

THRELKELD VILLAGE HALL TRUST AGM

11 JANUARY 2023

CHAIR'S ADDRESS

Welcome to our first face to face AGM since 2020, how ignorant we were in the first couple of months of that year about the challenges that would face us. Although we entered 2022 with some restrictions still in place these were mostly ended in March and normality began to return. Since then we have seen regular bookings for classes resume and as well as bookings for weddings, camping weekends and parties. Steven will tell us more about these shortly. A new event in the hall was the plant sale organised by the TAA (now Threlkeld Events Ltd), this was very successful and those of us with gardens look forward to a re-run this year.

As the hall has got busier again the demands on the cleaners have grown and I want to thank Steph Malik and Navy Bostock for their hard work.

With the exception of January, we have held all our committee meetings face to face in the hall. We also had a strategic planning meeting in August when we focussed on the future of the Village Hall, more of this to follow. As always the real work gets done outside the meetings by committee members and volunteers. Steven Oldfield continues to balance his secretarial duties, managing bookings and all that involves, with keeping an eye out for maintenance issues and with the help of others including Craig Beaty and John Knifton dealing with any as they arise. Steven will be handing over the responsibility for bookings very soon and on behalf of the Committee I want to thank him for the time and energy he has put into this for many years. I am relieved to say Steven is remaining as secretary and a very active member of the Committee and will continue to be involved in maintaining the hall and keeping me on the ball. Other Committee members are Neil Beresford, Vice Chair, David Evans, Treasurer, Barbara Lowesmith, Threlkeld Events representative, David Arkley, Parish Council representative and Tina Morland, Threlkeld Young People's representative. We looked forward to Chris Smith rejoining us on his return to Threlkeld in a couple of months time. Without each of these members the hall would not function. Tina Morland is

stepping down this year and I want to thank her for her contribution over a number of years both to the Committee and the Youth Club. I am very pleased to say Tina is continuing to support the Youth Club and I know she would welcome other volunteers to support her with the club.

Neil Beresford has led a small group of Committee members in progressing our plans to extend the hall building to allow for additional kitchen area for the Coffee Shop and much needed storage for the Hall and Coffee Shop. The work involved in this should not be underestimated. Given the significance of the extension we have asked Neil to talk about it at this meeting. Thank you Neil, Barbara Lowesmith, David Evans and Adam Bazire (Coffee Shop Board Chair) for your work on this project. And thanks to Veronica Pollitt who could be seen digging a trench at the back of the toilets last week in preparation for the building works.

Very soon we will be launching a new Village Hall website. Chris Smith kicked this project off before moving to Germany. In March this year we agreed to outsource the development of the site and Barbara has led the liaison with the developers. Barbara has been supported by Chris, Neil, David Felton (Coffee Shop Board Director) and Helen O'Brien. Thank you to all those involved, particularly Helen who is not a committee member and no longer lives in Threlkeld. Helen has supported the technical side of the website for many years and continued to do so after she moved away from the village. I know that Barbara has found her advice throughout the website development process invaluable. Thank you Helen.

We will have a separate report on the Coffee Shop and will hear how it has been both a challenging and successful year. Like many cafes and restaurants in the hospitality sector the Coffee Shop has struggled to recruit staff while continuing to be a very attractive venue for coffee, lunch and tea. We are grateful for the hard work and commitment of the staff which enables the Coffee Shop to be so successful. Each year the Coffee Shop gives its profit after all costs have been covered, plus some small local donations, to the Village Hall Trust. This is used to cover the costs of maintaining the Hall as the income from hirers is insufficient to do so. Going forward if the Coffee Shop continues to be successful we anticipate that the Village Hall will have surplus funds which we want to use to benefit local people. To do this we have to change our Charitable Objects, as these only allow the Village Hall Trust to

maintain the Hall for local use. This involves negotiation with the Charity Commission, and we are seeking legal advice on how to achieve the change. So watch this space.

While I am talking about money I want to thank David Evans for continuing as our Treasurer, David will report on the current state of our finances shortly.

The future role of the Village Hall cannot be decided in isolation to what is happening around us particularly the impact of the financial recession and the crisis facing the NHS and Adult Social Care. I am pleased the hall has been able to play a part in supporting our local community by providing a warm space on Friday afternoons for people to meet up with others for a cup of tea and a chat. We will continue doing this until the end of March and we will be open to other ways we can help beyond then, particularly when we have changed our objects and have the ability to make a bigger contribution to enhancing life in the village. It is an exciting time ahead and a great time to get involved and influence the direction we move in, so if you would like to be part of it either by joining the committee or helping from time to time as a volunteer please get in touch with one of the Committee Members.