

BOTESDALE VILLAGE HALL REPORT 2018

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. 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 and the final event of Diss Corn Hall on Tour, before the re-opening last year.

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 Ghost Train at the end of March, and rehearsals to produce A Man for all Seasons performed at Redgrave Church. Recently they supported RAHOF with a sold-out fundraising entertainment in music-hall style. Peter Creswell produced a Christmas party entertainment for and with young participants. The final Corn Hall on Tour production was the Pantaloons production of Pride and Prejudice, where we were able to share the profits with the Corn Hall.

Ballroom Dancing, Yoga, Artworks, Border Craft Collective, and the Parochial Church Council continue to use the hall on a regular basis, and we continued Pilates classes on a Thursday until the end of the year and Youth Drama classes on Saturday mornings until the summer holidays. Others have used the hall for parties (10) and fund-raising events (4), and the District Council used the hall as a polling station for both local and general 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 recently a presentation evening for the Neighbourhood Plan Forum.

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 flooring in the main hall was replaced and this year it was the turn of external decoration during the summer holiday.

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