

Wingham Village Hall Committee Report for Annual Parish Assembly 2023

The village hall remains fully open and continues to be supported by our regular hires. Over the past year we have welcomed back Wingham Art group, now lead by Vivian, and welcomed a fitness group lead by Ben. The hall has regular bookings every weekday and offers our village various activities.

Over the past year we have held several events at the hall. This has helped us to promote the hall and some bookings have led on from these. The events have been well supported by local people and many have commented on how good the hall looks with the newly refurbished floor.

We have held indoor boot fairs, tabletop sales, craft fairs and a Christmas market. All have been a much-needed income boost to the hall, especially when bookings remain low compared to pre pandemic times.

Although the financial climate remains a concern for all, the continued support to our finances from Wingham Parish Council has been vital and their grant has helped us to reduce the hire fees to Wingham residents, which we continue to uphold.

Going forward we have enthusiastically planned a tabletop sale which is due to go ahead on Bank holiday Monday – 8th May, we have a quiz planned for June, a dance planned for September and a Christmas market planned for the end of November. We have also set up crowdfunding, approached Wingham residents and businesses for monetary donations to help us get a Defibrillator at the hall.

We, as the committee, remain committed to the village hall and see it as an asset for everyone. We look upon ourselves to be the current custodians, with this in mind we have additional maintenance planned for the warmer, drier months. This includes looking at and potentially replacing the guttering around the hall, replacing some of the wooden shingles and inside redecoration. To keep costs down we have a small sub maintenance committee who complete 'odd jobs', if anyone can spare some time to help us, please do let us know. The current sound system is due to be upgraded imminently, with thanks to Gareth and John for taking this on. This will enable all hirers to stream music from their phones through the current system, a much-welcomed upgrade as currently it can only be used if you have a CD.

Parking remains an issue, particularly at school pick and drop off times. We found that hirers were unable to park and gain access to and from the Miles room. This poses an increased risk if an emergency evacuation from the Miles room was ever needed during these times, especially for wheelchair users. The safety of the Preschool children was also a concern as school parents would park right up to the side entrance. We have now installed three bollards, allowing parking for hirers of the hall, a space to park at peak times as well as ensuring the safety of the children. This is working well however it has been noted that a few drivers are now mounting the kerb alongside the private resident's road, going round the bollards to park. We have also had the car park relined to make the bays clearer and adding a 'Keep Clear' section in front of the Miles room to allow access to and from the building, and an allocated space for Lloyds bank, The Refillable Van and the Fish and Chip van. However, at peak times some parents are still ignoring the keep clear section and continuing to park in the area. We will be installing additional bollards to keep this area clear, increasing the safety to all hirers using the Miles room. We are continuing to monitor the situation and are working in cooperation with the school.

Melanie Smith
Chairperson, Wingham Village Hall Committee
March 2023