

Bradfield Village Hall CIO – Annual Report 2020/21

This is the Annual Report of the Bradfield Village Hall CIO – Charity number 1180330 (formerly Bradfield Village Hall Trust – charity number 300129) of Southend Road, Bradfield Southend, Reading RG7 6EY. It is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation governed by its constitution. The Management Committee [Trustees] during 2020 have been Christine Evans (Chair), Eva Roggenstein (Treasurer), Jane Gaut, Sam Grey, Antony Powell and Paul Henwood. The secretary is Sarah Westcar. The Management Committee are also the managing trustees of the adjacent Bradfield Playing Fields (Charity Number 314297) on behalf of Fields in Trust. It is a member of Connecting Communities in Berkshire.

Emma Rolfe has continued her role as the Administrator, which includes taking enquiries and bookings for the hall, dealing with day to day issues, locking the gates at night and organising the social media posts. She also took over the cleaning when Carol Cullum stepped down. The Committee thank Carol for her hard work over the years and are very grateful to Emma for all her hard work keeping the Village Hall running smoothly, especially with the added burden of complying with covid rules.

A very interesting and successful Open Day was held in the hall on Saturday 25th January 2020, to coincide with ACRE's first National Village Hall Week. An exhibition of photos, anecdotes and historical information was displayed in the hall from past and present users. Thanks to all those who contributed and spent time sifting through and arranging the many collections. Much of it has been carefully stored away so that it could be used again once the new hall is open. Unfortunately we were unable to repeat any such event in January 2021, although a series of anecdotes about the hall were published on the Village Hall Facebook page.

The Committee were aware that the playground was deteriorating and felt remedial action needed to be taken. Some of the items have been removed, others mended and much of the metalwork was given a good clean and repainted by the Committee and some willing volunteers. Many thanks to those who gave their time to help. Thanks also go to Paul and Tony who have tackled many of the maintenance jobs around the site.

Eva organised the installation of superfast Broadband in the hall through Gigaclear at no cost to the Village Hall. In consultation with them, it has been installed so that it will be easy to extend through into the new building at the appropriate time. Gigaclear are providing the use of the internet free as part of the Community Hub initiative.

At the beginning of 2020 the hall had maintained its level of bookings with the Sunshine Club being the major user using the hall every early morning and four afternoons a week, but in late March came the first Coronavirus restrictions. During the first lockdown, the Management Committee were happy to allow the shop to use the hall at no cost to enable them to cope with the extra demands of the Pandemic, by offering home deliveries to those in isolation. No income was received during this time, but relief was granted for Business Rates, partially reducing outgoings. It was agreed to keep paying Emma to keep up with the ever changing legislation so the building was kept safe for those accessing the building, as well as tackling many of the outstanding jobs around the hall. We are particularly grateful this year for the grant from the Parish Council towards the upkeep of the field.

Subsequently, when government regulations allowed, the Sunshine Club have returned and two support groups have been using the hall. In recent weeks and with a relaxing of

restrictions, there have been many enquiries about hiring the hall. These have not all be positive, the lack of suitable facilities being the main problem, such as for young children.

During the Summer, the Hall became involved in the Village Hall Accreditation Hallmark Programme with Connecting Communities in Berkshire [CCB]. This recognises good standards of managements and demonstrates that Trustees are meeting their legal obligations. Bradfield Village Hall has been accredited with Level 1 and is eager to be assessed for levels 2 and 3 when government regulations allow.

In July the site was invaded by travellers, causing considerable disruption to the area. Our thanks go to the Police in persuading them to leave. However lasting damage was minimal. Following advice from the Police, posts were erected one side of the hall and a height barrier erected the other side. We greatly appreciate the Parish Council paying for this protection for the field.

The Management Committee's main focus has centred on the Development Project to replace the current hall and improve all the site facilities. Since planning consent was granted in November 2019, covid restrictions have brought challenges with progressing the project and fund raising. The Development team has consisted of Julie Noakes, Christine Evans, Eva Roggenstein and Sarah Westcar for the MUGA and playground - assisted by other members of the community as needed. Their hard work is very much appreciated. Regular updates have been published in Newslink magazine and on our Facebook pages and by leaflet distributed to all homes in the parish, in addition to reports given to the Parish Council. A video has also been produced promoting the project which can be viewed on the village hall website, www.BradfieldVillageHall.co.uk

Some fundraising events have occurred, including two sponsored walks. We did a virtual 467 mile walk via all the three Bradfield Village Halls in England. The very successful Double Match Day event with Greenham Trust netted over £17,000. Many thanks to all those in the village who joined in the 1,112 circumlocutions of the sites of the new hall and games area. In partnership with the school, we also held an enjoyable scarecrow trail in the village.

Much effort has been expended on grant applications and encouraging locals to support the project. So far, approximately £565,000 has been raised - in donations, pledges and grants. The estimated project costs indicate that a further £1.7 million is needed to complete the whole plans. We are extremely grateful for the support from many of those living locally and users of the facilities, as well as those bodies who have awarded grants towards the project.

The money raised so far has enabled us to progress the project to RIBA Stage 4 – drawing up the plans in detail in readiness to go out to tender when the remaining funds have been identified. The Trustees are aware that delays and alterations in design and planning, particularly the roof, have increased the total costs. However, the urgent necessity of having suitable facilities in Bradfield is providing the impetus to find the funding, both locally as well as through grant bodies. It is hoped that building will be able to start in late Summer/early Autumn 2022 and completion in Summer 2023. The challenge in the coming year will be to raise the necessary funds to achieve these long-awaited community facilities.