

BOTESDALE VILLAGE HALL REPORT 2017

Botesdale Village Hall, originally the Church Rooms, is leased by Botesdale Parish Council from the Parochial Church Council, and administered as a charity by a Committee of seven Trustees, representative of the hall users, together with two independent Trustees. The conditions of the lease include provisions for three elected members and up to two co-opted members. With the closure of the Women's Branch of the Royal British Legion, their representative will transfer to being an elected or a co-opted member.

The past year has seen successful use of the hall not only by the regular users but again this year as a venue for four of the events organised by the Diss Corn Hall Trust while their hall was being refurbished – Corn Hall on Tour.

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 Mrs Sara Holt-Wilson 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 review to raise funds for the Village Hall and are in rehearsals for a production of the Ghost Train at the end of March. In December Peter Creswell staged the first production of his new Comic Opera "Well there you have it" to much acclaim. Additionally, Open Space Theatre have used our hall to stage a production.

Ballroom Dancing, Yoga, Artworks, Border Craft Collective, Botesdale Parish Council and the Parochial Church Council continue to use the hall on a regular basis, and this year we have added Pilates classes on a Thursday and Youth Drama classes on Saturday mornings. Others have used the hall for parties (9) and fund raising events (5), and the District Council use the hall as a polling station when required for local elections or referendums.

After years of service to the Committee as Hall Administrator and Secretary, Anita Burnard is handing on the role of Secretary. On behalf of the whole committee I will record our thanks to Anita for her unstinting work for the Village Hall, for I believe the whole period of operation since the transition from the Church Rooms.

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. This year the flooring in the main hall was replaced during the summer holiday, aided by grants from the District Councillor's Locality Budget, the Fairstead Charity and Botesdale Parish Council. External decoration is planned for this summer.

Botesdale Village Hall provides an excellent venue for the community and is well used throughout the year. By the nature of the trustees being drawn from the user groups, most have additional time consuming commitments. It is currently proving difficult to fill the required official positions with the Chairman also covering the Treasurer and Hall Administrator roles. The committee would welcome additional trustees to support this valuable local facility.

It only remains for me to thank the Trustees, and our staff for their efforts and support throughout the year, so necessary for the continued success of the Village Hall.

William Sargeant
Chairman