

St Mary Bourne Village Centre
(Registered Charity No. 301936)

Chairman's Report for the Annual General Meeting to be held on 4th March 2024

The Village Centre is a registered charity that was established by a trust deed in 1952 with the object of providing and maintaining a village hall for the use and enjoyment of people living in the parish of St Mary Bourne and surrounding area. Our aim is to provide local people with facilities that they want to use, so feedback from our users and new ideas for using the facilities are always welcome.

Our AGM is an appropriate time, for me personally and on behalf of the local community, to publicly thank the people involved in the running of the Village Centre and those who run activities in it on our behalf. These people are the mainstay of the Village Centre, and we are very grateful for all that they do.

The Village Centre is run by a management committee of eight volunteers, four of which are the charity's trustees (myself, Mel Cavell-Wells, Mike Case and Oli Madge). The other committee members are Michael Widén (who manages our invoicing) and Angela Cook (who manages our bookings and enquiries) and this year we have been joined by Fiona Foote and Harriet Dickinson. Mel is our treasurer and manages our finances, Mike is our secretary and Oli is our health and safety officer. Thank you all for everything that you do and especially for taking on extra tasks during 2023 to enable me to get through a very difficult year. Your care and support means a great deal to me. Thanks to Mike for helping me out by seamlessly slipping into the role of chair for the year.

The Village Centre trustees are elected for a period of 5 years and are ultimately responsible for the running of the charity, however most decisions are made by the management committee. All trustees have first been members of the committee to find out what we do before taking on the extra responsibilities of a trustee. The management committee meets quarterly, and the trustees sometimes have a couple of additional meetings, so there is not a heavy time commitment and joining the committee is a good opportunity to give something back to your community. The current members have been on the committee for many years, and it is definitely time to hand on responsibility for this community asset to the next generation. We have been running with only 4 trustees for many years now and ideally we would have 5. We would really appreciate your doing what you can to spread the word on this and help us to find new committee members.

Thank you again to Lorna Hancock for another year of running the Community Library which is open in the Club Room each Saturday morning. Lorna does a great job of rotating the books on offer so there is always a good selection to choose from.

The Film has been well attended again this year. Michael, Angie, Harriet and Jo Oram have been a great help with keeping these screenings of current and popular films going and it wouldn't happen without them.

In June the Watermill Theatre returned to the Recreation Ground with their outdoor touring production of Mansfield Park and a good crowd enjoyed the excellent performance. We continued the annual pantomime tradition by hosting a well-attended Bumblefly touring production of The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood in December. We are still waiting to hear about what may be on offer this year and when we know details will appear in Hill & Valley.

Thanks to Michael for managing the box office and front of house for these productions and to the Parish Council for allowing the use of the Recreation Ground.

We are grateful to all of our regular hirers and appreciate their continued support during 2023. Hirings for one off events and celebrations have been reasonable but overall our income is lower than in 2022 and has not met our budgeted expectations. We usually budget to make a small surplus each year as we are a charity and not running a profit-making business. Any surplus we do make is invested in maintaining and improving the facilities. Our budget for 2023 was conservative and, given that we had been unable to spend money we had planned to in previous years, we actually budgeted to make a loss in 2023 to allow

for that planned expenditure. We ended the year with a deficit of £8,575, which was actually less of a deficit than budgeted, as we had allowed for greater expenditure on major works that did not get done during that financial year. A full explanation of our finances is given in our Treasurer's report.

We do our best to manage things to keep our hire rates as reasonable as we can and keep a close eye on our unavoidable expenses, which like everyone's have increased considerably in the last two years, in particular oil and electricity costs. The arrangement we have made with Ninny's nursery to continue using the Club Room during the week will certainly help us meet these ever-rising running costs.

Now we are approaching 30 years since the main hall was opened it is not surprising that we are facing some costly items of maintenance. We will shortly be replacing many of the windows and a couple of external doors and the likely cost of repairs to the Club Room exterior is looking substantial at more than three times what we had originally budgeted. We continue to have some issues with the heating system, particularly in the main hall, which we are taking advice on and trying to get resolved. Another significant expense has been the testing and certification of the electrical system and we have also had some plumbing issues to deal with.

Despite required expenditure, we continue to hold a prudent level of capital as we know that we will need to use it for planned maintenance in the relatively short term. We have identified that a large part of that capital will be needed to fund planned/expected expenditure on the fabric of the building and replacement equipment in the next few years and so it is to be regarded as expected expenditure and not free reserves. These items will involve considerable expenditure and we are lucky to have the funds to finance them.

We finally found a new caretaker, Tony Taylor, in February. Tony is skilled in a number of areas and will be dealing with routine maintenance and upkeep and we are very pleased to have him on board.

This is your community facility and could be the perfect venue if you are planning a party or other celebration, a meeting, a theatrical event, a sporting or recreational activity, an exhibition or any other event that the Village Centre could accommodate. Our website (www.stmarybourne.co.uk) shows the facilities we have on offer and what they cost to hire, lists clubs currently using the Centre and has all necessary contact details. We often have a piece in Hill and Valley and also publicise events on the Bourne Valley signposts on Facebook.

We welcome feedback or other comments or suggestions about the Village Centre so if you have any please let me or another member of the management committee know.

Karen Crofts
Chairman

4 March 2024