



T'Owd Man's Mutterings

Supplement

Village Hall Update

The management committee thought it would be a good time to give the Bonsall community an update on what we have been doing to improve the Village Hall over the Covid year. This time last year we tried to send out a survey to everyone to ask what you thought needed improving at the Village Hall, so that you might use it more. Initially stopped in our tracks by the first lockdown, we did manage to email some surveys out to groups and received a few responses. You indicated several improvements, and this is what we have been working on putting into action.



The full survey report is available on our new Village Hall website. We have been very busy and the hall has had a significant 'makeover' where we have deep cleaned the downstairs floor and polished it, painted all the walls and woodwork, including the kitchen and toilets. New curtains have been hung and the ladies toilet has had a revamp. We have purchased 'nearly new' chairs and tables that look very smart and we are looking at providing an internet connection for the hall. Brightening up the main village hall window with seasonal decorations started at Christmas and we now have a Spring theme if you want to pop up and have a look! We are in the process of improving the bar area and the top floor will soon have improved lighting and more plug sockets.

As we move into warmer weather, we will be planting upcycled containers as well as making the rear courtyard more attractive to sit out in. There are many people to thank who have volunteered their time to make the improvements but especially Steve Elliot and Mark Sobey. We are very lucky that we have so many kind-hearted individuals who are willing to give up time to help us out.

There are major plans afoot to improve the access to the hall for anyone who has trouble using the ramp and especially the very top part, which is steeper than the rest. We hope this will improve access as well as repairing the porch, which is doing its best to leave the main hall. Whilst it is not possible to completely redesign the entire ramp and entrance, because the hall sits up high and it is so close to the road, we have had planning consent to make a number of changes, such as resurfacing the ramp and moving the hand rail to allow use of the full width of the existing path, redesigning the entrance to make it more disabled- and pram-friendly and adding metal railings on the



If you wish to have a look, the website address is
<https://bonsallvillagehall.org.uk>.

top of the wall to match those at the cafe. The plans will be displayed in the Village Hall and we will be putting these up on the website too.

The costs for the improved access and repair to the porch are significant and in the tens of thousands, so the committee are applying for grants to help fund the changes. So far, we have received £2,500 from the Duke of Devonshire's charitable trust and some monies from the local council-held funds. There are several other grants submitted that we have not yet heard from and so, we hope once we are able to open, following official guidelines, we can put on some fun and sociable fundraising events.

We now have our own website and, although it remains a work-in-progress, we are very proud of it. Again, this has been developed by one of our volunteers, so we have not had to bear the typical setup costs. Additional pages that will be added will be a calendar to see the availability of the hall and instructions on how to make a booking.

Running the village hall in the 21st century means we have had to update our policies and procedures to ensure safety of users and that it is managed to the highest possible standards.

Now all we need to do is to show off our hard work to you all! As soon as we are permitted, we will be open for the public. We are guided by ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England) and we may be able to have some socially distanced bookings from mid-May, following risk assessments. We hope to open more fully on 21st June, but this timeline may change.

Once restrictions are lifted, we will have an Open Day and would love to see you to have a cup of tea, cake and chat, a look at what we have been doing and what we still hope to do.

Not every village has a community space, and we would love to see the Village Hall being used more, maybe you have ideas that would encourage people to use it! If so, please come and tell us or drop us a note via the website. Please drop in on the Open Day; we will be making that date known nearer the time.

Hazel Baldwin
on behalf of Bonsall Village
Hall Committee.

