

MINUTES OF THRELKELD VILLAGE HALL TRUST

A.G.M., 31st JANUARY, 2024

1. Apologies were received from Barbara Lowesmith and David Arkley. Emma Moody had said that she may be a little late but did subsequently attend the meeting.
2. The minutes of the previous A.G.M. had been available on the website for the past year, there had been no suggestions that they were inaccurate in any way.
3. There were no matters arising from the earlier minutes.
4. Christine Renouf gave her address, as follows;

CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS

Welcome to our Annual General Meeting. It has been another busy year at the Hall, Steven Oldfield will tell us more about this shortly. I'm pleased we have been able to continue our tea and chat sessions, which are now on a Wednesday afternoon and have proved very popular. Threlkeld Events have had another successful year of entertainment events and included a plant sale in May.

This year the committee has been focussed on two important developments: the extension and establishing the Village Hall Trust as Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

Building the extension has taken longer than we envisaged but it is progressing now and we look forward to having more storage space and a larger kitchen for the Coffee Shop before too long. When we commenced the new extension, it had been hoped that the building would be complete and occupied by now. However, delays arising from issues with the foundation and roof design, and more recently weather-related delays, mean that completion is now likely to be early spring.

Highly regrettable as these delays are, the Trustees remain convinced that the work will provide much needed improvements which will benefit the Village Hall for many years to come. The additional kitchen area will enable our highly successful Coffee Shop to offer a wider selection of food and improve service to customers. They will not have to share the Village Hall kitchen with Hall users, and all the food and consumables some of which are spread around the building, will be held in the new food preparation area.

The new Hall Equipment Store will provide more space to hold much of our existing equipment which is only required intermittently, for example extra chairs and tables. It will also enable us to offer to regular users the ability to keep on site any of their own equipment they may need. This has often not possible and should make our Hall more attractive to some groups. The upstairs office area will no longer be used for storage, and this will become a well equipped meeting room which can be available to small groups throughout the day. A much needed additional facility.

The building delays are a short term frustration. We believe the new space will significantly enhance the Hall for years to come. I want to thank Neil Beresford, Barbara Lowesmith and David Evans for the time and energy they have given to this project.

We will hear from Adam Bazire how the Coffee Shop has fared this year. When Trevor Roberts launched the Coffee Shop in 2014 his vision was that it would be such a success that it would make enough money to benefit the village and surrounding area. Over the years the Coffee Shop has enabled the Village Hall to give grants to the Youth Club, and Brownies and support other local activities. But we have been very limited in what we can do because of the Charity Commission rules governing Village Halls. The Charity Commission never envisaged that a village hall would have sufficient money to give some of it away. Once we have paid for the extension we will begin building up a reserve of money over and above what we need to maintain the hall. We want to be able to use that money to support the village and contribute towards such causes as the playground improvement. This is why we need the Village Hall to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. In the second half of this meeting we will explain the CIO process in more detail and seek your support in us taking the next steps. I want to thank Adam Bazire for steering us through the complicated process of becoming a CIO.

It is important to us that local people use the Village Hall, we have a range of classes running each week but are always open to the hall being used for different activities. This year we have been keen to ensure everyone knows what is going on, we have a regular slot in Beneath Blencathra now and have recently undertaken a survey to get feedback from users and non-users of the hall. Chris Smith is going to report on the feedback from the survey shortly. We want the Hall to be central to village life, a go to place for everyone but we need your support to achieve that:

- You can tell us what you would like the hall to be offering
- You can help us maintain the hall by joining our small group of volunteers who we call on when small jobs need doing
- You could become a trustee and have a voice in what we do and how we spend our money.

Before I hand over to Steven, our Secretary, I want to thank all those who contributing to making the Village Hall the success it is: our trustees, the team of volunteers who Steven calls on to help with maintenance, the Coffee shop staff and our cleaners

5. Steven Oldfield gave his report as follows;

SECRETARY'S ADDRESS

This report relates to the activities of the Village Hall Committee and the uses to which the village hall has been put from last year's A.G.M. to the present time. Through the past year Christine Renouf has been the Chair, Neil Beresford the deputy Chair, David Evans the Treasurer. David Arkley is the representative of the Parish Council. Barbara Lowesmith is the TE rep. and Emma Moody is the TYP rep. I have continued in my role as Secretary and Bookings Secretary. Chris Smith is a co-opted member and with his skills and knowledge of the computer world he has been very active. Adam Bazire attends the Trustee meetings in relation to business mainly concerning the coffee shop.

During the past 12 months the Committee met six times with one additional ad hoc meeting to consider the very relevant matter of the C.I.O.

Ongoing maintenance work has been carried out. Occasionally hall supporters met to tackle issues such as keeping the car park tidy, cleaning parts of the main hall that the cleaners would not be expected to reach and other minor upgrades and improvements. Speaking of hall supporters, there are a number who regularly turn out to make things tick, if I start to name names the list would be quite long and I would still forget someone so, this year, I am going to say no more on that subject. They know who they are.

Throughout the year the hall has been well used by all the obvious groups, our long term hirers are still here, suggesting they are satisfied with the facilities, services and prices. Obviously, having the coffee shop attached is the great draw it was expected to be when we were drawing up the original plans. I believe we are known and appreciated further afield than just Threlkeld, or Keswick even. We have meetings booked here by county wide associations, parties and weddings booked by people from far away and naturally camping groups coming from all corners of England and Scotland. Two weeks ago we received an email from the Lake District National Park Authority which said, among other things **“We saw you as being an excellent example of a true community asset that people were proud of and saw you as the centre point of the community”**. I expect the Treasurer will point out the increase in yearly takings from hirings. One particularly significant success is the Tea and Chat which now occurs on Wednesday afternoons and is routinely visited by over 20 (mainly) locals. As last year, one of our local young entrepreneurs hired the hall to set up a ‘pop-up’ coffee shop during the two days of Christmas that the coffee shop was closed.

As always, we are seeking actual help. We do have a couple of young couples who are now helping out, we haven’t quite pressured them onto the Committee yet but I am very confident by this time next year we will have some additional, new Trustees. We have also had one local gent who, with his professional knowledge, examined and certified our lift and tall ladders. Anyone who thinks they can help out in any way would be very welcome. I would just point out that being a Trustee just really means attending one meeting every two months, helping to steer and guide the good ship Threlkeld Village Hall and drop for the occasional little job or responsibility, but we do actually enjoy it.

6. David Evans gave the treasurer’s report as follows;

TREASURER’S REPORT

Summary

- A loss of £15,567 was recorded for the year
- Available Funds at the Year End stand at £189,505
- The extension project dominates expenditure and is the reason for the loss. This is despite slow progress with the construction owing to technical design issues amongst others.
- The cost of cleaning materials continues to grow significantly while the salary costs for our cleaners has stabilised
- Insurance costs are rising year on year in line with industry trends

Accounts

The year to 30th September 2023 marks a return to normal operations after a slow recovery from the Covid shutdown during the previous year. The operations (finances purely related to the running of the hall) income and expenditure have more or less broken-even when taking account of late invoicing for the Coffee Shop rental. Hall hire rates have been increased over the last two years to account for the rise in our costs related to general inflation. Costs, notably cleaning and related materials, have also risen as a result of increased footfall in the Coffee Shop compared to pre-Covid times. We have limited hall hire rates to just break even and spread the rises over two years to reduce the impact on our users. Non-Coffee Shop rentals have increased by 46% over the year indicating the return to normal levels of usage.

The Coffee Shop continues to be popular. The number of customers has probably dropped a little from the height of the “staycation” boom but the level of donations remains buoyant. Donations were accelerated in the previous year to prepare for the costs of the extension and so are lower this year. Further donations are due but will fall in the next financial year.

The increase in cleaning material costs is a concern and this will be investigated in more detail over the next few months to identify any trends we should be aware of. Insurance costs are rising generally but these will need a complete renewal once the extension is complete with revised rebuilding costs. At this time, we will search more widely for quotes. The office computer was ten years old and was showing its age so we have replaced it this year. The professional fees are legal costs related to the move to conversion to a CIO. We have decided to do as much of this work as we can ourselves to keep costs under control.

The costs of the extension work have shifted from design and planning work to construction. The completion of this has been delayed by at least three months and probably more for various reasons and along with this we have increased costs. At present we believe we can comfortably cover these from our own funds.

Overall, it has been a good year and the fact that we can cover the extension costs internally is gratifying. This all bodes well for the future when we hope to be able to support other groups in our vicinity with the funds provided by our Coffee Shop.

Available Funds

At the end of September 2023 the Trust held available cash funds of £189,505.

Accounts Examination

The accounts will be submitted to an accountant for review prior to passing on to the Charities Commission.

David Evans

5th February 2024

Operating Profit & Loss					
		2023	2022	Notes	
Income	Bank Interest	£2.33	£0.16		
	Coffee Shop Licence	£7,800.00	£10,400.00	Another £4k will be received in November 2023	
	Donations Received - Collection Boxes	£225.97	£206.41		
	Hall Hire	£20,812.65	£14,510.69	43% increase over the year	
	Rates Refund	£0.00	£144.50		
	RHI	£2,831.30	£2,855.20		
		£31,672.25	£28,116.96		
		2023	2022		
Expenses	Caretaking & Cleaning	(£7,343.00)	(£6,955.07)	5.6% Increase - Increased salaries	
	Cleaning Materials	(£3,268.48)	(£2,235.79)	46% increase - increased hall use?	
	Electricity	(£8,954.44)	(£7,962.43)	12.5% increase - increased hall use?	
	Equipment & Fittings Projects	(£22.92)	(£379.08)		
	Equipment & Fittings Replacements	(£664.87)	(£15.00)		
	Grant	(£72.00)	(£1,500.00)		
	Insurance	(£1,812.41)	(£1,260.64)	44% increase - general rise in insurance costs.	
	IT Materials and Equipment	(£2,556.50)	(£16.24)	New Computer	
	IT Software, Licences, Support	(£316.95)	(£1,634.46)		
	Maintenance Repairs Renewals	(£1,853.63)	(£4,035.62)		
	Marketing	£0.00	(£67.98)		
	Office Expenses	(£134.69)	(£12.39)		
	Phone & Broad Band	(£978.67)	(£843.76)		
	Professional Fees	(£3,100.00)	£0.00	Legal fees related to change of constitution	
	Subs & Licences	(£423.02)	(£415.55)		
	Water & Waste	(£2,875.43)	(£2,651.86)		
		(£34,377.01)	(£29,985.87)		
Operating profit/loss		(£2,704.76)	(£1,868.91)	Break even/small surplus when corrected for timing of CS fees	

7. Adam Bazire gave a report from the Coffee Shop as follows;

COFFEE SHOP REPORT

Background

- We are wholly owned by the Village Hall Trust
- The business is run on an “arm’s length” basis
- Separate Board of Directors, but close working relationship and one Trustee Director
- Avoids conflicts between Charitable and Commercial aims
- All profit is returned to the Trust
- In addition, we can support local community organisations and projects
- The Coffee Shop’s legal structure is a “Community Interest Company”.
- We give preference to local people for employment
- We give preference to local suppliers where possible
- We have a commitment to using “Fairtrade” produce

Financial Performance

(Note: financial year end is 31 March so we are already close to the end of FY2024)

Results

- 2022 financial year benefitted from the reduced VAT rate following the pandemic and international travel was restricted leading to a “staycation boom”, enhancing footfall.
- 2023 delivered record revenue and, after adjusting for the reduced VAT in 2022, record profit.
- However, after adjusting for inflation, this represented a decline in footfall.
- We think this is, again, the result of 2022 being an exceptional year for domestic holidays following the pandemic.
- In addition, the Coffee Shop pays £14,400 to the Village Hall Trust for use of the facility covering rent, rates, heating, lighting, and general maintenance.

Financial Year ending 31 March

	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Revenue	£357,328	£349,309	£116,886	£183,291	£142,249	£130,602	£126,853
Donations	£60,000	£100,000	£13,350	£17,527	£5,000	£3,000	£5,000

Forecast

- 2024 has had its challenges
- Inflation has been very high. Cost of materials has increased by more than 15%. Bacon, jam and sugar have all gone up by more than 30%
- Labour costs have also increased substantially
- We have raised prices, but not by enough to keep up with inflation
- We have also had some significant staff illness issues
- Although not a charity, we try to support our staff when issues arise
- Year to December 2023: Revenue £303,290 (2022 £282,895); 2024 full year forecast £380k.

Conclusion

Thank you

- to our magnificent staff;
- to the Village Hall Trustees;
- to our volunteer directors; and
- to all our wonderful customers

8. There were only three nominations made to the Secretary prior to the meeting, these were for Christine Renouf, Neil Beresford and Steven Oldfield. Each was separately unanimously voted onto the Village Hall Committee by those present.

9. Adam Bazire and David Evans together explained the intention of the V.H.committee to become a C.I.O., as follows;

PROPOSED CONVERSION OF THE VILLAGE HALL TRUST TO THRELKELD VILLAGE HALL CHARITABLE INCORPORATION ORGANISATION

The secretary, Steven Oldfield, assured the meeting that notices had been placed throughout the area of benefit one month earlier advising everyone of the proposed intentions of the Trustees. He also confirmed that no objections had been lodged with him.

Agenda

- What are the differences between a Trust and a CIO? – David Evans
- Why do the Trustees want Threlkeld Village Hall to become a CIO? – David Evans.
- The conversion process – Adam Bazire
- Q&A – Adam & David

What are the differences between a Trust and a CIO?

- Currently the Village Hall is structured as a Charitable Trust
- The hall cannot own property or take out contracts in its own name
- All contracts and legal obligations must be undertaken by individual Trustees
- With this comes the risk of personal liability for any consequences
- A Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) is a modern legal structure
- The Trustees will be protected from individual liabilities making this a more appealing proposition
- It simplifies administration as the organisation takes out contracts and owns property in its own name.

Why do the Trustees want Threlkeld Village Hall to become a CIO?

- Changing to a CIO will increase the freedom to distribute funds
- The current Trust places strict limits on what money can be spent on – essentially maintaining the hall only
- Thanks to the good work done by the Coffee Shop staff, we are in the lucky position of having surplus funds
- The Trust wants to be able to distribute these funds to deserving causes in the vicinity but cannot do this under the current structure
- A CIO will help to ensure that we are in-line with current Charity Law

- It will also provide protection to volunteer organisers from large liabilities
- Remove the need for individuals to sign contracts on behalf of the Trust

How to get from Here to There

Adam explained with the assistance of a chart the processes that the Trustees would have to go through to complete the transformation from a Trust to a C.I.O.

A Key Message

At the end of the process the same hall will be run by (largely) the same people with the same objective offering the same facilities

The changes will:

- Allow hall funds to be distributed more widely in the village
- Remove personal liability from Trustees, increasing the number of people willing to take on this key role
- Bring the hall up to date with the latest legislation
- Simplify administration

All those present were then asked to vote on whether they wished the V.H. Trustees to take steps to incorporate itself as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation on the basis set out on the meeting's agenda. They were then asked to vote for the Trustees to seek permission of the Charity Commission to transfer the land and property of the Threlkeld Village Hall Trust to Threlkeld Village Hall C.I.O.

Finally those present were asked to authorise the Trustees to take all actions and complete all documentation to affect the above resolutions. Those present voted unanimously in favour of all three proposals.

10. Chris Smith gave a break down of information acquired via a village wide survey conducted over November and December, as follows;

VILLAGE SURVEY RESULTS

What we did, how and why

- Online survey
 - 6 questions + demographics
- Nov/Dec 2023
- Appeared in:
 - Beneath Blencathra x2
 - Village Hall posters
 - Village Hall website
- 38 responses

How often do you use Threlkeld Village Hall? *

Daily

2 or 3 times weekly

Weekly

Monthly

Rarely

Never

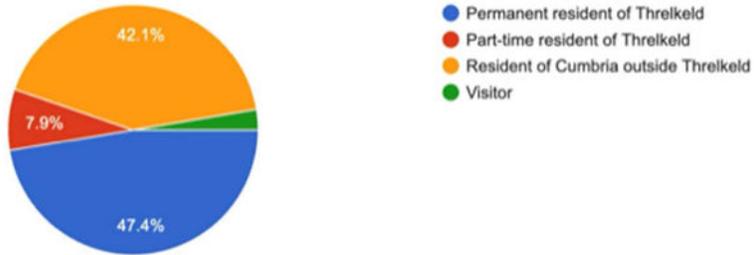
Which services or events do you regularly attend or make use of? (You can choose more than one) *

Coffee Shop

Music / drama events

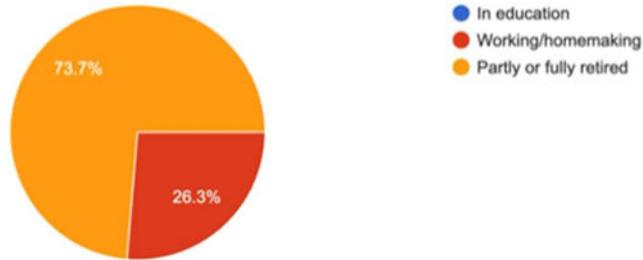
Who took part in the survey?

Would you describe yourself as:
38 responses



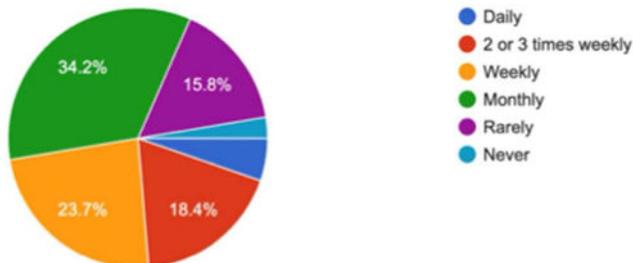
Who took part in the survey?

Are you...
38 responses



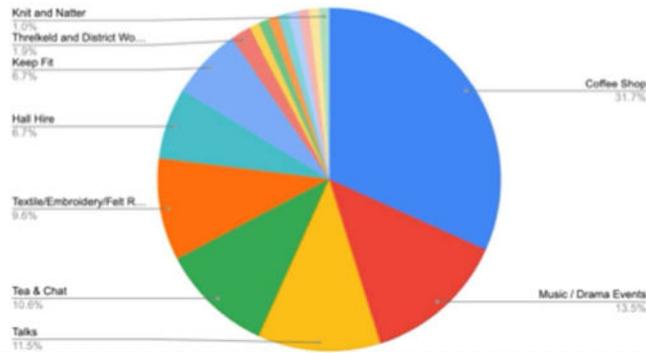
How often do they use the Hall?

How often do you use Threlkeld Village Hall?
38 responses



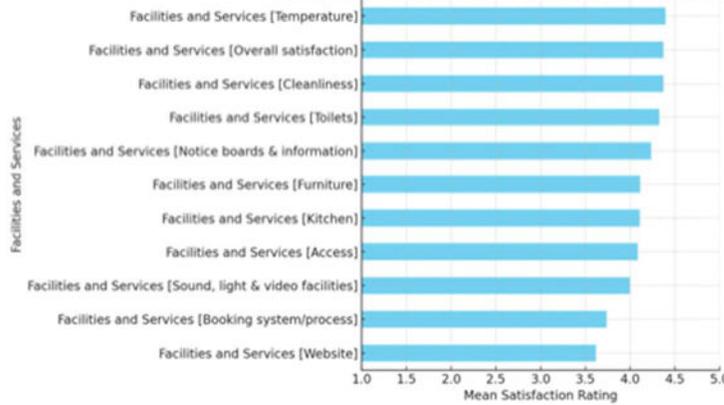
What do they do at the Hall?

Number of Mentions



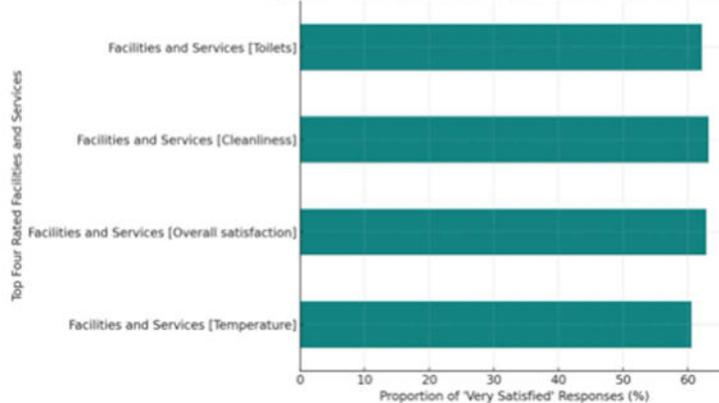
Mostly respondents rated Village Hall services very highly

Mean Satisfaction Ratings for Village Hall Facilities and Services

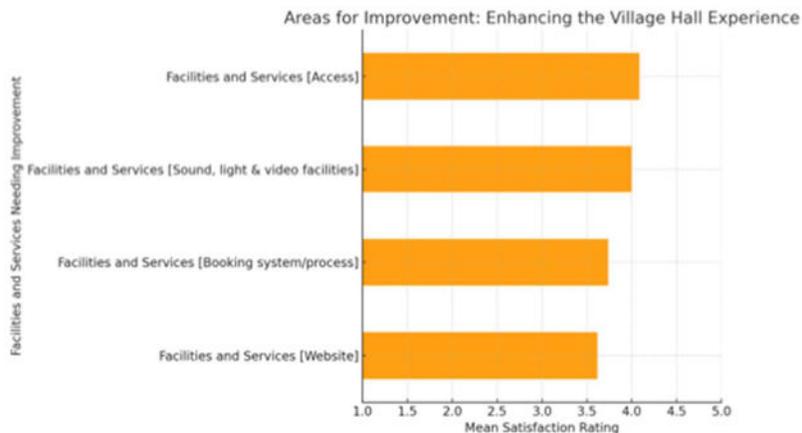


Our strongest ratings: solid basics and good overall satisfaction

Proportion of 'Very Satisfied' Responses for Top-Rated Features



Good but can be better: areas to improve



Plenty of constructive feedback

“Ideally, the hall temperature would be constant in winter”

“Being disabled sometimes have a struggle parking, hopefully better when new car park finished.”

“On booking the hall, it would be good to see a calendar of bookings already made for ease of finding a date.”

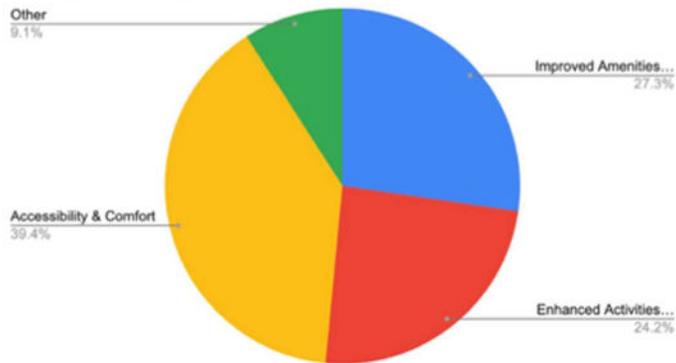
“TVH compares very favourably with other local village halls”

What the trustees can take from this feedback

- ✓ Essential Services Highly Valued
- ✓ Role as a Community Hub
- ✓ A Space for Everyone
- ✓ Openness to Improvement and Adaptation
- ✓ Potential for Expanded Services

No surprises, parking is the biggest single concern

Changes and improvements: key themes



Change and improvement suggestions

Parking

Ventilation and Temperature

Shop/Mini-Market

Cafe Expansion

Better Storage

Younger Audience Appeal

Community Engagement

Volunteer Support

Children's Activities

The village loves the Hall, and cares about it a lot

The Village Hall is a vital hub: The sheer number and variety of suggestions indicate the Hall's importance as a community center. It's not just a venue, but a space for connection, leisure, and addressing essential needs.

Multi-generational appeal: While concerns about parking and improved temperature control indicate needs of the current user base, suggestions for broader activities like craft fairs and events with different formats (not just seated) hint at potential interest from a wider range of demographics.

Desire for expanded functionality: Villagers see the Hall not just as a passive venue, but as a resource offering even more diverse events, a welcoming atmosphere and perhaps basic shopping.



Avenues for investigation by the trustees

Prioritize Accessibility and Comfort: Parking improvements, better ventilation, and temperature control should be top priorities. Consider signage, layout adjustments, and potentially even exploring alternative parking solutions.

Broaden the Appeal: Cater to younger adults through engaging events (music with different formats, fitness classes) while maintaining activities for other demographics. Consider surveys or subcommittee groups to delve deeper into specific interests.

Enhance Amenities and Services: Explore the feasibility of a mini-market within the coffee shop, offering essentials and attracting holidaymakers. Consider expanding the cafe menu with hot meals and potentially evening service. (We'll pass this on to the cafe)

Engage the Community: Actively seek volunteers, particularly younger individuals, to support Hall activities and foster a sense of ownership. Consider community forums or a youth committee to involve villagers in future decisions.



Potential next steps...

Conduct a feasibility study: Assess the viability of a mini-market and cafe expansion, considering costs, logistics, and community demand.

Form a parking improvement committee: Brainstorm solutions to address parking concerns, involving residents and potentially local authorities.

Develop a diverse events calendar: Schedule activities catering to different age groups and interests, promoting inclusivity and community engagement. (We'll pass this on!)

Launch a volunteer recruitment campaign: Target younger demographics through social media and community platforms, highlighting the importance of their contribution.



Some very positive feedback (of which there was lots)

"It's a credit to all that run it. Compare to others around the country that are closing, Threlkeld Village Hall is an asset we should cherish."

"Excellent facilities. Varied programme. Bright and inviting VH... I appreciate the local hire rate, very good value... It is a pleasure to dance in a beautiful modern VH."

"Love the cafe. Appreciate the chairs in both the cafe and the hall as I have back trouble and I can actually sit on these chairs unlike many others!"

11. There were no questions asked and the meeting closed at 8.40pm.