

BAACA Chairman's message for year ending 31st March 2022

Welcome to the Bellingdon & Asheridge Community Association AGM – I hope you have enjoyed using these fantastic community facilities during the year.

The Covid-19 pandemic had a massive effect on the hall, requiring us to close completely at points. We opened the playground as soon as we were allowed, to provide a valuable recreation space for youngsters and their parents, and the field was open throughout for exercise in line with legal requirements.

We supported a group that was set up to provide help for those that needed it during the first lockdown – this was kindly coordinated by Don Baker. Happily, there were very few people that needed assistance. We also ran numerous online quiz nights to boost morale.

With financial support from the government, we managed to maintain the facilities despite the lack of hall hire income. We reopened the hall as soon as we could and I would like to thank the trustees who worked tirelessly during the pandemic carrying out and updating risk assessments, installing hand sanitiser points, and organising extra cleaning.

Gradually, in line with the guidelines, we returned to being fully open and were delighted to be able to run our extremely popular Christmas parties in December 2021, as well as a variety of community events such as pub nights and tea & cake afternoons. Bookings are looking strong, and our hall continues to be one of the most popular around.

As you may know, the annual village fête is our major fundraising event, and enables us to maintain the hall and recreation ground for community use. We were unfortunately unable to run the village fete for the last two years, but this year it was back with a bang raising over £5,000 for the hall. Thank to everyone involved for all their hard work and commitment to ensure a very successful day.

We have installed additional routers to improve the Wi-Fi signal and continue to update the hall; both interior and exterior lights are being renewed and replaced with LEDs, including sensors externally to improve safety and security. The interior of the hall will be redecorated with new curtains and blinds, and the floor cleaned and re-sealed. We are planning to install an audio-visual system in response to a request from the community for films and presentations.

Next year we will focus on the exterior, repainting and checking the roof, repairing the entrance to the car park along with extending tarmac to the whole area, marking it out to ensure maximum capacity as the hall gets busier. We're also looking into adding an electric vehicle charging point and potentially using the lovely south facing roof for solar panels to improve our carbon footprint.

I would like to personally thank all the volunteers who have worked incredibly hard to make all the above happen – without them none of this would have happened. It's a real community effort and you should all be very proud of what you achieve year after year.

Thanks also to our amazing bookings secretary Jo Richardson, who does a fantastic job of making sure the hall is booked out to a huge array of groups, families, and festivals.

Finally, I would like to thank you all for your support past, present and future.