Village Hall Chair’s Report March 2023

We have had an incredibly successful year since my last report. The last phase of improvements we proposed to make to the hall - removing the old lean-to kitchen, creating a decking area, improving the storage area at the side of the hall, including installing the old kitchen sink outside and installing bi fold doors, was all completed in April 2022. As I have said many times before so many of the villagers have played a part in revitalising this valuable community asset, with ‘hands on’ support with maintenance and gardening, coming along to fundraisers, the coffee mornings or regular classes that use the hall or hiring the hall for private events.

We are still having regular classes and events in the hall every week day - Stay and Play, Zumba, Pilates, Yoga, Dancefit, Tai Chi, Nia Dance, TGIF weekly teas ( thanks needs to go to Sally Smith for running these) and the monthly Fika coffee mornings on a Saturday along with occasional hire from Willowbook Recorders, the Parish Council and for private parties. The Church have continued to support use of the hall holding their Harvest Supper, Mulled Wine and Burns Night events and we have again held the Macmillan Coffee fundraiser and the Christmas Quiz Night, where we donated half the profits to the parish council for use in the community. We also provided the mulled wine and mince pies for after the Carols on The Green event run by Chater Community Choir.

2022 also saw the hall used for the village Jubilee celebrations in June, which were planned to be outside on the Parish field, but due to it ending up a very wet day we had over 80 villagers packed inside enjoying their picnics in the warm and dry before the enthusiastically supporting the inter pub Tug Of War! We also donated and distributed a commemorative Jubilee mug to every school aged child in the village.

In September we finally reached our Centenary day, relieved that the objective of getting to that date with all the refurbishment work completed achieved! We began the day with a very well attended coffee morning with demonstrations from the Zumba and Tai Chi groups, entertainment from the Willowbrook Recorder group, Rob Persani from Rutland and Stamford Sound broadcasting his morning radio show and both the High Sheriff of Rutland, Geoff Thompson and The Lord Lieutenant, Dr Furness, coming along and supporting us. Sue Hodson made a fantastic cake for us which we all enjoyed along with glasses of fizz. The Whist and games afternoon was admittedly quieter but we still enjoyed delicious scones donated by Kate and Mark at The Boot Inn and had time to catch our breath before the evening party got underway. The Rutland Big Band had us all tapping our toes and dancing the night away, there were some fantastic 1920’s outfits and calls for a repeat event in the future! A truly memorable day all round.

In November we were thrilled to have been nominated and subsequently win an award from the Rural Communities Council for ‘Best Rural Community Building’. This was in recognition of the refurbishment work and making the village hall a welcoming and thriving community hub and also of all the hard work the committee and all the volunteers had put in since 2019. The competition was stiff and we were very humbled to have won.

We have begun 2023 with the hall being fully utilised through the week with the usual activities and held a free lunch event during Village Halls week in January, which was focusing on warm and welcoming spaces – something we are aim to provide throughout the colder months in the current economic climate, particularly at Friday teas and the Fika coffee mornings. The diary is already filling up with private bookings and we are already planning a fundraising party night later in the year to purchase a sound system for the hall.

We may have now completed all the major refurbishment plans but we continue to rely on the community to keep breathing life into your village hall and know that with your support, attending classes, coffee mornings or events, the hall is set to stay a focal point in South Luffenham.

Tracy Steward April 2023