

LBJH Trustees' report to the AGM Thursday 12th May 2016

The Trustees took the decision to move the date of the AGM to the second Thursday in May from 2016 to bring it more in line with the auditing of accounts and other matters. As a result this report covers the period from November 2015 to April 2016 only.

The Trustees further agreed to formalise the election of Trustees by requiring nominations to be made and seconded in advance of each AGM and for the nominee to declare a willingness to stand for election. This change will take effect from the May 2016 AGM and brings the process of election of Trustees more in line with other charitable organisations.

The Trustees have not met formally since the November 2015 AGM but have been in contact via email as and when necessary. The Management Committee has continued to meet on the first Thursday of each month with minutes and monthly cashflow statements available to all Trustees. An information pack has been compiled for the benefit of new Trustees. Relevant information is published in Roundabout and on the village website.

Usage of the hall has, with the exception of a quiet period at the end of 2015, continued to run at a high level with an established list of regular events and one off events mostly at weekends, such that there have been very few days when the hall has not been in use. Most of the regular users have seen their numbers increase and some have extended their hiring times. Users without exception have been delighted with the facilities and with the efficient way in which their bookings have been managed and many bookings have been repeat events or via personal recommendation. Formal (and costly) advertising has thus been kept to a minimum. The Hallmark certification awarded in October 2015 may have had a positive effect on bookings though this has not been directly quantifiable.

The high level of usage, together with very low running costs and much of the routine cleaning and maintenance completed by volunteers rather than costly contractors, is reflected in the monthly cashflow figures which show a healthy surplus month on month. Until recently all of the surplus has been used to complete work on the hall and grounds but from 2016 onwards the Trustees have agreed to increase the financial reserves when possible and will be formulating a reserves policy in line with recommendations from the Charity Commission.

It has also been agreed that the financial situation now allows the employment of a cleaner on a regular basis and a groundsman on a limited basis during the Summer months. This will relieve some of the pressure on volunteers among whom the key holders in particular are carrying an increasing commitment. There is however no plan at the moment to employ a caretaker and volunteers will continue to do much of the maintenance and gardening work.

The most notable undertaking took place during the Christmas closure period when a small group carried out a complete refurbishment of the main hall floor. This has transformed the appearance of the building and so far the new finish is standing up well to the level of usage.

While the directional signs in the village have worked well a number of first time users overshoot the entrance to the hall on Ritherdon's Lane and have to turn round in the village. The Trustees are looking into the installation of further signage to prevent this.

No formal contact with the administrators of Matrix UK Ltd has been received in the last six months though the Trustees have kept a watching brief via the administrator's website. The Trustees have decided to adopt a wait and see approach but if nothing else it appears unlikely that the contract with Matrix will ever be formally signed off.

The Management Committee organised a very successful Spring programme of community events in 2016. Over 350 people in total attended the five varied functions and while the surplus generated is a useful source of income for the hall, the value of the events for the whole community is paramount. The enthusiasm, dedication and hard work that underpins these events is greatly appreciated and thanks go to committee members, Trustees and a band of willing helpers who make such a programme possible.

Keith Moore
Chairman, LBJH Trustees

