

**Hartlip Village Hall Management Committee**  
**AGM: 12 March 2020**  
**Chair's Report**

I would like to welcome everyone to this year's AGM for the presentation of HVHMC Report and Accounts to the inhabitants of the parish of Hartlip.

Should there be any matters you wish to raise, please do so under Any Other Business.

Hartlip Village Hall is a registered charity and the Charity Trustees and HVHMC are responsible for managing the charity's assets, namely HVH, HVH Car Park and the hall's equipment, for the benefit of the charity and no other purpose. They must ensure that the purposes of the charity as laid down in its Trust Deed are fulfilled and must obey the Duties of Charity Trustees as laid down by the Charity Commission.

This means that casual latitude in decision making about the charity's assets is not possible.

Committee Year 2019/20 has seen stability in committee members.

**Paul White** was re-appointed as HPC Representative in 2019 and has responsibility for hall maintenance. Much of Paul's work goes on behind the scenes. His contribution is huge, making significant financial savings for HVHMC which contributes to its ability to maintain modest hire fees which directly benefits hirers.

Hartlip Parish Council has now replaced Paul White by **Paul Williams** as their representative.

Paul White has remained with responsibility for maintenance which is much appreciated.

I have served as Chair and Secretary.

I have continued as Booking Clerk seeking out and encouraging new Regular Hirers to trial activities to benefit the community. Carrying this role in addition to the very significant workload of Chair and Secretary removes the need for this to be a paid post as it had been in the past thus reducing the hall's financial outgoings. As with Paul's commitment to maintenance matters, this commitment impacts positively upon fee levels and charges for activities for residents and other users.

**Tracy Still** was welcomed as Treasurer in December 2018 and has held that role during committee year 2019/20 working closely with me and becoming increasingly familiar with the requirements of the position.

The hall's **Charity Trustees** have played an active part in the management of the hall and are very much 'critical friends' to HVHMC.

Particular mention must be made of Graham Addicott who has given an incredible amount of time to showing the hall to potential hirers and managing the logistics of all hires since March 2019 due to my ankle operation and very lengthy period of being unable to walk at all being confined to bed for five months and now learning, slowly, to walk again. Thank you Graham.

**Lionel Robbins** is Independent Financial Inspector to the hall and carried out the inspection of 2019 finances on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2020.

**Peter Blandon** has continued to serve as a member of the support team in the capacity of IT Manager. Peter keeps the website up to date and also forwards on booking enquiries to me for action.

**Graham Seymour** has continued to serve as a member of the support team in the capacity of Technical Advisor. Graham carries out all the emergency lighting testing and keeps the necessary records up to date. He researches any new ideas which are of a technical nature and presents HVHMC with a report and guidance.

**Jacqueline Shicluna** has served as a member of the support team with responsibility for fund raising.

Jacqueline was the committee member responsible for the establishment and running of Hartlip One Hundred Club.

HVHMC favours putting on an annual social event whenever possible to raise much needed funds for HVH but at a modest charge as a priority of this committee is to offer opportunities for the community to come together.

Jacqueline has organised annual Quiz Nights in recent years.

**Paul White**, as explained above serves as Maintenance Manager.

Each attends meetings if required and submits reports when necessary.

HVHMC is most grateful to them.

The dedication, expertise, energy, time and determination of HVHMC Trustees, committee members and support team has been immense during the last 6 years making the crucial repairs and improvements to the hall possible and, as said earlier has also assisted in enabling hire fees to be held at a very moderate level. This makes the activities available at HVH inclusive to all.

**Emma Smith** remained as hall cleaner until February 2020. She was replaced in March 2020 by **Trina Davison** and we look forward to working with her.

The demands upon HVHMC continue to be heavy and I am very grateful for the hard work and dedication of all members of the team.

Others have supported the hall and me personally during 2019/20 and I wish to record my thanks to:

- HVH's Charity Trustees
  - HPC as HVH Holding Trustees
  - County Councillor Mike Whiting for a valuable grant
  - Borough Councillor Alan Horton for a valuable grant
  - Borough Councillor Richard Palmer for a valuable grant
  - Swale Borough Council for grant funding
  - CC personnel for advice when needed
- .....

2019/20 has been a year of much hard work and time investment for HVHMC. Once again, it has not been a year without challenge of various kinds.

The committee, since its formation six years ago, has set itself ambitious targets and once again achieved all of them and more.

I will outline some in my main report but so much has been done that it is impossible to cover all. I have therefore, as over the last five years, produced a bullet point appendix summarising all that has been done which you can peruse at your leisure.

It is recommended that residents visit the website and view the Chair's Reports and Appendices for 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 in order to appreciate the huge amount achieved during those years by the team.

**HVHMC work undertaken this year falls under the following broad headings:**

1. Finance
2. Systems and Policies: review and development
3. Maintenance/H&S
4. Hirer recruitment/provision of services

**Finance**

**Grants** have been applied for and obtained.

Grants today tend to be match funded and so HVHMC must ensure that it manages its finances so that it has the resources to enable applications to be submitted.

- County Councillor Mike Whiting: £1000
- Borough Councillor Alan Horton: £600

- Borough Councillor Richard Palmer: £600
- Swale Borough Council: £250

These funds have been supplemented and, in some cases significantly so, by investment by HVHMC to enable a range of projects to be planned. These projects are outlined later in my report.

**HVH Funds:** Hard work and financial expertise has been invested for the last six years to rationalise and make fees fair across the board.

Rigorous and regular analysis of income and outgoings, grant sourcing, efforts to increase hirings and the work mentioned earlier by committee members and support team has made it possible to maintain receipts at a similar level to that aimed for and achieved by this HVHMC in 2015 i.e. 38% higher than 2014. The major works identified as urgently needed in 2015 and somewhat daunting at the time have been prioritised and faced with determination. They have been costly projects but responsible financial management has made massive progress in this area possible. Work is still to be done.

**Booking and Fees Sub-Committee (BFSC)** continues to work towards establishing and maintaining a fair and even playing field for hirers and security for the hall into the future.

Strong management enabled fees to be kept at rates set for 2017 during 2018 and 2019. A minimal increase was introduced from January 2020.

**Contingency Fund:** 2017/18 saw the committee fulfil its intention to add to the Contingency Fund which it established in 2015/16 to give security to the hall facility and hirers. This fund continues to be held strong.

**Fundraising:** Hartlip One Hundred Club, established in 2017, was further embedded this year.

### **Systems and Policies: Review and Development**

**Terms and Conditions document** has been reviewed and updated. It is available on the website.

**All Booking Forms** have been reviewed and updated to ensure that they capture necessary information efficiently, provide a strong paper trail for financial inspection and support the management of hires.

**Invoicing of Regular Hirers** is carried out annually for efficiency for hirers and HVHMC and to provide the evidence for financial inspection.

**Website review** is underway. Some changes have been made. More will follow and include policies as appropriate.

The activities page, annual fee details and Terms and Conditions document have been updated.

A One Hundred Club page is provided.

**Finance Report:** the new system introduced several years ago to improve efficiency and to ensure that committee members and Trustees can be active in tracking progress has been embedded.

**Policies:** there is an expectation today that organisations such as this establish key policies. One of the Charity Trustees, Graham Addicott, has undertaken the gradual drafting of policies which are brought to the committee for discussion, modification if necessary and ratification. This programme will continue in the months to come.

### **Maintenance and H&S**

Progress through the rolling Development Plan has been excellent and detail is provided in the appendix to this report.

HVHMC has a policy of using local labour where possible.

Works this year include:

- All required servicing has, as usual, been kept up to date
- All emergency lighting tests run and outcomes recorded with remedial work carried out as necessary
- HVH Risk Assessment/H&S Assessment has undergone annual review
- Piano repaired and tuned
- Major works have not taken place this committee year. Instead detailed plans, costing and fund sourcing for some major projects has been a priority.

As a result, I am pleased to report that 2020/21 will see a number of projects undertaken. These will include:

- Installation of a handrail outside the Meeting Room
- Refurbishment of ladies and gents' toilets project managed by Paul White
- Installation of emergency lighting in ladies and gents' toilets
- The entrance hall, ladies and gents' toilets re-floored with a non-slip surface.
- Redecoration of walls and ceilings in entrance hall, ladies and gents' toilets
- The main storage cupboard in the School Room is to be remodelled to create two secure storage spaces
- The east door is to be renovated and painted
- The Boiler Room and cage is to be decorated
- The kitchen is to be ripped out and refitted to a more user-friendly specification

- LED panel lighting with emergency facility will be installed
- New flooring will be installed in the kitchen
- Problems of unauthorised use of HVH car park had continued during 2018 and responsible and necessary action was taken.

This matter is one of the biggest threats at the present time to the sustainability of the charity and its assets into the future.

H&S of authorised users, safeguarding, security of the hall and nearby residents, abuse of HVHMC members are among the many matters involved.

It must be remembered that HVH is a charity and must adhere to the purposes of the Trust Deed and to Charity Commission law.

As such all HVH assets (hall, car park and equipment) are to be used to facilitate the fulfilment of the purposes of the hall and nothing else.

The car park is therefore specifically and solely for users when attending the hall and is a crucial resource to the recruitment and retention of classes and activities.

HVHMC allows Allotment Holders to park if space permits when, and only when, tending their allotment and for no other reason whatsoever.

This is for historical reasons the allotments and hall having been available to Hartlip residents since the 1890's if not earlier.

Unauthorised parking in recent years has led to loss of some hirers providing activities for residents thus losing opportunities for residents and vital income to the tune of four figures p.a. for the hall.

Very real dangers of accident or fatality were being caused.

HVHMC is grateful to those who have responded appropriately to the message given clearly by the sign installed in the car park.

The matter will be considered further if necessary.

It was unfortunate that an item authored by a resident and published in the April 2019 Forum was inaccurate and failed to acknowledge both the purposes of the charity as laid down by the Trust Deed and the Duties of a Charity Trustee regarding the assets of a charity.

This led to misunderstanding amongst some residents who, rather than speak with Trustees or HVHMC to ascertain the facts, wrote supplementary pieces to the Forum which were equally inaccurate.

This caused unnecessary tension in the village and took up valuable Trustee and committee time to scribe an accurate, robust response to clarify the situation.

### **Recruitment of Hirers/provision of services**

This was actively focused on again during 2019/20.

A number of new activities trialled – some with a view to all-year slots, some with a view to blocks at intervals.

Irish Dancing has extended its hours and now books some Occasional Hire slots in addition as required.

A Yoga class is now running on a weekly, all-year basis.

As we speak HVHMC is in discussion with five more potential Regular Hirers. It is not likely that all will establish but any that do will benefit the village.

As previously reported, HVHMC's in years past, closed HVH during school holidays which amounts to 13 weeks or 25% of the year.

The committee was concerned about this waste of the resource in terms of the charity fulfilling its purpose and from a financial point of view.

This time has and is being targeted to increase hall usage and income.

New Regular Hirers are encouraged to be 'all year round' rather than 'term-time only'.

This provides a better service to residents and other users.

This level of additional booking makes a much heavier demand on the Booking Clerk than the old system did.

As reported last year the issue of Sunday Opening was investigated painstakingly during 2017. No covenant was found and so, from 2018, the hall opened on Sunday with times and hire charges specific to that day.

2019 saw this to be a useful service for some people with a number of bookings taken.

Occasional hirings for private events have been many and varied. The hall has played host to Christening Parties, Wedding Receptions, children's parties, baby showers, Festival of Light celebrations, anniversary parties, adult birthday parties and wakes.

HVHMC remains committed to engaging with the community of Hartlip and providing opportunities for the community to come together where possible. Christmas Eve 2019 saw the hall host Hartlip Sings Christmas for Hartlip residents. This was the fifth year of this free event. This is a collaborative event organised by Hartlip Community Hub for Hartlip Parish Council, HVHMC and the Chapel. It is a very popular event.

So, another busy, varied and successful year for HVHMC with some very positive developments afoot.

Barbara Addicott  
Chair of Hartlip Village Hall Management Committee  
12 March 2020