

**Jubilee Hall Trust AGM
Wednesday 27th January 2021**

Chairman's Report

Well, I chose an interesting year to return to the Jubilee Hall as a Trustee and Chairman, didn't I? However, last January none of us could have foreseen the effect that the COVID 19 pandemic would have on the world in general and, for the purpose of this report, the Jubilee Hall in particular.

COVID REGULATIONS: In the middle of March we were forced to close the Hall completely to comply with the rules of the first lockdown. When that lockdown was lifted we were able to re-open the Hall but with a limit of only 10 people at any one time. Sanitation equipment was installed and hirers had to accept responsibility for their own safety and cleaning of the equipment they had used. The Hirers Agreement was rewritten to comply with insurance requirements and new instructions about responsibilities were issued to all hirers, new and old. This did enable certain events to happen but then came the second lockdown at the end of October so the Hall was completely closed again and remains so at present.

EVENTS: In spite of the new restrictions we managed to hold a number of events during the year, though far fewer than we would normally have done. Our monthly Pub Nights ran every month from January to September though when the Hall had to close because of COVID, they shifted to the Glebe Meadow. In March, the normal pub night was replaced by a St. Patrick's Day dinner in the Hall organised by Debbie and Stuart Griffin. This event, together with a talk on "*Training Guide Dogs for the Blind*" on Thursday 12th March, were the final events of the year in the Hall. All other plans had to be cancelled, or rather postponed as we intend to return to all of them as soon as conditions allow. However, thanks to the technical expertise of Andy Leitch and good weather we were able to hold a "*Music on the Meadow*" event on the Glebe in September when we broadcast the Last Night Of The Proms live.

OTHER INITIATIVES: With the hall closed we looked at other ways we could fulfil our stated aim – to serve the local community – and we came up with two initiatives. The first was to launch a Virtual Book Sale on the village website. This was suggested by Christina Davies who contributed a large number of books to kick start the project. At the time of writing this on-line book sale has raised £113. The second initiative was to launch a Starston Village Photo competition in conjunction with Pigeon Post. Photos will be submitted by email and posted in a gallery on the village website. The theme is Winter, the closing date is 20th March and the judge will be Lisa North of Lisa North Photography in Harleston.

BOOKINGS: Hall bookings were similarly disrupted. Our Tuesday morning Art Ladies continued until the Hall was closed in March, returned briefly in the summer window and then had to disappear again. However, they have made it clear that they will return as soon as they are permitted to do so. We did have a handful of ad-hoc bookings, all well managed by Robert Wood, making sure that people knew about the new regulations. He was ably supported by Joy Brooks who kept the On-Line Bookings Calendar up to date with all the changes.

PUBLICITY AND PROMOTION: I have to thank Dee Palmer for taking on this role in addition to that of Jubilee Hall Secretary. We have two publicity email lists, one for people in Starston and one for people in the surrounding area who attend village events and support the Hall and Meadow. It is due to a regular flow of publicity, coupled with promotional material, that means our events are always well attended and initiatives, such as the on-line book sale, are well supported.

HEALTH AND SAFETY: Steve Thompson continues to monitor our Health and Safety systems. The new smoke and heat alarms in the Hall and kitchen have now been fitted but unfortunately the fire extinguishers have not had their annual service. This is due to the fact the company we employed to do this does not give any warning of when they are coming. They simply turn up at the Hall and expect someone to be there. If there isn't, they just go away again. We will be looking for a new company to take over this function.

MAINTENANCE: Inevitably there have been a series of maintenance problems throughout the year and, as usual, Colin Loveday has been on hand to sort them out. One of the main challenges this year was the repair to the parapet wall above the lady's loo to address the damp problem. Colin, aided by his trusty labourer, Mr Grimble, has now fixed this.

CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS: At the last AGM it was reported that we had three construction projects in the pipeline: laying a grid in the car park to improve disability access, repairs to the car park wall and repairs to the west wall of the Hall which has suffered from water damage from passing vehicles. The disability access grid was installed in August and, although it has not had much chance to be tested, appears to be very successful. The total cost of this work was £3000 and we received a grant of £2500 from South Norfolk Council towards the cost. The other two projects are still on hold, the west wall repairs could not go ahead until Highways Department had reprofiled the verge on Railway Hill to try and prevent such water damage in the future. This highway work has now been done.

FINANCE AND THE 100 CLUB: Financially, this is an interesting time, as with the Hall closed we are receiving virtually no income and yet many of our regular costs continue. Central government has provided some grants for community spaces. These grants are administered by SNC and are proving very useful. You will find full details of our current finances in the Treasurer's report. The Starston 100 Club, which is one of the few sources of income left to us at present, has been reorganised with Geoff Broadhurst handling the admin and John Formston organising the draws. Thanks to them both.

THE GLEBE MEADOW: The meadow has been a lifeline to many people in lockdown, not just in Starston but from Harleston and surrounding villages. It has provided somewhere to go safely, walk, get some fresh air and, as Professor Tim O'Riordan said when he formally opened the meadow in 2012, find "*a little piece of peace.*" There is more information about the meadow in Peter Grimble's Glebe Meadow report.

FLOOD DAMAGE: Finally I have to mention the damage done to the Hall and Meadow in the floods that swept through Starston on Christmas Eve. Water got into the hall and destroyed the carpet and left floors and walls very damp. The force of the water across the meadow destroyed the fences at the far end while damaging the fence along the Harleston road

where most of the new hedging plans were also washed away. One of oak benches was swept away downstream and there was damage to the beehives. Repairs are in hand but are expected to cost between £4,000 and £5,000. Our insurance specifically excludes water damage so we are applying for grants for some of the work and we have already had several people, both in and outside Starston, offering to contribute to a repair fund. We are very grateful for their support.

FINALLY: I cannot end this report without offering my sincere thanks to my fellow Trustees and all other member of the Management Committee for their unfailing support for the Hall, the Meadow and for me. Everyone on the committee has a specific task which they do quietly and efficiently. With a team like this, the job of Chairman is made very easy indeed.

Thank you.

Michael Bartlett
January 2021