



Chair's Report 2022

Compared to the two previous years, where Covid and social distancing rules significantly curtailed what we could do, 2022 began on a more positive outlook. Although some social distancing rules were still in place until February 2022, by the early Spring, all our regular user groups had resumed their activities and things started to get back to normal ...or the new normal.

Firstly, thanks to Val for leading on the collection of annual subscriptions and thanks to the collectors who go out knocking on doors in all types of weather! The subscription monies contribute to our overall income, which in turn helps to facilitate the running of our much-valued community building, as well as helping hall users with social, recreational, and educational activities. Thank you to all members who renewed their annual subscriptions. Although the year-end accounts for 2022 show less income for subscriptions compared to previous years', this is due to the subscription extension period, given during the pandemic, and our accounting period ending at the calendar year end, before subscriptions were fully collected. Our 2023 accounts will show that subscriptions collected are close in £value to pre-pandemic levels.

Despite the impact of the pandemic during the early part of 2022, and a much smaller management committee, we were still able to achieve the following:

To improve our building & facilities we have:

- Invested in additional dishwasher safe glass storage holders to house all our glassware, which will reduce breakages. We also repurposed the shelving system to house them.
- The garden area and car park were given an extensive clear-out and tidy during the summer. The guttering and gullies were also cleaned out and the fire escape side steps were jet hosed to clear away the moss. Thanks to Ian, Jo and Richard Harden for doing this work.
- We monitored the damp patch throughout the year, which took a significantly long time to dry out and more recently the areas have been repaired and replastered.
- We purchased a second-hand smart screen for use downstairs for presentations, exhibitions, online meetings as well as general audio/visual uses.
- The investment in the HIVE heating system has enabled us to reduce heating consumption.

Social Events & Activities:

- In June we held an event celebrate the 'The Queen's Platinum Jubilee.' Although originally planned to be held outdoors in the Castle courtyard the inclement weather brought us indoors. Over 100 people attended, and the event was great fun. Thanks to Josie, Val, Ian & Jo for making the event happen!
- The Christmas Show was yet again an excellent event with a great turnout of both cast and audience. Thank you to Rosemary Monument and Martin Peacock for all their efforts raising £528. As you know, Rosemary, after many years running the show, wishes to retire and

although she will be greatly missed, I'm pleased to report that Josie Armstrong has kindly offered to take on the lead role for organizing the show with Martin Peacock.

- Despite a reduction in the number of volunteers for Wednesday Coffee morning, it continues to be popular and helps provide a regular income. Thanks to Christine who has the challenging task of coordinating the weekly rota, which is not an easy task! Thank you to all helpers and bakers for their contributions, it is very much appreciated.
- Thanks to David Jackson for restarting the men's monthly social evenings – they are very well attended and enjoyed. At our last AGM, a member asked if the BCA would be providing any support for Ukrainian people who might reside in the village as part of the 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme. So far as we know, only one person is residing in the village and, after encouragement to attend the men's social evening, secured some work and is warmly welcomed into our community.
- We have continued to promote the hall for casual sports and snooker and have seen an increase in the number of members using the building ad-hoc for this, which is good!

Turning to Finances: Thanks to Ian for managing the association's finances. It involves regular weekly work. Thank you, Ian! I'm pleased to report that, overall, our bank balance remains healthy. Thank you to Brancepeth Parish Council for their annual grant of £3,000, which helps contribute to the running costs of the building – without it, we would not be able to carry out the necessary maintenance and repairs to our building. We have monies set aside to attract grant funders to help us improve the green energy efficiency of the building, which in turn will reduce the hall's running costs and make it viable for the long term. We have recently reviewed our hall hire pricing and we will be increasing hire charges for non-members going forward.

Thanks also to Jo for keeping us all organised. Jo looks after our website, does the hall bookings, applies for grants, and more generally is our chief sweeper up a' and gardener! Also, to the wider committee for their time and efforts in helping with the smooth running of the association.

Looking ahead ...

- We are looking forward to the Barn Bash event at the end of the month to help raise funds to make the necessary repairs to the roof. Thanks to Josie, Val, and Jo for organise this and a huge thanks to David & Vickie Jackson for hosting the event at Littlewhite Farm!
- This summer, as part of our green investment plan, all windows will undergo remedial repairs and be repainted. This will increase their lifespan by 5-10 years.
- We would like to see our newly formed Carpet Bowls 'section' become established with the aim of making it a weekly, well attended, and self-funded activity. Thanks to Ian for helping me set this up and to Christine for taking the lead on this going forward.
- Plans are in place to celebrate '100 Years of our Village Hall' building in 2024. Jo has set-up a group who are currently working on a publication about the history of our building and an exhibition as well as a special dinner dance event, which Josie has kindly agreed to organise.
- And, more generally, to work with St Brandon's, the Castle and the Brancepeth Parish Council to organise any joint social events ...which help make our village a nice place to live!
- Last, but by no means least, we need to continue our efforts to find new volunteers to help run social activities and join the management committee ...

Martyn Jones, Chair