

Fritwell Village Hall

North Oxfordshire

Fritwell Village Hall CIO

Chair's report

March 2023

Welcome to the Fritwell Village Hall CIO AGM.

I would like to start this Chair's Report by thanking all of those people who have given up time to support the Village Hall over the last 12 months. That includes the Trustees of the Hall, and the Friends of the Hall who regularly give their time to help. A lot of work has taken place in the last 12 months and it is only possible with the time, dedication and support of all these people. Much of this work goes on behind the scenes but is necessary to ensure that the CIO is not only run effectively but also that trustees carry out their legal responsibilities. To get a full overview of the governance involved you can see all of our policies on the website.

I would also like to thank the Parish Council who have been supportive of the work that the Trustees do.

I'd particularly like to take this opportunity to thank Mike Wheeler, as a friend of the hall, who has done the 'beer-run' for us now for 10 years, up until his retirement in 2023. This has been an invaluable support to the hall and the events that run a bar.

The past 12 months have seen us continue to focus on progressing plans for a new Village Hall. The early part of the year was, once again, disrupted by Covid, but once we were able the Trustees met regularly to ensure this project continued to move forwards. We started 2022 with three options on the table, but by the middle of the year we had narrowed this down to working with Walker Graham architects, and had submitted a basic plan, with the help of the Parish Council, to the District Council as part of the pre-planning process. The outputs of this process were very helpful and enabled us to move onto the next stage, which was finalising the plans for the hall in order to take these back to the community. I would like to thank David Williams particularly for his help as part of this process, he was an invaluable support. The year ended with a community meeting where we outlined the plans to the community and asked for input. The community input was very welcome and, on the whole, very positive. A video of the presentation, the slides, and a transcript of the Q&A are all available on our website. We move on to 2023 with the planning application submitted to, and approved by, the District Council and are excited for the next steps.

During the summer we highlighted to the community that we had vacancies for two trustees and were very pleased to welcome Kelley and Sarah on board. I'd like to thank them for their contributions since joining us, which are much appreciated by all of us. Four of our first trustees have completed their term of office and we thank them for their significant contributions to the work of the CIO.

Fritwell Village Hall CIO, Fewcott Road, Fritwell, OX27 7QA

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Throughout 2022 we have seen continued community use of the Hall. Regular hirers such as the Baby and Toddler Group, Keep Fit group and Table Tennis Club have continued and the 'Live Nights' have provided excellent live music and entertainment. The CIO run events, such as the series of talks, continued to bring in a good audience and thanks go to those locals who have been brave enough to contribute. The Thirsty Thursday Quiz continues to be very successful and is back to pre-Covid levels of attendance. A very successful free (thanks to a grant from Cherwell district Council) event was run to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee which was well attended despite the poor weather, and the annual 'Flower Show and more...' was well supported by both gardeners and residents despite the extreme heat. December saw the welcome return of Bingo to the Village Hall and we look forward to the next one in March.

The latter two events bring in residents not often seen at CIO events and we are always delighted to see them. In further attempts to broaden the demographic of users of the Hall we tried running a weekly coffee morning. Although this was enjoyed by the few staunch supports who came, it was discontinued due to lack of support and the rising costs of electricity meant it would be running at a loss. Similarly, our monthly Pub Night (originally called a Social Night) and Cushion Club are enjoyed by the few who attend and have continued. If you can think of events that would interest you or your friends, please let us know, as we want to reach and serve as many residents as possible.

The Trustees, like the whole nation, were saddened by the death of Queen Elizabeth and as a service to residents broadcast the funeral live on the big screen. In 2023 we will look forward to events to mark the coronation of King Charles III.

The Village Hall is also happy to continue to support the Community Fridge with its work to distribute food, otherwise destined for landfill, to the community.

As ever the Trustees faced a challenge keeping the Hall in good working order. In Spring 2022 we became aware that there was a water seepage issue under the floor. Investigation highlighted that there was mould under the floor and that the existing lino required replacing. This work was undertaken promptly but unfortunately this meant that the hall had to be closed for a period of 2 weeks. (8th – 22nd May), impacting both usage and income.

As ever finances are important to the Hall's continued running. Of additional note in 2022, over the usual income and outgoings, were grants towards the heating and the Diamond Jubilee Celebration.

The work towards a new Village Hall will continue in 2023. Having got planning permission for the works we have started looking in earnest at fundraising and hope to involve the whole community in this endeavour.

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To conclude I'd again like to extend a final thank you to all involved with the hall, including all the volunteers who help at events, but reserving most thanks for the residents who use the hall and continue to make it an important asset in the community.