

THE SHUTFORD VILLAGE HALL TRUST

(Charity No. 304364)

Trustees' Report for the year ended 31 March 2018

This organisation is a charitable trust originating from the gift of land in 1954 for a community building to be used and managed by the parishioners of Shutford and their community groups, who are entitled to representation on the Management Committee in accordance with the conveyance of the land, which is our governing document.

At the end of the last report, the bare shell of our new village hall was about to be handed back to the trustees, and this was duly done by our contractors, Genesis Construction, on April 11th 2017 albeit some of the groundwork still to be completed. Our management committee continued to pursue all available sources of funding for general and individual parts of the fit-out project and to call in the many pledges received from villagers to carry out specialised work towards the building completion. Not all grant applications received approvals, but 5 new grants were received from external sources and 3 additional financial contributions came from local residents. It was disappointing that a grant from the Parish Council was not approved by a small margin but on-going activities by the Committee during the year raised approximately £6,000.

Completion of the building started with the installation of the insulation materials beneath the floor, in the roof and walls, enabling the pledge from TOE2 to be claimed. Much of this work was carried out by villagers in their free time as were internal linings, carpentry, plumbing, electrics, plastering and eventual painting. The Village Hall was given all the internal doors free of charge by a villager and they were fitted by a villager too. The choice of a heating system was made quite late in the project and a quotation from local agent, AC Electrical, to install 2 Mitsubishi Inverter air to air heat pumps, was accepted on a recommendation from a Committee member. Particular mention should be made also of our kitchen, which was supplied and fitted at cost and 50% funded by the Calor Rural Community Fund, made possible by a national vote in favour when pitched against a wide range of other worthy projects. All the fit-out work carried out by contractors was zero rated for VAT but materials obtained for the DIY activities had to be obtained at the standard rate.

An opening date of 14th July 2017 was announced and invitations to the opening ceremony were extended to all those who had contributed, totalling 110 individuals. It is all these people and many more that the Trustees and Management Committee must thank most sincerely for making this project possible and a plaque acknowledging them is now mounted on the wall of the entrance hall. The opening ceremony on Bastille Day was blessed with gorgeous weather and attended notably by our original benefactor, Lord Saye and Sele and our newly re-elected MP Victoria Prentis. Everyone was favourably impressed with the new building and amazed that the old building had been handed to our contractor a mere 10 months earlier, and it had come in just under budget.

So, in this financial year we have experienced 7 months of use of the building and the only problem of any importance was the acoustics in the main hall, which has been improved substantially by the installation of sound absorbers, by the quaintly named company "The Woolly Shepherd", which make quite a talking point when first observed. Our original research around the district where village halls had been substantially renovated or replaced indicated that the efforts were rewarded with a substantial increase in usage. This has certainly been the case so far in our hall, where new activities include, a Supper Circle, Film & Book Clubs, various Craft & Exercise Classes, Music Evenings, Charity Coffee Mornings and numerous Children's Parties, crowd the booking calendar along with meetings of our traditional village organisations. But one very notable success is the Community Lunch on Thursdays, originally intended just to bring villagers together, but now provides substantial contributions to our funds.

In conclusion, it must be said that our new Village Hall has reinvigorated our Charity, brought many more villagers in contact with each other and is a valuable asset to the village, for which we are ever grateful to all those who helped, both financially and with their time, expertise and skills.

.....Roger Bancroft

..... 2018