

## **BOTESDALE VILLAGE HALL REPORT 2019**

Botesdale Village Hall, originally the Church Rooms, is leased by Botesdale Parish Council from the Diocesan Board of Finance and the Parochial Church Council and administered as a charity by a Committee of six Trustees, representative of the hall users, together with three independent Trustees and one co-opted Trustee. The conditions of the lease include provisions for three elected members and up to two co-opted members.

The past year has seen successful use of the hall not only by the regular users but again this year as a venue for parties and events organised by local groups.

The Rickinghall and Botesdale Pre-School and Botesdale After School Club (BASC) use the hall throughout the day during term time and continue to maintain high numbers and good OFSTED reports. The proximity of the Hall to the woodlands area (leased from the Holt-Wilson family to the Pre-School) and the adventure play area at the School for BASC (who pick up from seven schools in the area) has meant that the children have been able to play outside during part of the day even during the winter.

Our local drama group WARTS staged a very successful production of The Vicar of Dibley in June, and Seasons Greetings performed in December.

Ballroom Dancing, Yoga, Artworks, Border Craft Collective, and the Parochial Church Council continue to use the hall on a regular basis. Ballroom Dances were also held on four Saturday evenings, and a Children's Pantomime was held in January. Others have used the hall for parties (6) and fund-raising events (4), although the District Council did not need to use the hall as a polling station as there were no local elections last year.

The Parish Council holds the monthly meetings in the Village Hall, using the main hall for meetings as required by the public attendance, usually resulting from consideration of planning applications. The Neighbourhood Planning team have also held steering group meetings in the hall, and a presentation for the Neighbourhood Plan Consultation.

The trustees employ local people for the key tasks of routine cleaning and minor maintenance, and we are fortunate in their efficiency and reliability.

The finances are healthy, with reserves of greater than £10,000, similar to the annual income excluding grants for special projects. The principle source of income is of course from the regular bookings of the hall, and charges are maintained as low as possible to cover the running costs with allowance for contingencies.

As well as routine testing and maintenance of the hall and its' services the committee initiates improvements where possible. Last year the external decoration was completed and this year two windows were replaced, and the internal decoration was completed during the holidays. Significant electrical work was completed, including replacement of the external maintained lights with low energy units greatly improving security and safety of access to the hall. The windows and lights were partly funded with grants from our District Councillors locality budgets and from the Botesdale Fairstead Charity for which we are extremely grateful.

Botesdale Village Hall provides an excellent venue for the community and is well used throughout the year. By the nature of the core trustees being drawn from the user groups, most have additional time-consuming commitments. This is one reason that it has proved difficult to fill the required official positions with the Chairman also covering the Treasurer, Hall Bookings and Hall Administrator roles, a situation which is untenable in the longer term. The committee would welcome additional trustees to support this valuable local facility.

It only remains for me to thank the Trustees, our staff, and the local professionals who have assisted with the running and maintenance of the hall, for their efforts and support throughout the year, so necessary for the continued success of the Village Hall.

William Sargeant  
Chairman