

Bradfield Village Hall cio

Annual Report April 2025 – March 2026

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 2025/26 have been Antony Powell, (Chair), Eva Roggenstein (Treasurer), Jane Gaut, Nigel Neenan, Steve O'Reilly (who resigned August 2025), Chris Tidbury and Fiona Woods, with Sarah Westcar as secretary. Rosemary Balsdon took over as Parish Council representative in May 2025. 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.

The major project this year has been the refurbishment of the hall. This started at the end of July 2025 with the scaffolding going up. The main plan put forward was to reduce the hall operating costs by making it more energy efficient. This involved replacing the roof, insulating the walls internally, rewiring the building and bringing the heating system up to modern day standards. Because of successful fundraising we were able to include what had been seen as phase 2 into the summer schedule and this involved moving the toilets to where the kitchen and storeroom had been and relocating the kitchen to the old committee room. We also used the opportunity of the roof asbestos removal to remove the leaky asbestos roof from the back storage unit.

Due to the generosity of locals, we were able to make full use of a match funding grant of £25,000 from the Greenham Trust. We had a grant of £5,000 from Englefield Trust and the Parish Council were able to use CIL funds to give £50,000. We also got a West Berks Council Rural England Prosperity Fund grant of £18,000 which went towards the solar panels and new heating system. At the last minute, due to some hard work from members of the committee we received a Platinum Jubilee Village Halls grant of £40,834 which came from Defra. The new Fundraising subcommittee also put on a wonderful Music Bingo and Curry night.

One of the main reasons that we were able to do so much work on a tight budget was due to Tim Mote acting as our Project Manager. He was ably helped by Jon Alderman and a team of locals who were called on to help at various stages of the project. Jeremy Harrison and Edwin Bruce-Gardner were also invaluable in keeping an oversight on the project.

The main works were completed by the end of October and we had an opening ceremony on 1st November 2025 with Chris Tarrant cutting the ribbon. The work of many people was recognised when The Village Hall and the Associated Committees who were involved with the renovations were nominated for a West Berks Community Champion Award by Kimiko Dearing, chair of the Parish Council, and were highly commended in the Community Group category.

There are still some details to finish off but the list of these is gradually being reduced. It is good to see that the Bridge Club that had left to find warmer accommodation has come back and the positive comments from the Gardening Club members, when they had their opening meeting this month, were very encouraging. Other regular users, such as the Thursday Coffee and Cake mornings, Saturday Markets and WI seem very happy with the new setup. We have already gained some new regular users and hopefully more will come when they see the facilities that we now offer. The next major event is the Mayfayre and we hope that the weather will be kind for that.

The playing field is being kept in good condition by our contractors, Scofell, and we appreciate the contribution the Parish Council have given us towards the upkeep of the grounds. There is now a sub-committee looking at the refurbishment of the playground, which is our next major project. We were very grateful to various people who enabled us to replace the fencing across the front of the playground which already makes it look smarter,

We hope that we now have a community asset that really enhances the village, and thanks again to all those who made it possible.

The Management Committee

