

Annual Open Meeting of Aston le Walls Parish Council
Aston le Walls Village Hall
11th April 2024
Chair's Report

I would like to start by saying how sad we all were, on behalf of the whole Committee, when Martin Mason recently passed away. Martin was a highly valued member of the Village Hall Management Committee for many years and will be greatly missed in the village. Members of the Committee attended Martin's funeral and a donation of £50 was made to Martin's daughter Miriam's Sierra Leone school charity.

The Hall has had another successful year, staging many events for the benefit of residents and the wider Community, and providing a venue for a range of activities organised by others. In February we launched our Fundraising Campaign for the rebuilding of the Hall, an ambitious programme which is now well underway for which I gave an update in the recent newsletter, indicating that, of our target £250k, we have received pledges of up to £112k once Gift Aid is secured, and that we have an application to the National Lottery for up to £95k. We are awaiting Planning Permission and are now focusing on the architect's plans, building materials, and specification alongside our fundraising. We will shortly circulate plans to all households, inviting comments and suggestions for improvements to our plans.

Events

The Pilates Group has continued with its regular weekly sessions. Other regular users continue to be the Parish Council, Toddler Group, Tabata, monthly Coffee mornings, and Monthly Film and Arts Club. We organised with the Parish Council a village celebration and picnic tea party to mark the coronation of King Charles III on 6th May. We had a range of annual activities: the Easter Egg Hunt, Scarecrow Trail, the Harvest Supper, the Produce Show, the Christmas Fayre, the Christmas Children's Party, and two quizzes including the Christmas Quiz, all of which were well attended. These events do not happen without a lot of hard work. Huge thanks to all who have worked tirelessly to make these events a success, focusing on raising money, and at the same time bringing the Community together, and enjoying ourselves, particularly to members of the Committee.

Upcoming events include the regular monthly meat voucher raffle, which Dianne has taken the lead on, very successfully making over £290 on its first outing. Film and Arts Club on April 26th which is a talk on Cancer by Professor Herbie Newell. Pub and Quiz Night on May 17th. Scarecrow Trail on 6th July. The Produce Show on 7th September. Harvest Supper on 4th October and a new Fundraising village picnic which we are planning to schedule for 3rd August, at which we will have a 'Buy a Brick' and other programmes.

Funds and Financial Report

I would like to thank our Treasurer, Susan Fagg, for her meticulous work over many years in managing the finances of the Hall, not an easy task, given the variety of sources of income and expenditure for the Hall. Susan decided to step down as Treasurer at our AGM in February but has kindly agreed to continue to manage the 100 Club, and Coffee Mornings.

(We also hope that she will continue to make her delicious scones and baking for our events!). Debra has kindly taken over this role and we are very grateful to her for that.

In the last year we had several extraordinary expenses including the Coronation and the wonderful cartette racing track designed and built by Barnie, which gave the Produce Show an exciting new dynamic. This was enjoyed by all, both participants and spectators. We anticipate that this will have many uses over the coming years.

Despite these expenses we ended the financial year to 31st October in a strong financial position.