

Chairman's Report AGM 2009

Bookings for one-off events are holding up well in spite of the recession, and our long term bookings have remained pretty constant. This year we held our hire charges at last year's level. We are continually looking at ways we can reduce our costs, whilst seeking opportunities for grants, and running our "100 Club" lottery to raise funds for extra equipment.

Equipment purchased this year includes a large capacity water boiler in the kitchen, an electric floor polisher, a lockable telescopic bollard, a lapel radio microphone and another table trolley – the latter two items being funded by receipts from the "100 Club".

The SVA has continued to support the Village Hall; this year they have donated 120 cushions for occasional use on our stacking chairs.

The staging and sound system that we purchased last year have been put to good use and have proved to be very versatile.

The number of events in the Village Hall open to the general public continues to grow. Plays, films and music concerts are now regular features of public entertainment at the Hall and are generally well attended. These are either organised by the SVA or the result of a direct booking by touring companies.

Fund raising events for village organisations such as quizzes or dances continue to take place in the Hall and have attracted up to one hundred or more participants. The number of children's parties has decreased, probably owing to the competition of "party packages" being offered elsewhere, but we still continue to attract a good number of larger functions.

We are very aware that we must continually look for new customers for the Hall to replace any long-term bookings that may drop out, and for new one-off bookings. We hope to keep the Village Hall in the public eye by means of regular articles in the three village newsletters, and we have an up-to-date entry in the Humber and Wolds Community Council directory of Village Halls. We try to keep our website up-to-date, and we are grateful to Graham Latter, the manager of our website, for being so prompt whenever we ask for additions or amendments

Parking is still somewhat problematical. In order to make users of the Reckitt Trust facilities who arrive by car aware of which car park they are supposed to use we have erected a new sign directing traffic to the appropriate car parks. The trustees of James Reckitt Hall have erected a new sign over their door. We are considering doing the same over our main entrance.

During the previous year a schedule of fire drills was introduced for the regular users of the Hall and these have continued. We are grateful to Marion Riley, our designated Fire Risk Assessment Officer, who has organised these with Harry Armstrong.

General maintenance has continued. We have started on what we hope will be a programme of work to repair and repoint the wall to the pond. Rainwater from half of our roof now goes directly into the pond to supplement the inflow of fresh water. But other drains are providing a problem at the moment; some radical work may be needed here in co-operation with the trustees of the James Reckitt Memorial

Hall. Routine checks and maintenance are carried out on all our services, boiler, alarms, etc. This year's check of our emergency lighting lead to costly replacements.

Malicious damage to the property has been relatively small. The loss of the bollard has been rectified ; anti-climb paint has been applied to the edge of the Memorial Hall roof to stop teenagers climbing onto our roof. Unfortunately an amount of lead was stolen from the entrance hall roof. This has been replaced with an alternative material.

Andrew Short, our caretaker, has continued to do a splendid job, and is much appreciated by our hirers and of course ourselves, who know how well we can rely on him. Sam Larter, our cleaner, continues to maintain a very high standard and the cleanliness of the Hall is regularly remarked upon by our customers.

Swanland Library, our sub-tenant, not only occupies part of the building, but also has become an integral part of community activities within the Hall through its regular reading group and what is becoming an annual event, its Murder Mystery evening.

An important milestone in the development of the Hall was the winning of a Hallmark 1 award in June for achieving a high standard in the administration and management of our charity. We now intend to prepare for the Hallmark 2 award, which is given for matters concerning health, security, safety, and licences. Preparing and entering for these awards is a good check for ourselves that we are achieving the highest of standards. Obtaining these awards will also help us in our marketing and may make grant givers more likely to fund us knowing that we are a well run organisation.

Once again I would like to thank the trustees for their voluntary service to the Village Hall, in particular John White, our Treasurer, and John McKain, our secretary, and booking secretary, who both put in an enormous amount of time and effort.

I would also like to thank Marion Riley for her ability to persuade people to join and stick with our 100 Club, and Harry Armstrong for helping Marion with publicity and fire drills. Thanks too to Ian MacFarlane who writes our committee minutes in great detail. Yvonne Dumsday represents the Parish Council; she is also responsible for the purchase of our day-to-day supplies, and for scheduling the many maintenance checks some of which I have referred to.

Harry Armstrong and Steve Webb are not putting themselves up for re-election, and I wish to take this opportunity to thank them for almost five years' service as trustees for the Village Hall. Besides attendance at meetings both have contributed in other practical ways, and Steve has left a lasting legacy through his DIY skills.

So this has been another very successful year. But our main concern for the future is that **all** trustees have now served for approaching five years. The posts of Booking secretary and Treasurer are particularly demanding. No one can expect trustees to put in such voluntary public service for ever, and replacements must eventually be found or the Village Hall will no longer be able to provide such a wonderful facility for the community. To find successors in the next couple of years has become our greatest challenge.

Paul Priestley-Leach, Chairman Swanland Village Hall
Wednesday 29th July