

North Wootton Village Hall Management Committee
Chairman's Report August 2021

I write this with cautious optimism as the country begins to move towards a 'new-normal' and the hall is once again flourishing at the heart of our village. Winter of 2020 saw the hall shuttered again after a brief respite in the Autumn when we managed to hold three village markets and briefly welcome back our yoga classes. It was disappointing to have to cancel our annual Christmas Fair although committee did ensure that the Hall looked its best with external decorations including a tree during the festive season. During the dark days of the second lock-down we were heartened to be voted West Norfolk Heroes and receive a letter of recognition from Lord-Lieutenant for Norfolk, Lady Dannatt MBE leading the Parish Council to also express their thanks and appreciation for the hard work that the Committee put into running the Hall saying *'In recent years it has gone from strength to strength and is a real asset to the village'*.

We held our first committee meeting of 2021 in May. During the time that the hall was closed a new adjacent pathway was constructed, half of the cost being met by the Parish Council and the other by Norfolk Highways Dept. We are grateful to both organisations for their generous support. The creation of this pathway then allowed the committee to proceed with agreed improvements to the path around the hall and the creation of gravelled car parking to the left of the hall. Nurse Builders carried out the work and the marked improvement to the appearance of the hall and ease of access are evident.

In anticipation of better times to come the committee has also sought and been granted a permanent license to sell alcohol, doing away with the tedious task of obtaining a temporary license every time we hold a function. You'll be pleased to know that we are also going to replace the rather tatty Village Hall notice board. The new board, which is on order, will be illuminated at night. Ever mindful of public health & safety we are also going to fit a Defibrillator to an exterior wall.

Following approval from the Parish Council and after public consultation the Committee plans to add a porch to the front entrance of the Hall. The design of the porch is thoroughly in keeping with the historic style of the Hall improving insulation and access as well as enhancing the visual appeal of the building. Following this feedback from Hall users we also plan to install a bike rack. Other not so obvious improvements include plans for more storage at the rear of the building, internal re-painting (already carried out), and a new water heater

Our postponed VJ celebration was held on Sunday 15th August and was very well attended. Coverage in the local press attested to its success and everyone who attended agreed it was our best event ever. Financial support came from the Parish Council, Norfolk Community Foundation and the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk allowing us to make this a free even. It was attended by Deputy Mayor Cllr Lesley Bambridge and featured live music from Swervy World, and local singer Claire Scollay. There was a display of wartime artefacts; old photos of the village and fete style games and Lynn Brewery's specially brewed "Dame Vera" beer. Everyone involved played an important part in the day, but we must acknowledge Antony Lamb's outstanding contribution.

Once again, the Hall is in demand for regular sessions like Yoga, Baby massage, dance and music classes as well as birthday parties, weddings and christenings. We still receive a steady income from the West Norfolk Wins lottery, so if you can, please join in this modest scheme.

At this point there are always too many people to thank; the Village Hall does seem to bring out the best in our community, but it is the Committee members who make the difference and turn our aspirations into reality.