

# Bradfield Village Hall cio

## Annual Report 2022/23

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. The trustees during 2022 have been Christine Evans (Chair), Eva Roggenstein (Treasurer), Jane Gaut, Samantha Grey, Antony Powell, Nigel Neenan and Steve O'Reilly (Parish Council representative) with Sarah Westcar as secretary. It is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation governed by its constitution. The Trustees are also known as the Management Committee. As well as the Village Hall, the Trustees are the managing trustees of the adjacent Bradfield Playing Fields (Charity Number 314297) on behalf of Fields in Trust. Emma Rolfe has continued in her role as the Bookings Administrator. She also cleans the hall and locks the gates and posts on our social media pages.

Sunshine Club gave notice that they were moving premises in September and the Rabbit Club based in the hall has disbanded. Bridge, Gardening Club, Dog training, WI and the support groups are still regular users and we have bookings for parties and other social events. In addition, dog, rabbit and pigeon shows have returned.

Last April Nigel and Ann trialled a coffee morning in the hall to raise much needed funds. It was enjoyed by many people in the village, especially dog owners, so it was decided to make it a permanent fixture. Every Thursday morning, everyone is welcome to pop in for Coffee and Cake, and a chat. Thanks to all involved in the coffee morning happen, in particular the ones who make the delicious cakes and those who serve in the kitchen.

Last May, as unfortunately the Mayfayre had to be postponed, it was decided to organise a Community Fun Day as an opportunity for the societies and organisations in the village to advertise themselves in the hope of gaining new members and also selling something or providing an activity to make some money. Alongside these stalls, there were food and drink stalls, games and activities, and the hall was filled with market stalls, the WI teas and a bar. The weather was kind and it was a well-attended, and most enjoyable village event.

Another successful event was the Jubilee Lunch on June 5<sup>th</sup>. Due to the inclement weather, it was held in the hall, but this seemed to add to the occasion. There was music, the hall was beautifully decorated, the tables were filled with all sorts of goodies and there was a wonderful atmosphere. The WI provided drinks and cakes for those who wanted to supplement their feasts.

The Watermill visited again at the end of June for an excellent outdoor performance of Camp Albion, which proved extremely popular as it was centred around the Newbury by pass demonstrations and peace camps.

Annie Assheton treated us to a very accomplished food demonstration in September. The audience learnt many tips for easy entertaining at Christmas, left with a variety of recipes and were treated to samples of the delicious food. All agreed it was an enjoyable and successful fundraiser.

Last October our Rapunzel scarecrow came first in the Village scarecrow competition. She even survived all the wind could throw at her, despite being up on the balcony.

It was decided by the Committee that a model of the hall would be useful so that people could more easily visualise what the proposed building would be like. Having a model made by a professional company proved an expensive option, so Christine's grandson offered to make one out of Lego. This was first put on display at the Christmas market and Caleb was on hand to answer questions. He had a great deal of positive feedback and was featured in an article in the Newbury Weekly News; he even had an interview on Radio Berkshire!

Caleb's Lego model was also on display at The Village Hall Open Day in January, which was held as part of the national celebration of Village Halls. Our event was organised around a fifties theme, as our Village Hall opened in 1951 and Lego was patented in 1958. Refreshments were served and children and adults alike enjoyed making Lego models, doing puzzles, playing games and listening to music.

Apart from fundraising and organising events, the Committee have been busy organising the day to day running of the hall and its grounds, and dealing with the increasing maintenance issues associated with an ageing building. The roof had to be repaired last Winter as part of it was damaged by a storm, although fortunately much of the cost was covered by insurance. The foyer and toilet floors are becoming very worn, but a new floor would be very expensive. With the very cold weather over the winter, the heaters have struggled to heat the hall sufficiently, since there is very little insulation in the building. The huge rise in the cost of electricity prompted discussions at committee meetings and with the present users, resulting in an increase in our hire charges from April 1<sup>st</sup> this year.

The carpark needs constant maintenance and the playground has had some safety issues that have needed to be rectified immediately. The bench in the playground was broken and had to be removed. The Parish Council have generously promised to replace it with two benches.

The committee worked hard to prepare the Committee Room before it was decorated and it is greatly improved and more spacious now that the large cupboards have been removed. The outside shed has been tidied and much was taken to the tip or for recycling.

In addition to arranging fundraising events and dealing with the maintenance of the hall and its grounds, most of the work by the Trustees over the last year has involved the Development Project to replace the current hall and improve all the site facilities. There has been another revision of the business plan and many meetings with the architect and building advisers. In addition, there has also been a concerted effort to try to find more cost-effective solutions to the build without a reduction in quality. Thought was given to approach the project stages in a different order but that proved not to be cost effective. Currently, the focus is on getting the new hall built as soon as possible; work on the outside facilities may have to wait a little longer.

A great deal of effort is being put into submitting grant applications as the need for the new hall is becoming more and more urgent. The current identified funds stand at approximately £770,000. The committee remains confident that the money can be found through grants and local support. It remains our conviction that a refurbishment would not be a viable alternative due to the restrictions of the site and all the varying requirements that need to be satisfied.

The Management Committee appreciate the contribution the Parish Council have given us towards the upkeep of the grounds and the playground inspection.

My personal thanks go to the Management Committee for all their hard work throughout the year and also to those others who assist quietly in the wings. Their support and that of the users of the hall is very much appreciated. I would also like to thank all those in the local community who have encouraged us and made generous donations towards the project. Bradfield Village Hall would not be able to continue to serve the local area without all this support. Thank you.

Christine Evans,  
Chair, Bradfield Village Hall Management Committee