

RICKINGHALL VILLAGE HALL : CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST OCTOBER 2013

SUMMARY

This has been another busy year, with finances continuing on a sound footing despite the ongoing wider economic problems. Our income excluding exceptional items is up by about 8%, with increased use of the Hall and Sports Area the main sources. Expenditure has been relatively high after the previous low year, but the strong income, sale of some obsolete field maintenance equipment, and a grant from MSDC, have enabled us to fund this.

Thanks are due as always to those who voluntarily serve on the Hall Management Committee, and especially those who regularly assist at the Farmers' Market, and at other events - not all are even on the Committee! Monty Cornell, of course, continues to serve the Hall and the community way beyond the call, and this is an opportunity to formally thank him. Thank you Monty, on behalf of the Committee and of the many hirers of the Hall.

FACILITIES

We have had a lot of work done this year, both in maintaining and improving our facilities. The most obvious change has been in the complete REFURBISHMENT OF OUR BAR, including installation of a roller shutter, and major IMPROVEMENT OF THE BAR/COMMITTEE ROOM. This has seen new flooring and lighting, to create an altogether much more modern and welcoming facility.

Our other major expenditures have been on the deep cleaning and subsequent REPAINTING OF THE SPORTS AREA with anti-slip paint, and the complete REPAINTING OF THE HALL EXTERIOR. The SKATE PARK has been substantially rebuilt to extend its life, hopefully by several years - one ramp has been slightly extended too - and then we have also installed TELESCOPIC BOLLARDS at both field entrances to replace the old and unsatisfactory chains.

HALL HIRINGS

May saw the first of what is to be an annual MODEL RAILWAY SHOW, to be run by us jointly with Diss & District Model Railway Society. This attracted nearly 400 people, and made us over £600 nett as well as introducing new people to the Hall. Howard Newport worked hard to revive the CAR RALLY at Easter, but the early date and unkind weather proved difficult. His now annual FIREWORKS EVENING was more successful just after our year end, but then high winds destroyed his catering marquee and gazebo mid evening; hopefully 2014 will be kinder.

The overall number of hires has been at a record level, with 492 BOOKINGS during the year. This represents an increase of 8% on last year's number, which was itself a record. The increase this year is mostly the result of the twice-weekly Zumba classes, which complement the existing Aerobics and Yoga sessions. Other bookings have been more or less at their usual levels, and we continue to welcome all of our many regular hirers.

SPORTS AREA

Income from our Sports Area was a most pleasing 26% up this year. This was because we hosted the NETBALL SUMMER LEAGUE for the first time, and also had regular summer hirings from WORTHAM TENNIS CLUB, for both coaching and matches. The professional repainting of the surface undoubtedly helped in this regard, as it does now look particularly smart and apparently plays well.

PLAYING FIELD

Income from the field was significantly down, but expenditure the very opposite. We have had to fund repairs to the mower, and have also had to deal with increased visits from moles, treatment for which costs £90 each time.

A written agreement was made with Rickinghall Gunners FC during the year to define the basis of arrangements between the management of Gunners and of the Village Hall and, most pleasingly, this does seem to have resolved some misunderstandings which had built up between the two.

SKATE PARK

This facility was again very well used following its renovation, with small-wheeled scooters, BMX-type bikes and actual skate boarding all popular during the summer. The only parts not now rebuilt are the two small boxes in the centre.

Here's to a good 2014 for the Hall and all who are involved with it.

Bob Clark, Chairman: 20th November 2013