



Chair's Report 2021-22

2021 was another unusual year, hampered by the Covid-19 pandemic with the numerous on/off lockdowns and social distancing rules impacting upon groups and individuals accessing the building for a significant part of the year. At our last AGM we lost the valuable contribution of four long-standing committee members (Peter, Josie, Margot & Joan) and we had to restructure the committee to try and replace each of their roles and areas of responsibility.

Fortunately, since the autumn, the building has been fully reopened with all the regular user groups now up and running and reusing the facilities.

In September, we resumed collection of annual subscriptions (having extended the 2020 subscription year into 2021, due to the pandemic. The Covid recovery grants enabled us to do this). Val Gibbons kindly joined the committee to take the lead on this essential function. The subscription monies greatly contribute to the income of our cherished village hall building as well as helping to facilitate hall users with social, recreational, and educational activities. Thank you to all members who renewed their annual subscriptions and I hope that moving forward, all members will use the building as much as they wish to do so.

Despite the impact of the pandemic and the loss of 4 committee members we were still able **to implement the following social activities:**

- The Christmas Show resumed with an excellent turnout of both cast and audience. Thank you to Rosemary Monument and Martin Peacock for all their efforts. The event raised £XXX
- Wednesday Coffee mornings started up again in October – although the sessions are not yet as busy as pre-pandemic levels they are slowly picking-up. Thank you to all helpers and bakers.
- Tai Chi group has joined the BCA as a new section. They kindly donated £300 to the BCA as contribution towards the HIVE heating system.
- We have promoted use of the hall for more casual sports usage and several members have started to use the facilities for soft tennis.
- All other regular user groups have resumed their weekly or fortnightly sessions.

To improve our governance, we have:

- Reviewed and refreshed our key policies to ensure they comply with Charity Commission guidelines as well as meeting the needs of our members.
- Reviewed and refreshed our hall hire terms and conditions, pricing list and booking forms and implemented a new internal process between bookings and finance.

To improve the building:

- Undertaken repairs to the chimney stacks and the internal damp patches are now starting to dry out.
- Electrical works including XXXXX (sound controller to the back of the hall to XXXX?)
- The choir kindly donated some funds and Jean approved the purchase of a wooden lectern which can be used for talks and music events, as well as an indoor/outdoor sign.
- Purchase of a baby changing unit.

- In response to soaring energy costs increases, a sub-group was formed to review green refurbishment options. The building has poor insulation, an aging central heating system which has focussed the committee to explore green alternatives to reduce costs and to improve energy efficiency. The following investments were agreed by the committee:
 - installation of HIVE heating controllers to minimise energy wastage
 - remedial repairs and painting of all windows - which is likely to increase their lifespan by a further 5-10 years
 - installation of room lighting sensors, where possible, to reduce electricity costs and be more energy efficient
 - that, the balance of BCA funds after the above investments and allowing for 12 months building running costs, are ring-fenced for a significant green investment project focussed on energy efficiency to replace the heating system for a greener energy efficient system for the long- term viability of the building.

Our bank balance remains healthy with further Covid recovery grant receipts from Government. Thank you to Ian for taking on the role of Treasurer and setting-up a new process for managing and reporting on our financial affairs. Thank you also to Brancepeth Parish Council for their annual grant of £3,000, which helps contribute to the running costs of the building.

Thanks also to Jo keeping us all organised as well as managing the website, applying for grants, and managing our governance paperwork, chief sweeper, and gardener. Also, to Gerry for handling bookings and the wider committee for their time and efforts in helping with the smooth running of the association.

Looking ahead ...

- We hope to resume a range of social nights and activities including quizzes, men's nights, and cinema evenings in the coming months (subject to the pandemic and helpers).
- Working with St Brandon's, the Castle and the Brancepeth Parish Council to host a street party to celebrate 'The Queen's Platinum Jubilee.
- Finishing off the stage project with the refurbishment of the stage panels – giving them a new lease of life for the next 40 years ...
- Providing an 'Online bookings tool via our website to facilitate easier booking access for our members.

Martyn Jones – Vice-Chair