

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF EATON BISHOP VILLAGE HALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE – THURSDAY 19th JUNE 2025

The past year has seen the completion of the major projects to improve the energy efficiency of the Village Hall. This work began in earnest in 2020 following the Management Committee seeking professional advice from the Ludlow-based architect, Trevor Hewitt, and, Richard Hill, a heating specialist. The final element of the programme was the insulation of the front, east facing, and the north facing walls of the Hall. Apart from improving the Hall's carbon footprint, it is hoped that the benefits will include a reduction in the rate of increase in the running costs of the Hall. This will allow the Management Committee to minimise the increases in charges to those hiring the Hall and make the Hall a more attractive and comfortable venue in which to hold events and functions. The funding needed to undertake this work became available from monies granted to village halls by central government to help compensate the halls for loss of income during the Covid epidemic and from successful grant applications to the National Lottery, for which Eileen and Moe should take much of the credit. More detail of what has been achieved will be presented in the Maintenance Report which will be presented shortly.

I feel that the efforts of the Management Committee are now likely to move more towards looking at what needs to be done to maintain the integrity and structure of the building and its surroundings. When the Hall was built in the late 1920's, building standards were less strict than they are now. For example, significant areas of the Hall are only single brick thickness. There are areas of rising damp and these will have to be dealt with by correcting the underlying cause and not just a cosmetic treatment to hide the obviously affected areas of the walls. Recently, infestation with the woodworm beetle of some parts of the Hall's woodwork has become apparent. Again a survey of the whole Hall is necessary to determine just how extensive the treatment needs to be. Several other aspects of the Hall also need to be addressed such as the front garden which requires regular maintenance and the Jubilee room which has become little more than a corridor from the disabled access door into the main hall area.

However, the hall continues to be well used both by occasional and regular users. Regular use includes weekly yoga classes led by Caroline Hanks and the bi-weekly keep fit sessions. The weekly Wednesday coffee mornings, which were introduced by Phil and Julie, have become very popular with around 40 people attending including several from neighbouring villages. The monthly Village Market has evolved to embrace a social meeting place for people to meet and chat over a cup of tea or coffee. Its continued success is in contrast to the struggle that some other villages are having to keep similar events going. Last year's Village Show, which is now run by the Management Committee with invaluable help from the Gardening Club, was considered by many as one of the best on record in terms of visitor numbers and the number and quality of exhibits. More recently, Meryl has organised a number of art workshops with all those attending expressing the wish that they should continue. She has also arranged several coach trips the cost of which has been able to be subsidised from donations to the Hall given at the Wednesday coffee mornings and other events.

As chair of the Management Committee I would repeat what I have said at other AGM's. That is that in my view, the Management Committee is a most functional and effective

committee thanks to each members willingness to take responsibility for specific Hall requirements and their enthusiasm and ability to work so well together as a team. In addition, on the committee members behalf I would acknowledge the invaluable help provided by other members of the village community several of whom are relatively new to Eaton Bishop. Such support for events “on the day” is so essential in view of the central role of the Hall in the social life of the village.

Finally, Eileen, has asked to stand down after serving for several years as our treasurer. Eileen, you have been a most expert treasurer maintaining clear and easily understandable records of our finances and your input has been very much appreciated by us all. I know that I speak for all members of the committee both past and present in saying that your contributions not only in your official role as treasurer but also the support that you have given in the day to day activities of the Village Hall will be greatly missed.