

Caxton Village Hall - Annual Report for 2016

The Village Hall Committee held its AGM on 21 January 2017. The following is a summary and look back at the year.

Committee Membership

It was a fond farewell to one of our Parish Council representatives, Keith Howard, who stepped down this year. Keith has been a great contributor to the committee, and was instrumental in rescuing the committee from near-zero membership a couple of years ago, and restoring it to the healthy state it's in now, so a big thank you to Keith (and for keeping me in line as chairman from time to time!).

Sally Bushby has kindly stepped forward to replace Keith from the Parish Council, so we were pleased to welcome Sally this year.

Another welcome addition is Mike Hope. Mike has taken the hall under his wing somewhat recently, very kindly, and expertly, doing a number of jobs: more of that later....

Committee Members, and Appointment of Officers for 2017

Chris Rundell – Chair

Christina Harrison - Secretary

Helen Barbour - Treasurer

Ann MacDonald

Rita Pettinger

Charlotte Richards

Dorota Hirsz

Val Gape

Sally Bushby

Janet Molloy

Mike Hope

Finance

We saw a drop in income from Hall rentals this year, due to some previous regulars dropping out (all for good reason). With some increased running costs this resulted in a loss for the year of £809. Whilst we can accommodate this from reserves, clearly it's a trend we need to reverse. So please, use your Village Hall to keep it alive!

Fund Raisers

Fund raising to continue to maintain and improve the Village Hall continue, and we had another in our series of successful quiz nights on 16 September, this time featuring a ploughman's super and bring your own drinks. Thank you to everyone who supported this, as well as to Jane Bradford who wielded the quizmaster's microphone despite a broken wrist!

Members of the Committee and neighbours also arranged a well-attended coffee morning on 30 September raising £350 for MacMillan Cancer Support.

On 9 December we also ran what we hope will be the first of a series of regular Friday coffee mornings and afternoons, for people to get together for a cake and a chat. So look out for the dates, drop in, say hallo, maybe make some new friends!

Village Hall Refurbishment

An application for funding for some significant refurbishment work was assembled and submitted under the Landfill Communities Fund operated by local waste disposal organisations. We have learned that any application needs to come from the freehold or leaseholders, so the Parish Council have kindly taken over the lead on the bid, and we'll be working with them to help make this a success.

In the meantime we're taking steps to help the damp dry out by fixing gutters and keeping them free of leaves and other debris which has previously caused them to overflow and soak into the walls.

Maintenance and improvements

Thanks in the most part to the skills and enthusiasm of Mike Hope, we've made some real improvements, including: fixing up the porch, a fence and gate to control who can get round the back of the Hall, warnings and security measures to keep people from playing on the roof (yes really!), clearing and fixing up guttering to stop water getting in, weeding and clearing of brush, and prevention of autumn leaves blocking up the gutters and drains. These have been real steps forward in keeping the Hall safe and sound.

We've had a donation of a portable Public Address system, which will be useful for future quizzes and whenever we need to make a voice heard. And we've had safety and maintenance checks of the electrical appliances, and emergency lighting and fire extinguishers.

Booking Contact Numbers

The vintage mobile 'phone we used to use for taking bookings (07907 841451) has finally given up the ghost; could you just use Ann MacDonald's other numbers 01954 719704 or mobile 077889 447921, not the old mobile number as it's no longer being answered.

Plans for 2017

Ideas for events and fund-raisers in the coming year include further quiz nights, curry nights (first of the year 24th February – a date for your diary!), coffee mornings and afternoons, and even a pop-up pub! Let us know if you like the sound of these, and any other suggestions you might have.

There are a few jobs we'll try to tackle while we're waiting for the refurbishment bid, including the flooring in the Committee Room (the smaller room at the back), some of the more threatening curtain rails, and paintwork to the flaky walls.

We'll also be working with Brian Hayes to contribute Village Hall news to the Caxton website <http://caxtonvillage.co.uk/> so be sure to add it to your favourites list for all the latest.

Thank Yous

Lots of people put lots of time in on a voluntary basis to keep this very important facility for the village running, so many thanks to Committee Members, the Parish Council and everyone who has helped over the year, and everyone who has hired the hall and supported events. Please continue to make use of the Hall to keep it a vital and viable part of the community.

Chris Rundell

Chairman, 2 February 2017