

DWMI Report to the Parish Council AGM 12th May 2016

It's difficult to believe that our New Village Hall is nearing its 3rd birthday. At the re-opening in July 2013 we expressed our hopes for an 'exciting future' for the New Hall. It has certainly provided us with the communal focal point that the village missed after the demise of the much-loved Old Hall, and its success has greatly exceeded all expectations. It is hugely admired by everyone who walks through the doors and I think we can now safely say that we now have the new 'much-loved' replacement that the village of Drinkstone deserves!

Our end of year accounts are presently with the examiner and they will be presented at our own AGM to be held here on Monday 13th June at 7pm but I can report that the current financial situation is looking good.

Just to give you a general idea of some basic facts and figures this evening: The number of income generating bookings for the year was 411, which equates to an average of 34.25 per month as against 29.25 per month in the previous year. This total included 2 wedding receptions, an election and 14 children's parties (of which several are repeat bookings), plus 19 one-off events or private bookings. There is a steady flow of bookings for the year ahead and we have already taken a booking for October 2017. There are now 13 clubs or classes based at the Hall, most of which run regularly throughout the year. The increase in bookings has meant that the responsibilities of the Bookings Manager have also increased considerably and we owe a great deal to Liz who always manages to keep her calm and somehow fit new bookings in to an already very busy calendar!!

Consequently, the income from lettings for the year 2015-16 has exceeded the year's budget predictions, which as usual were jointly formulated by Liz and Merete at the beginning of the financial year. The fact that the Hall has been in such great demand from Hirers has meant that we have been able to maintain the booking fees at a very reasonable rate, whilst continuing to achieve a healthy profit. This has given the Trustees the flexibility to give consideration to the longer term future of the Hall and to set into place a Reserves Policy, part of which in turn establishes a Maintenance Fund ring-fenced within the DWMI accounts. The Village Hall accounts have always been reviewed monthly at the Management Committee meetings and when and where it is deemed possible, this Fund will now be added to. It will be earmarked to cover any major repairs and maintenance which might become necessary in the future, and will provide us with the means to maintain the building to the highest possible standards that both our hirers and local users have come to expect.

Regular Fund-raising events have continued throughout the year and I'm delighted to be able to report that last Saturday's Sale Trail was our most successful ever, raising in excess of £1,100 for the Hall. The Events and Fund Raising Committee have made it their priority to offer an ongoing, varied programme of activities which will appeal to a wide range of people, whilst balancing the need to continue to raise funds for the Hall. Regular Pub Nights were introduced by popular demand and have now become a permanent fixture on the Village calendar, and, in addition to our usual events, we have planned an Antiques evening later in the year. As ever we are remain open minded and willing to consider organising any further different activities which might be suggested.

We have also been very fortunate this year to have received an award of £1000 from Penny Otton's locality budget, and this has enabled us to upgrade the dishwasher, projector and microphone which will be well used by community groups and hirers. Penny has always championed our cause and once again we would like to thank Penny for her active support and her continued interest in our Village Hall activities.

The members of the Management Committee are a fantastic group of like-minded people who are extremely hard working, enthusiastic and committed to the cause. They have remained a very stable unit and a 'together' team who willingly devote a good deal of their time to Hall affairs, and we are fortunate that they possess a good mix of the skills and expertise needed to run the project successfully. However there are some changes to report in the make-up of the team.. Unfortunately in the Autumn Debbie Moss decided to stand down from the Committee and as a Trustee. We thank her for her many years of enthusiastic service and she has assured us that she hopes to be able to support our activities whenever possible in future. We are very pleased that Sheila Riches and Lorna Thurlow have joined the Management Team this year and have already involved themselves in the planning for the Queen's Birthday celebrations. Sharon Edmondson was appointed by the Committee to fill the vacant Trustee post and we were very grateful to her for successfully carrying out the duties of Bookings Manager in Liz's absence earlier this year. Special thanks must also go to our caretaker Robert Irving, who does a superb job in looking after the building, and to the rest of our 'hands on' back-up team - the two Tonys (Schmitt and Bland) and Dave Woodward, who are always readily available to provide us with support as and when needed.

In conclusion, I think it is important to stress that the success of the Village Hall has not simply been down to a good management team. We owe our thanks to the valued team of 'regulars' who, not only help us to look after the Hall but are regular users who take part in clubs, classes and other activities. They can always be relied upon to give us their support in all sorts of ways and we hope that this successful partnership will continue well into the future.

This support from all sections of the community and their 'ownership' of the Hall will always be vitally important for its success to continue. Only by continuing to work together will we be able to strengthen and extend the very positive role that our Village Hall is currently playing at the heart of our beautiful village community.

A truly magnificent Community effort - Long may it continue!!!!!!

