

Sturton by Stow Village Hall Annual Report 2018-2019 (compiled March 2019)

During 2018-2019 the committee decided to employ a bookings clerk, as due to our chairman moving house he could no longer share the task with our treasurer. This would have meant John doing all the bookings in addition to the many other tasks that he undertakes. Janet Lee undertook the role and has successfully integrated it with her work as cleaner. The hall continues to be used by many regular groups as well catering for private parties of all types. The committee and team work hard to make sure that all their needs are catered for.

Works completed during the last year include replacing the urinals and surrounding tiling in the gent's toilet. A job that was not done when both the ladies and gents toilets were refurbished a few years ago. We have purchased and installed gutter brushes to reduce the occurrence of blockages due to leaves and detritus falling into the gutters. By doing this we may have reduced the propensity for the gutter downpipes to get blocked and overflow during heavy rain. We have fitted new 3kw heaters in the committee room together with timed switches that switch the heaters off after a period of 1 -4 hours. This ensures that the heating cannot be left on for extended periods wasting electricity and costing money. We have also installed additional double outlet sockets in the committee room to facilitate the installation of a projector and also to give flexibility to future users of the room when we manage to hire it out more often in the future. We have had a number of enquiries and expect that the room will get used more in the future. A replacement fan heater was installed in the hair dresser room as the existing one failed. This was done by committee members as is most first line maintenance. Many thousands of pounds have been saved by using the skills and time of committee members and their partners and friends for hall maintenance tasks.

Despite all our efforts, the running costs of the hall still outstrip the monies received in lettings. We have done our best to reduce costs by fitting LED lighting etc. but electricity charges still are a significant amount of our annual running costs. We have recently sought quotations for solar panels as mentioned in last year's report. However, the cost of them would use most of our reserves and at this time the true benefit of solar panels was difficult to determine due to Brexit and the ending of the current feed in tariff agreement on 31st March.

The committee have decided therefore to try and complete more pressing works. To that end a sub-committee has been appointed to look into a) the replacement of the front façade that is wood framed and going rotten b) replacement of all outside doors with maintenance free materials c) replace existing soakaway roof drainage with new soakaways or connection to the surface water drain that runs through the high street .and d) The possibility of creating more storage in the roof space over the main hall to free the upstairs "kitchen" of unnecessary clutter and make it more attractive to hirers. The sub-committee will decide on the priority of work and get prices for each project and the committee will then get each task done.

The Hall committee has asked for and received funding from the Parish Council for many years. The reason that the Village Hall needs help is that the income from lettings does not cover the day to day running costs of the hall which are between 12 & 14 thousand pounds per annum. Earlier this year the council voted not to support the Hall for 2019-2020 because the Village Hall had funds of circa £23,000 in current and savings accounts. After representation from the Village Hall committee the PC agreed that they would pay the 2019-2020 request. The Parish Council Chairman advised PC members that reserves of cash were covered in a charity commission document but was not sure if it related to the VH in this case. Subsequently the Village Hall has sought clarification from Community-Lincs about reserves. We were told that charities with a reserves policy were advised to set their figure at between 2 and 3 times their annual expenditure. In our case that would be between 36-42 thousand pounds. The committee did not think that we should have a reserves policy but that we should try to keep one years running costs in hand and identify where any additional funds were going to be spent over the next two or five years. This means that we currently have just over £11k available to sort out the previously identified maintenance and replacement tasks. We think therefore that we will continue to need to fund raise in order to complete those projects. As in the past we will continue to seek funding from other sources to do these works. You may remember we received grants to build the side of hall storage "cupboards" to refurbish the toilets and more recently to replace the committee room furniture.

The committee are proud of their record in maintaining the hall as one of the best in the county and with your help, will continue to do so