

# Bradfield Village Hall cio

## Annual Report 2023/24

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 2023 have been Christine Evans (Chair), Eva Roggenstein (Treasurer), Jane Gaut, Sam Grey, Antony Powell, Nigel Neenan and Steve O'Reilly (Parish Council representative) with Sarah Westcar as secretary. Gordon Fletcher joined in 2024. Christine and Sam resigned at the end of 2023 and Antony took over as interim chair. 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 posts on our social media pages. Chris Tidbury took over locking the carpark gates.

The most important thing in this report is to thank Christine. The amount of work that she has put into the hall over the years cannot be overstated. We all owe her a deep debt of gratitude for all that she did, especially those things that kept the hall running but were done behind the scenes and that many of us just took for granted. She was instrumental in getting the new hall project going and if West Berks planners and the village had got behind the project as put forward in the 2017 Vision for the Future document we would probably have a new hall now. Unfortunately, that did not happen and Covid and Putin's invasion of Ukraine changed things to such an extent that the cost to build a new hall is nearly three times what it was initially. We are very grateful to those people and organisations who have supported the project, and we hope that we can still move forward to provide a community asset that will enhance the village. Sam has also put in a great deal of work over the years and we thank her for that. Both have said that they are still prepared to help with events such as the Watermill visits and Saturday Markets and we are extremely grateful for that.

The Thursday coffee mornings and Saturday Markets show what can be done if there are dedicated people to run them. We also hosted two productions by the Watermill outreach team, Mansfield Park and Macbeth. These were successful events enjoyed by many from the village and further afield. Dog training, WI and Gardening Club are still regular users and we have bookings for parties and other social events. Unfortunately during the very cold weather Bridge Club decided to find a warmer home. We did host a Coronation lunch at the hall but many had their own celebrations so it was not overcrowded.

It was good to have the Mayfayre back as it is one event where the whole village seem to appreciate the facilities and we are very grateful for their grant. We needed to put in place a new contract for the grounds maintenance as Peter Bendall retired after having served us well over the years and that went to Scofell.

We know that we are going to have to work hard to keep this existing hall going for the time being, the roof needed repairing again after more wind damage and the heating struggles in really cold weather, it is not ideal for many who want to hire a hall. Another area that needs addressing are the drains which we had hoped could be replaced by those to the new hall but it is something being looked at.

The Development Committee that was set up to look at how to move the New Hall Project forward have put a lot of time and effort into doing this. Their first brief was to look at funding options and unfortunately, even with a very positive outlook on this, it was clear that due to the substantial rise in costs and lack of a major individual donor it was unlikely that we would be able to raise the funds needed. With this in mind they are now looking at other possible options to provide a hall for the village going forward. We thank them all for the time and effort they have put into this.

The Management Committee appreciate the contribution the Parish Council have given us towards the upkeep of the grounds and the playground inspection. The new benches they provided have now been installed and are very welcome. The playground does need some work on it, but it would still be a good idea to move it to a safer location and there should be some specific grants for this.

Many thanks go to all the committee members for the work that they put in to keep things running and we hope that we can get some positive ideas to keep things going.