

Bradfield Village Hall Annual Report 2017

November 2016 was the 65th anniversary of the opening of Bradfield Village Hall. The Management Committee had hoped to be celebrating this event by working on its replacement. However many hours of 2016 were taken up with submitting plans for the proposed new hall and the enabling housing, then dealing with the subsequent discussions, withdrawals, adaptations and a public meeting and then having to deal with withdrawals a second time.

In addition, much time and energy, not to mention finances, have been spent on keeping the Hall operational – heating, plumbing, kitchen ceiling, committee room roof and electrics have all required attention. If the new building work doesn't proceed soon, the whole building will have to be rewired. The bark in the playground was replaced in 2016 but other improvements have been left in anticipation of replacing them in the near future.

On the more positive side, the Bradfield Market, held every second Saturday of the month has gone from strength to strength. With a good variety of stall holders and more customers, it has become a good social event. It doesn't raise huge amounts of money, but it all does add up. The Watermill Theatre visited again last year, with a production of "One Million Plays about Britain". The play was yet another sell out. It was great to see a Bradfield actor in the cast. Bradfield College also brought a group of very talented students and gave us a superb evening of jazz. We have been very encouraged with the eagerness of Bradfield College to help raise money towards the new building project.

Our focus throughout the year has been on the proposals for a new village hall and the upgrade of all the outside facilities. The Trust is charged with the purpose of providing facilities suitable for all kinds of activities that are social, recreational or educational and the proposed plans should stand us in good stead for some decades to come. The plans for both the new Hall and the enabling housing are with the District Council again and the orange notices are expected any time soon. We are looking forward to being granted planning permission so the work can begin in earnest to raise the money required and turn our proposals into reality.

A village Hall is unique in any village, in that it is a facility for everyone. Bradfield is so fortunate – how many villages can also boast a primary school, a pub, a cricket field with an excellent pavilion, a church, a social club, as well as a community shop and post office? Each of these other buildings meets the need of a specific group. The Village Hall aims to draw people of all interests and needs to be adaptable to suit many different purposes. The area is very affluent and expectations are high. The plans for the future of this site are to ensure that the Trust can meet these expectations.

The project will cost about the current cost of three, three bed semis, and once planning is granted, applications for grants can be made. The proposal to sell a small portion of land towards the cost is regrettable, but unavoidable.

Although the hall is under-used at the moment because of the state it is in, on average over 200 people use the building every week. The car park is overflowing at least twice a day in term time and full all day on Tuesdays. The bus now turns round there each morning and the library visits every third week. The shop is dependent on the car park for their customers and their deliveries. The playground is full on a sunny day after school and it is always a delight to see small children riding their bikes in the court during the day and the youngsters kicking a ball around in the evenings. The Village Hall has stood at the heart of the village for the last 65 years. The Management Committee look forward to this being the case for the next 65 years.

We really value all the support we have received from significant numbers in the community. We hope that support will continue.