



Charity Number: 301765

Bramley Village Hall

Bringing People Together

Bramley Village Hall Trustees: Annual Report from the Chairman of the Village Hall Trustees for 2019-2020.

Summary: The Village Hall remains a key focal point within the Bramley community and is in regular use by community and commercial bodies and by private hirers. The period under review saw significant change, with refurbishment of parts of the Hall and the completion of a new extension. These works were achieved with minimal disruption to our users and the project was delivered on time and budget. Further work has been undertaken to develop plans for new drainage and resurfacing of the car park and first steps were taken to explore the possibility of installing solar panels at the Hall. Our financial position remains sound, although the impact of Covid-19 will create some uncertainty about the year ahead.

Objectives

The objectives of the Village Hall and its Trustees as set out in the Deed of Trust remain unchanged.

The Trustees Committee

Gareth Jones – Chairman

Richard Beale – Treasurer

Jo Whatley – Secretary

Tony Walton – Maintenance

Jane Matthews – Health and Safety and the link with our Caretaker

Lars Smallbone – Young Trustee

Sam Webber

Jenny Begent

Sarah Hodnett

Keith Oborn - Trustee nominated by the Parish Council

Sam Webber and Lars Smallbone joined the Trustees Committee during the year and brought our numbers up to full strength; Lars is our first Young Trustee, in line with the Charity Commission's desire to encourage people under the age of 25 to become more involved in the governance of charities, large and small. We remain keen to recruit additional volunteers to support the work of the Trustees and to eventually join the Committee.

Catriona Hayward continues to be employed as our Business and Events Coordinator and managed our work with the architects and project managers for the refurbishment and extension project.

Policy Documents

We have policy documents covering all of the key areas of the Hall's functions, including finance, Health and Safety, bookings, maintenance and safeguarding. All have been reviewed during the course of the year. We have a Business Plan reviewed annually and a Strategy Document for the 5 Year period, 2020-2025, has been published on our website.

Village Hall usage – 'Business as usual'

- Usage has remained steady: regular users have occupied the Hall for an average of 303 hours per month (compared to 317 hours in the previous financial year, down slightly due to building work).
- Regular users are split equally between community and commercial hirers.
- Despite a period of disruption due to building work when the main hall was unavailable, we still hosted 21 children's parties and 5 adult parties.
- We lost only one user group as a consequence of the building work due to the dusty conditions which occurred.
- Since the opening of the additional space, the 'Frith Room,' we have seen additional bookings from some of our current groups and one new group who are taking advantage of our 'Kick Start' offer (see below)

Financial situation

- Our year-end figures have yet to be audited but Income for FY19/20 amounted to £39,163 (£44,734 for the previous year) of which fundraising efforts brought in £2,215.
- Expenditure in FY19/20 was £38,407 (£49,932 in FY18/19, of which £5,262 was our contribution towards the cost of architects drawings and other services for the extension project).
- Pending audit, we reached year end with income exceeding expenditure and a surplus of £756.

Key developments

- With the financial support of Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council and Hampshire County Council, we undertook the refurbishment of the Village Hall, with the addition of a new main entrance and a new meeting room, now named the 'Frith Room.' The project was completed on time and budget (£295,000) in January, 2020.
- We were pleased to welcome Cllr Diane Taylor, Mayor of Basingstoke and Deane, to the Village Hall to officially open the extension on 18 February 2020. County, Borough and Parish Councillors attended the event, which included exhibits by some of the user groups at the Hall and paintings of 'The Frith' woodland by children from St James Primary School, Bramley.
- An opportunity to achieve funding for resurfacing of the car park and improvement of external drainage issues is being pursued (with appreciation of the support from Bramley Parish Council in this matter).
- During early 2020 we took some initial steps to explore the possibility of installing solar panels at the Village Hall, to meet our energy needs from a renewable source and to potentially generate income from the sale of surplus electricity. We have sought advice from a renewable energy charity about developing our ideas and we are identifying potential sources of funding. (Put on hold as a consequence of Covid-19).
- In early 2020 we launched 'Kick Start' as part of our strategy to encourage use of our facilities, offering partners in the community the space to develop ideas, to experiment and trial events or new groups without worrying about room hire costs, while we accept a degree of risk in the loss of potential hiring income while a new group gets established. By March, one new group had taken up this offer.
- Our Caretaker, Helen Wallace resigned in February 2020 and we interviewed two applicants to replace her. Mrs Emilia Tutt was successful and commenced in her role at the end of February. We greatly appreciate Helen's commitment to the role and commend her for the 12 years she spent as our Caretaker. We wish her well in her new job.

Issues

There are no significant issues, complaints or disputes to report.

As of 23 March 2020, the Village Hall was closed in accordance with Government regulations for containment of the Covid-19 virus. Steps were taken to reduce expenditure and to maintain the facility in a 'dormant' state until lockdown restrictions may be eased. The long-term impact of these developments on the Hall's financial position will be assessed in due course.

Gareth Jones
 Chairman
 Bramley Village Hall Trustees