

Hermitage Village Hall APA presentation 2021.

Good evening, nice to see you all!

I'm Sara Disson and I am the current Chairperson of Hermitage Village Hall.

I have held this position since October 2020.....what a year it has been!!!

I took on the role as Chair with two other new trustees, one of which is my husband, and yes, we are still married, with the sole aim of getting the rather neglected and unloved small hall finally finished. It has been a very challenging few months, as I am sure you are to fully aware, the main one of course being the presence of Covid 19 in our everyday lives.

After surviving numerous lockdowns and complying with strict government guidelines I am pleased to say there is light at the end of a very long tunnel.

As a community hall we managed to stay open for many regular hirers, the main one being pre-school and more so in the last lockdown this was made possible due to the fact that a lot of pre-school children's parents are key workers.

We have also been able to operate the food bank from the small hall throughout the last two lockdowns. The food bank provides an invaluable food parcel delivery service every week to 18 families/individuals in Hermitage and our surrounding villages.

Lockdown has had its plus side too. It has enabled us to apply for grants that may not have otherwise been available. The grant funding has not only maintained sustainability of the hall but presented an opportunity to commission additional facilities such as the committee room, pre-school toilets and the completion of the small hall.

An additional grant presented to the Village Hall from the Parish Council has enabled us to furnish the committee room and provide coffee making facilities. We were also able to purchase a freezer and dishwasher for use at future events at the hall so a big thankyou for the generosity of the grants awarded to us.

At the end of this pandemic both halls will be in good order to provide significantly enhanced facilities to restore the social fabric of the community.

We have through these tough times also managed to keep a lot of our regular bookings including pre-school, dance, Horticultural Society and gain a few new ones too, one of which is Karate which I am sure will be very popular. On a sadder note ballet will not be returning. Wendy has decided that after over 40 years of teaching ballet at the hall to hang up her ballet shoes and retire. Hopefully there is somebody out there to pirouette into her ballet shoes and continue to run the classes.

The large hall has proved very popular with events such as weddings so it will be amazing to be able to offer the small hall for use at such events too. We already have a few weddings booked in for the summer which is great news.

I along with my fellow Village Hall trustees are very much looking forward to the hall finally being finished and being a much needed, and indeed patiently awaited community hub for our village.

Thank you.