

SIDDINGTON VILLAGE HALL

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2020

The Covid-19 pandemic has been one of the most challenging periods in the 99 year history of the hall.

During the national lockdown the hall was closed and entry prohibited to all, with the exception of trustees to carry out H&S and security checks. Having the building free from all but essential activity was alien and unwelcome. Thankfully our regular users started to return from early August.

To facilitate Covid regulations, the hall has been risk assessed and measures put in place accordingly. Hand sanitising stations have been installed and sanitising equipment provided. Clear signage is in place indicating social distancing requirements and a one way entry and exit system. A QR Code is on display in the entry porch for hall users to scan. The number of chairs and tables available have been limited for ease of cleaning. A separate Covid-19 form is required in addition to the regular hiring agreement.

Without our regular hirers and ad hoc parties income ceased. Cotswold District Council offered village halls and community buildings a one off grant. Our application was successful and we were awarded the maximum £10,000. The grant helped to cover loss of income and extra costs incurred by an enhanced cleaning regime.

Siddington and Kemble Playgroup ceased to operate due to government regulations and they too lost their income. The trustees agreed to amend their charges accordingly. Thankfully the Playgroup returned on three days a week in June and five days at the beginning of September, with an increased take up of places. Thanks to Nigel Deller, they returned to a newly installed kitchenette located in the room they use as their office. Use of the hall kitchen is no longer required by them and they are therefore able to maintain a Covid secure bubble.

We were well into preparations to commence refurbishment of the toilets when the pandemic struck. The availability of builders has been problematic and is likely to remain so. Work will commence at the earliest opportunity to provide a much needed upgrade and will include improved access for wheelchair users.

The side store is planned for a make over as the porch is now the main entrance. To comply with social distancing regulations the external door is being used as the main exit point, establishing a one way system. Work will commence once things return to a more normal state.

The parking area to the side of the hall has been gravelled to eradicate potholes and improve overall appearance.

The planned Quiz Night in November and Carol Evening in December have been cancelled. Unless government regulations change, it is likely that the same will apply to the proposed Race Night in February next year.

December 2021 will be the centenary of the hall. We hope to be able to celebrate this special occasion in a way that reflects the importance of the hall to Siddington and the wider community.

Regrettably Jude Grayson has resigned as a trustee due to her work commitments. Jude was a valued member of the management team and is greatly missed. There are now two trustee vacancies to fill. The posts have been advertised in the Siddington Village News and Wilts and Glos Standard. It is hoped that members of our village community will express an interest in becoming a trustee of this much valued and well liked amenity. The role is rewarding and offers the opportunity to get involved in village events and to meet new people.

In the absence of face to face gatherings the trustees have readily adapted to virtual meetings via the Zoom platform . This has enabled our regular monthly meetings to continue without interruption.

Let us hope that the hall will once again be fulfilling its role in the community by offering an excellent venue for party's and special events.

Denys Young

Chair Trustees – Siddington Village Hall