

Village Hall Update May 2024

The Village Hall, last year has been extremely busy with a mixture of events, administration and maintenance.

The summer was wonderful with the Friendship Garden providing much entertainment with the Pop Up Café and a peaceful, reflective space. The Village Hall, grounds and garden looked spectacular and we would like to thank all of those who worked so tirelessly to achieve this. Special thanks must go to Sian who has managed to move the garden, with her army of volunteers from The Surgery to the Village Hall grounds. It looks beautiful, despite all that the weather has thrown at it, and as if it had always been there.

We launched the start of our Community Lunches again at the end of January and provided friendship and food every other week until the end of March for over 50 guests and volunteers at every sitting. It ran so smoothly, as Lisa had gathered the team from last year's warm hub, who quickly got back into their respective roles as cooks, washer up, serving, greeting and clearing up. Without all these amazing volunteers we would not be able to provide the fun and laughter on a dark and drizzly day in winter. We must also thank the Blackmore Vale Surgery Klinik team who provided their time to help members of the community with the online service.

The hall was closed in August for the installation of the new kitchen, acoustic panels and new sound and projector system. I think you will agree, the hall does look fantastic. The echo is so much better, the quality of kitchen a pleasure to use and the sound system is great and we are all getting better at using it. A special thanks has to go to Michael Hobbs for the kitchen work, Roger Hillman and Peter Keen for their advice regarding the audio and acoustics and Lisa Le Druillenc for her persistence, patience and hours of time spent applying for the Section 106 infrastructure funding and then overseeing the installation.

Over the summer we spent time preparing the old playground ground ready for the installation of the new equipment. We couldn't have done the work without Derek Bone and his contacts who seemed to find skip loads of hidden concrete, and I don't think we got it all out. In the end the grass and levels were perfect and Fawns were able to install our smart new equipment which was officially opened in October half term. The playground has been well used since and the excellent matting gives a good clean surface to be used all year around. We have bought additional matting which will be fitted shortly by Derek Bone and Andrew Davis. Many thanks to Andrew Davis and Tash Harris for monitoring the equipment to ensure it is safe.

We have two final projects to carry out, the refurbishment of the tennis court and the WC's in the hall. These are scheduled for second half of 2024.

Our fund raiser, The Spring Fayre took place on probably the only dry and sunny day in April but still with a biting wind. The garden and grounds looked beautiful and the village hall picnic benches had been repaired and painted just in time! – thank you Andrew. It was well attended and the stalls did a good trade. It looked a little like the Friday of Chelsea Flower Show with the

amount of willow frames, plants and wreaths being sold. Susannah de Ferry Foster produced the most delicious hot dog stand which was conveniently situated beside the excellent coffee from Full Circle so people took the opportunity to sit and catch up.

We have undertaken over the past year to update the charity paperwork. This has involved a huge amount of work by myself, Dick Stainer and the committee. We discovered that the original deed for the land was not registered with the land registry, the names on the deeds and the lease were deceased. In order to rectify the situation we decided to convert to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) which has the ability to own land and be named on a lease. In addition it provides greater protection for the Trustees, by offering limited liability – this means that in the event of liquidation or litigation any debts will be paid out of the organisation's funds and once these have been exhausted trustees are not personally liable for any further funds. Ultimately this means that as Trustees retire, the details on these important documents do not need to be changed creating expenditure for the charity. We are not there yet, as with all legal paperwork it is not straightforward and it is going to cost the charity quite a lot of money to sort out. We will keep you posted but hope to have it set up and running by the end of 2024.

The Village Hall is in a good place and used by regular users, weddings, christenings, birthday parties and training meetings. We have a fantastic and supportive committee, who are all continuing for the following year. Our main trustees are elected for a 3 year term, some of whom will be on their 3rd or more term. As with every voluntary organisation we will be looking for new individuals who want to be part of a happy team! However, I am proud to be Chair of a beautiful village hall with a fun and hard working committee. Roll on 2024!

Village Hall AGM - Wednesday 24 July 2024 7.00pm