

THRELKELD VILLAGE HALL TRUST AGM

18 JANUARY 2021

CHAIR'S ADDRESS

Welcome to you all. At the last AGM when we were all seated in the Village Hall and had the pleasure of Rosie Cumella talking to us about the work of the Calvert Trust, we could not have imagined how 2020 would turn out. At that meeting I thanked individual committee members for the work they had done during the year, we are all volunteers and I am sure that for some of them it feels like at least a part-time job. You might have thought that this year, the year of COVID 19, or should I say the first year of COVID 19, will have been a bit of a rest year for them. but that has not been the case.

Steven Oldfield, our secretary, ably supported by John Knifton and fellow committee members, took the opportunity to do a number of maintenance jobs in the hall and organised some external painting. Graham Anderson made weekly checks on the hall and tested the fire alarm when it was closed. Neil Beresford skilfully completed the negotiations with the district council for us to take over the Public Toilets in the hall car park.

We have held more meetings than usual, all by skype or zoom, our last face to face meeting was last year's AGM. So Joe Davies has had more minutes to write and he has made sure we are meeting all our insurance requirements when the hall has been closed.

David Evans, our treasurer, will talk about our finances shortly. He has kept us all informed of the impact of the hall being closed on our income and expenditure and has ensured that we received the grants we have been entitled to. David also led the work on making the hall a safe place for people to use during the short period that it was open.

We have been very pleased that we have been able to support the Coffee Shop during the weeks they have been able to operate. Providing them with the extra space in the hall has meant they have been able to offer more customers a safe environment. The regular flow of customers and feedback on Face book is testament to what a wonderful job they have been doing in welcoming people back and making them feel safe.

Keeping the hall clean has been an essential priority over the past nine months and I want to thank our cleaning team: Steph Malik, Sue Plant and Navi Bostock. They have had to be very flexible throughout the pandemic being ready to work when we have been able to be open but also having down periods when the Hall and Coffee Shop have been closed. It has been very reassuring knowing that their high cleaning standards are being maintained. And of course the Coffee Shop staff have taken on extra cleaning responsibility ensuring that the toilets are clean throughout the day. I also want to mention Sylvia Tuer who has been involved with the Village Hall probably longer than anyone else and in more recent years has continued to clean the hall at the weekend and after events. Sylvia has had to shield during the pandemic so was unable to come into the Hall. I want to thank Sylvia for her support of the Hall over many years and to say when it is safe for her to do so we will welcome her back.

When we were able to open the Hall in September, October, November and December it was lovely to be able to welcome back the line dancing and circle dancing groups and yoga and keep fit classes as well as the Brownies. We look forward to them and our other groups and classes returning later in 2021. We are also eagerly awaiting the return of the regular music events organised by the TAA.

This year I also want to thank an external organisation: ACT (Action with Communities in Cumbria) who with ACRE (Action with Communities on Rural England) have provided regular updates and guidance on what the various Covid 19 restrictions have meant for village halls. Steven Oldfield and I have attended a number of their zoom seminars which have been extremely helpful as the government guidance has at times been confusing and open to different interpretation.

What does 2021 hold – well after this year no one will try and predict the future. I am definitely not going to. But we do have some exciting things on the horizon. Chris Smith a new committee member has taken on the task of revitalising our website so keep an eye on the website over the next few months. Neil is leading a project group working on transforming the public toilets into an additional preparation area for the Coffee Shop and much needed extra storage capacity for the Coffee shop and Village Hall activities. We will need financial support to do this so if you know of any funding bodies who give grants for community buildings please let Neil or David know.

I want to finish by reassuring you all that the Village Hall will re-open and will be 'the venue' for classes, groups, weddings, parties and music events in the future as it has been in the past. We look forward to welcoming everyone back. Thank you