

Drinkstone War Memorial Institute AGM - June 2026

Report from the Hon. Chairman

Another successful year for Drinkstone Village Hall. After last year's AGM we were very fortunate to be able to move forward into this year with an unchanged group of experienced Trustees, all well-versed in the requirements for the successful running of a Community building.

We are very much aware that the Hall is a community resource and so we continue to support the Church and the Parish Council in many of their activities. Similar support is also given to the organisers of the 'Lunches for Good Causes' Initiative and to the MacMillan Coffee Morning.

We have run some very successful events once again during the year. These include the Race Night, the Sale Trail, the Over-60s lunch, the Xmas Mince Pie and Mulled wine morning, Pub Nights (our thanks to Colin for his support which allows us to sell beer at £3 per pint!) and the Film Night. These are not just fund raisers – some even make a loss but most importantly they foster community spirit and provide an opportunity for local volunteers to work together. For example, despite low attendances at some film nights which have run at a loss, we decided to continue with them for the time being as we feel they benefit the community.

The Village Draw continues to deliver monthly prizes to 'punters' – half the monthly takings are given out in prizes – our thanks to Christine, Lesley, Nick and Robin for their organisation and also to all volunteer collectors who ensure that it remains an excellent fundraiser for the Hall.

We have been very fortunate that Liz Schmitt was prepared to carry on with the non-Trustee role of Bookings Secretary, and we are very grateful for her continued commitment to the hall in all sorts of ways. At this point, I'd also like to add our thanks to Tony, who often

offers his services and technical advice to get jobs done. The Hall continues to be extremely popular as far as bookings are concerned.

Our programme of clubs and classes is now very well established and continues to thrive – all activities are very popular both with Drinkstone residents, and with people from the wider community. The choir will be supporting the Church at the Flower Festival in June. Tuesday Club has been experiencing a revival and during recent weeks has been very well attended. David Craggs has taken over the overseeing of our library of books which are available for people to borrow. The Pantomime during the Autumn was a great success. It was not a 'Village Hall' event, as the cast decided that the Church should be the beneficiary, however a concessionary rate was agreed, with an additional donation made, towards the use of the Hall for rehearsals and for the sole use of the hall over the 3-day weekend of performances.

Our cleaning and maintenance team of Jan Longley and Andy Hart have both been in post for a full year now and have made a big difference to the building and its surrounds – our thanks to Jan who works her miracles every week and always leaves the inside of the hall sparkling, and to Andy who has been working hard to tame the grounds and keep everything looking neat and tidy, all of which which help to attract bookings. Andy has quite recently completed the big task of refreshing the soil around the 13-year-old trees in the drive with new compost, and topping them up with shingle. Some of the interior walls will be painted at the end of this month.

We strive to ensure that the fabric of the building is well looked after – safety aspects are checked weekly, risk assessments are carried out regularly to satisfy H&S requirements and all equipment is serviced/maintained at frequent intervals, as required. However, in many cases the costs of parts and labour ie electrical, fire alarm system, plumbing, Pat Testing, have been spiralling for the last couple of years. As an example, we have had quite serious problems with the Ground Source Heat Pump recently and it is estimated that

the consequent repairs will reach approximately £1800. Earlier this year we made the decision not to raise the 2026/27 Hire Fees for any bookings for the fourth year running, which also means that they have not been raised for Drinkstone residents since we opened this Hall in 2013. This may not be a sustainable option year on year, so will be reconsidered on a regular basis. It is imperative that we continue to follow sound principles in order to ensure financial stability and security of the facility for the hall users of the future.

We have used some of the Maggie Ivor-Jones legacy fund to install a new outside shed in the back garden – a local Drinkstone builder laid the slab and erected the shed – we are now ready to reorganise the storage of all the outdoor items. An outside ash tray has been fitted at the front of the building, a water butt added to conserve water for watering the plants and a long hose to reach the trees along the drive. We are currently looking to buy some more sturdy garden chairs for outside events. A new strimmer has been purchased.

The underlying theme of this report is ‘Community’. In a village which has no further amenities other than the Church, the Hall has to be an important focal point for people to come together, whether it be to attend a class, enjoy a cup of coffee and a chat, be part of a team running an event, or perhaps join a working party to undertake a specific task for the good of the community. After all, we are a Charity which exists to serve the needs of the people of Drinkstone whilst fostering a community spirit which permeates through everything that we do. The large number of people who regularly come forward to help with and support our Village Hall events, demonstrates that this community spirit is very much alive and kicking!

Our very special thanks to Vice Chairman Robin for his hard work and attention to detail which provide an important basis for the work of the Management Committee throughout the year. A personal thank you also to Robin, who shouldered a much-increased workload when I was out of action for 3-4 months over Xmas and the New Year, to

Nick and Lesley the officers of the Charity, and last but not least to all of my fellow Trustees for their hard work and support during what was a difficult time for me. Week by week, the members of the Management Committee give their time and effort to carry out the many 'behind the scenes', often quite unattractive tasks, which are crucial to ensure the smooth running of all aspects of a popular, and attractive, public building. Without their energy and enthusiasm, the Hall would not continue to thrive, or enjoy its rightful place at the heart of the Drinkstone Community.

Sue Foulsham – Chairman DWMI