insulated from the adverse financial effects of the Covid-19 restrictions and the hall remains in a healthy financial position.

Simon Cheves

5th. May 2022