

Church Minshull Village Hall  
Muslin Row, Church Minshull,  
CW5 6EW

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – YEAR ENDING 31 JANUARY 2023

The year ending January 2023 marked the first full year of operation since the full and then partial closure of the Village Hall because of the Covid-19 restrictions and I am pleased to be able to report that all our erstwhile regular bookings have returned, albeit not all with the same frequency.

The strict sanitisation regime that was adopted post-Covid 19 in respect of regular 'fogging' and the rotation of the usage of the internal furniture (tables and chairs) was relaxed during the year although Trustees agreed that the public health advice (posters and provision of hand sanitisers) would remain as good practice.

The finances of the Village Hall remain in relatively good health with regular events (bowling, 'Sing for Fun', Bridge and Bowls) ensuring that the facility is in regular use every day of the week, although as in previous years, there was a slight fall back during the summer months. As in previous years, the Village Hall's revenue was augmented by external 'one off' meetings (children's parties, local organisation's committee meetings and annual general meetings, funeral teas, and anniversary parties); all of which are in line with wider aim of making the village hall facility attractive and available to the wider Church Minshull population.

As with most other community facilities within the county however, costs rose sharply in the year and with extra current and planned increases in operating costs (mainly power). Hire charges had remained unchanged for at least 3 years but with known increases in operating costs due in the latter half of the year and those scheduled for 2023, it was reluctantly agreed by the Trustees that hiring rates would have to increase. These increased charges would come into effect from January 2023 with existing users being given at least 2 months' notice of the impending increase.

In line with one of the recommendations contained in the original structural engineer's report for the village hall, that an interim (2 year) review be conducted, this was duly commissioned. The results from this review were positive in that there had been no further significant 'slippage' of the hall on its north/south axis. However, the report re-stated one of the recommendations of the original structural survey, that the village hall could only expect another five years (approximately until 2027) of practical use before major capital expenditure would be required to maintain the structural fabric of the facility.

Therefore, it was agreed that the Village Hall Trustees approach Church Minshull Parish Council with a view to taking a joint strategic approach to the development of new, modern village hall facility that could be operational within the next 5-10 years. A special working group consisting of representatives from the Trustees, Church Minshull Parish Council and other interested individuals was set up to take this forward. Given the probable size and scope of a new, modern village community facility, most funding for such a project would have to come from external sources such as the National Lottery and/or regional government.

The first step on this development project was a full feasibility study that would encompass the views of the local community, the interests and requirements of official environmental groups and future usage of a new facility that was in keeping with the aims and objectives of the existing Church Minshull Neighbourhood Plan. The Village Hall Trustees and Parish Council agreed to joint fund the feasibility study (and subsequent design drawings and planning applications) to an agreed maximum amount of £4000 each. The joint working group met regularly during the year and will in due course be approaching external funders for support.

Finally, as ever, I would like to thank all my fellow Trustees for their support and dedication to maintaining Church Minshull Village Hall as community facility for all the village and one for which we can all be immensely proud.

David Barrett

Chair – Church Minshull Village Hall Trustees.

May 2023.