

## **Chairman's Report 2011**

I am delighted to be able to report that on 19<sup>th</sup> of this month we were presented with a Hallmark 2 award. This is given to village halls which have achieved a high standard of management in the areas of health, safety, security and licences. We were only the second village hall in the Humber region to achieve this award. There is only one more Hallmark that we can win, Hallmark 3. Perhaps we can aim to achieve this in the coming year.

Meanwhile in order to continue to improve the quality of our management, we have added two further documents to our policy statements, an Environmental Policy and a Lone Worker Policy.

Following the guidelines of the Charity Commission we have also introduced a system of Internal Financial Controls. Members of the management committee will make an annual check.

To help with our financial planning the Treasurer has started to produce an annual budget in addition to his quarterly financial statements and annual report.

We have continued to make improvements to the Hall and its amenities. We have erected a rail round the Main Hall which can be utilised in a variety of ways – and it has already been used for hanging up decorations for celebrations, and a wide range of other events. We now have our own set of basic wall hangings, which help to soften the appearance of the Main Hall, and which are available to hirers.

The wood floor of the Meeting Hall was sanded and varnished, and now looks very attractive with its renewed golden colour.

We have purchased more tables and chairs so that these do not have to be constantly transferred between the upstairs and downstairs rooms.

Working parties of trustees doing a variety of practical jobs have become a regular activity at three monthly intervals, and these too help to keep the Hall in the excellent state that hirers remark on.

After obtaining a grant from BT of a new laptop computer and the partial cost of the installation of broadband and one year's rent, we had a broadband connection installed. However the hoped for take-up of this facility turned out to be virtually nil, and it was decided not to continue with this broadband rental at the end of the year's contract.

The cost and frequency of necessary repairs to the building are hard to predict – particularly as much of the Village Hall is an old building. So for example repairs to the old roof occur more frequently than they would with a new building.

Our plans for the installation of photovoltaic cells on the roof are slowly coming to fruition. We have already been awarded a grant for half the cost and we hope to have planning permission for the installation by the end of August.

We are always aware that although the Hall's rooms are well booked, and we have a healthy balance sheet, the loss of one of our major long-term hirers would result in a serious loss of income. So we are always looking for new ways to publicise the Hall. As well as having our own website, we are now on the Humber and Wolds Rural Community Council's Rural Community Buildings website, which itself is being well publicised through the distribution of posters.

The lease which we hold from the Parish Council is due for renewal at the end of 2011. Any modifications to the old lease which either party considers desirable are being negotiated at the moment. We in turn sublet two rooms to the ERYC library service - and we hope that the library service will want to renew this lease which comes due shortly after the main lease.

Our Secretary and Booking Secretary, John McKain, will be retiring at the end of this meeting. John has done an absolutely fantastic job in this latter role, and put in an amazing amount of work over the last seven years. In the early months after the establishment of the Village Hall a booking system had to be devised from scratch. John was constantly available on the phone to take bookings, which soon started coming ever thicker and faster. John did a consummate job in keeping hirers happy, and went out of his way to see that all their special requirements were met. Although we have been fortunate in the last years in having a good caretaker, there have been many times before that and when the caretaker was on holiday, when John, in his determination to provide hirers with a superlative service, has done far more than his fair share of caretaking and customer care. I cannot thank and praise John strongly enough for his contribution to the success of the Village Hall.

Martin Peel is now taking over as Booking Secretary and with this transfer comes a change to a computer based booking system. We hope to have replaced the old system completely with the new system by the end of the year. We wish Martin well in this demanding task.

John's post as Secretary of the Village Hall will be up for election by the management committee at the meeting which follows this AGM. We will be extremely sorry to see John go, but he suggests that he may well appear again from time to time in a role as volunteer rail painter, caretaker or yard sweeper (His suggestion!). We wish John many happy years on the golf course, with his family, or just enjoying a well-earned rest.

Pamela Gray has also expressed a wish to retire from the committee. I am very grateful for her contribution as a committee member, for the practical help that she has given at working parties, and for helping to progress ideas for marketing the Hall.

I too will be standing down as Chairman at the end of this meeting, although I will offer myself as a committee trustee for a short time further.

We are fortunate that we now have a strong body of trustees from whom the posts of Secretary and Chairman can be elected. All committee members have given a great deal of service to the village hall. It would take me too long to list everybody's contributions, but I can say that the committee represents a wonderful mixture of talents, which is another reason for the Hall's success. We are also very fortunate to have Andrew Short as our caretaker and Sam Larter as our cleaner, who both do an excellent job.

So after seven years this is my last Chairman's Report. I wish my successor as much pleasure and satisfaction as I have had in this post, and I am convinced that Swanland Village Hall in serving the community will continue to thrive and develop over the next seven years.

Thank you!