

# **Hacheston Parish Council – Annual Parish Meeting**

**22<sup>nd</sup> May 2024 – 7.00pm**

## **Report from Hacheston Village Hall**

### **1. Trustees and Personnel**

There have been no changes to Trustees since those advised at the last AGM. Zoe Potter has advised that she will stand down as a Trustee in May 2025.

The incumbent Booking Clerk and Cleaner / Caretaker remained in position for the whole of the year maintaining stability in hall operations.

Our long-term volunteer bar managers, Niki Accott and Peter Etheridge, stood down at the end of 2023. Chris and Leigh White have taken on the role. The Trustees thank both the old and new bar managers for their service to the Village Hall.

### **2. Meetings and Governance**

The Trustees met three times in 23/24. The planned meeting in December 2023 was cancelled as the Chairman was indisposed. At each meeting Health and Safety issues, safeguarding and financial performance were reviewed along with other current issues.

The required independent examination of the accounts was successfully completed in August 2023 by Chris Dobson. The most significant issues raised were better monitoring of bar petty cash and the need for the Charity to become a registered employer with HMRC.

The payroll is now run by a third party (North Yorkshire Centre for Independent Living), who in addition to paying our employees manage our relationship with HMRC and the Pensions Regulator.

The Register of Trustees on the Charities Commission website was updated as required. A full annual return for 22/23 was made in December 2023 consisting of the Chairman's Report, the accounts and the Independent Examiner's Report.

### **3. Health and Safety Activity**

Following the annual third-party Playground Inspection in October 2023, necessary remedial works were agreed and undertaken in December 23 and January 24. Routine monthly inspection of the playground equipment continues to be undertaken. There have been no reported incidents in the hall in the year.

### **4. Financial Position**

The hall continues to rebuild its financial position, underpinned by our core regular hirers and buoyed by the many successful resident events organised by the Volunteer group. Adhoc hires for events etc have still not recovered to pre-covid levels.

Although rising costs have been observed throughout the year, hire rates have not been increased. This situation is kept under continuous review and should it be deemed necessary rates will be increased in the second half of 2024.

Although revenue levels have improved in 23/24 so have costs with significant expenditure again incurred in maintaining the playground equipment. Hacheston Parish Council (HPC) continues to support the maintenance of Fairfield Green. Grants from East Suffolk Council and EDF were received to help fund maintenance of the playground. The Trustees are grateful for this support

With the ending of long-term contracts for electricity and gas, new 1-year contracts for both electricity in June 2023 and gas in April 2024 saw prices virtually double. It is hoped that when the electricity contract renews in June 2024 similar or improved prices will be achieved.

The continued ageing of the hall, means that the Trustees must also begin to provide for such large maintenance items as replacement of the heating system and internal and external redecoration.

The Trustees remain confident that the hall will be viable despite having to face these considerable challenges.

#### **5. Leases with Hacheston United Charities (HUC)**

No progress has been made with HUC in acquiring either the freehold or extending the lease term for the land upon which both Fairfield Green and the hall are located.

HUC is now actively considering the matter but as it owns several pieces of land in the village a number of other parties are involved and it is taking more time than initially thought required to get all these different parties ready to proceed.

#### **6. CIL Funding**

The Trustees submitted three proposals to HPC for potential funding from the CIL funds HPC has available. These were an outdoor gym and table tennis table, battery storage for the solar panels and replacement benches for the green. HPC consulted with residents as to which projects to support and the majority of support was for traffic calming measures in the village. The replacement benches may get funded if there are any funds remaining.

#### **7. Volunteers**

The Volunteer Group continued its good work throughout the year putting on resident events every month. An exciting calendar of events is planned for the next year, however it is noted that the number of volunteers is dwindling and the work falling on fewer people each month.

As ever we need more residents to come forward and volunteer to help. Not only with events but grounds maintenance and routine inspection of the playground equipment.

Nevertheless, the Trustees thank all volunteers for their massive efforts throughout this year without whose help the hall would not be as successful as it is.

**Malcolm Robinson Chairman of Trustees – Hacheston Village Hall**