**Stretton-on-Fosse Village Hall AGM**

**Joint Chair Report – 20th March 2023**

The last 12 months have been a tale of two halves. Success in obtaining grants to develop the hall and drive the progression of green energy and efficiency, hold another wonderful set of community events from the Wednesday Warm Hub Lunches which have been a place of comfort, friendliness and security for some, the village show, the teas, meetings, Browns events, Strett Fest, Jubilee Celebrations, to name a few. However we have also experienced reservedness to book the hall as the world tried to steady itself and get back to life as we once knew it. Bookings have been impacted and we still are being patient, however, in the next 12 months there will be a new drive to move this forward. We can add Wi-Fi to our hall assets and by revisiting the electrical usage and its terms we can hopefully bridge the gap between usage and expenditure.

We are fortunate that during this continued challenging time to still have financial reserves to cover our fixed costs and we have gone on to receive significant grant aid to invest in the hall development and insulate the building, which will then in turn lead on to the redecorating and updating of the venue. The application for this took considerable time and it is still a long road ahead, in the procurement of the insulation, but we are making progress and look forward to this coming to fruition. We have received further benefit in income with the solar panels during the summer months with the hot weather. A further return on investment was the EV chargers – having being installed following grant, hall, community and Parish donations this will enable our community to benefit from fast charging for their vehicles.

We must expand more regarding the warm hub, as this is a new initiative to be a place of comfort for our community. Without the dedicated volunteers, soup makers’, kitchen helpers, and team: some of our community would be missing out on socialisation and guaranteed warmth in the day in this difficult economic climate.

To enable the hall to move forward to encompass the changing needs of the hall, we have had to be ruthless with some of our items in storage. Thanks to those who may not be on the committee but came and helped sort through and dispose of items, help catalogue items in storage and organise the space in the cupboards and under the stage.

Our meeting room has the benefit of new furniture and many thanks to Marianne for making the cushions for the chairs. With the new carpet and in time – the new decoration - this will be a great room for hire.

I know this can sound like we are repeating ourselves each year, but we believe if it isn’t broken, then don’t fix it and that is certainly the case with the committee and the support that we have here. We have a great team and are certainly grateful for the time and knowledge you give as volunteers. It can feel like hard work but everyone pulls together and wants to help make the hall the best it can be.

Izzi, you have been a fantastic secretary again, and even balancing 2 roles to help Sharon has been a sterling effort and thanks is truly deserved.

Thanks to Rod, for being the backbone of the maintenance and if you can’t do it, arranging for the works.

Thank you, Janice, in your first year solo in the role of Treasurer.

Sharon, thank you for your support at a difficult time for you and we know at times it’s been frustrating to obtain booking information; however, we hear that this is solved and it will be more effective moving forward.

Throughout the year there has been a project to improve the bookings process by adding much more to the website. Including a bookings calendar, so people can see for themselves when the hall is available and the facility to obtain bookings forms without having to request them, then submit them online.

Information about what is available in the hall plus the terms and conditions for hiring are all to be available on the website to avoid having to keep providing this information. The process has proved challenging due to difficulties obtain some historic details about the website, so we are extremely grateful to Jon Holdback for all his patience and persistence with this matter.

We are fortunate that during this continued challenging time to still have financial reserves to cover our fixed costs having received significant grant aid to cover our lost income.

Our army of helpers in the kitchen at events or helping to keep the garden in a manageable condition have not gone unnoticed by all who visit and we are grateful for their support.

The Trustees are a continued support and their research into procedure and systems, along with the committee looking after the day to day operations is making the venue a better place and an even greater village asset. This is going to be an exciting 12 months as we move ahead with the insulation plans, potential entrance improvements and the updating of the hall aesthetics.