

## **Hall Chair Report December 2023**

2023 has been another busy year for the hall committee keeping the hall well maintained, safe, clean and comfortable for the community.

### **Hall hire**

We have been very grateful to have regular bookings from our steady group of users: Tai Chi, Yoga, Cubs and Craft group, as well as community group monthly meetings hire from Fernaig Trust and the Community Council. We had private hires: a wedding and a local birthday party as well as two fundraising events: a dance late December and a quiz night in April. We also hosted a repair café for the first time last month.

We have made an application to Awards for All Community Fund to replace tables and chairs that have either broken or gone missing as well as new equipment for the kitchen to make it more attractive and easier for events involving catering.

We have installed broadband through the local CMNet service which will be of benefit to all.

### **Hall Maintenance**

This takes up a lot of time so I won't bore you with the details but Achmore Hall is a big house! It's great that it gets regular use but means that maintenance is also an issue. Any problems do get flagged up and we try our best to deal with them. Repainting has been done inside and out and drains and gullies have been unblocked and cleared mostly. The garden has been tidied and cut back and the fencing around the oil tank tidied. Two rear doors are in desperate need of replacement as they are letting out valuable heat and led to a mouse infestation. Quotations for work are underway and it was decided a fundraising drive was the best way to pay for this work.

A project in the wings is making the hall net zero. An Energy Efficiency Assessment was provided for the hall and, on the basis of this, it was deemed by Energy Saving Scotland that we could apply for grants under making communities net zero by the Scottish government. We are now seeking funding and getting quotes for PV panels to both sides of the roof with batteries to help power an Air Sourced Heat Pump. This pump would link in to our underfloor heating system. Applications and quotations are underway for this. It should be stressed though that grant funding is for 80% so the rest has to be provided by us so the costs for this are likely to be a few thousand pounds. It's something that needs careful thought.

### **Hall Legal/Admin**

We have had issues with fire extinguishing contracts but I am glad to say it is all now resolved. We are exempt from HC rates and water rates. The Stromeferry and Achmore Community Website has been upgraded and this has been a good opportunity to update the hall part of that which we hope will be done in the near future. This will provide information to potential hirers on facilities and booking rates.

### **Going Forward**

I hope that we can continue to provide a lovely unique space for local and wider community use. Energy bills are going up, as well as other running costs such as insurance. Village halls no longer have access to the village halls running costs grant from Highland Council. I hope we can continue to keep our hire charges low, but money has to be got from somewhere so it may be that we need to focus more on fundraising in 2024. If the aforementioned energy

project gets under way it will help with energy bills into the next 10-15 years, as well contribute to reducing emissions.

The committee is always ready to hear of new ideas, classes and events so please come forward.

### **Thanks**

As ever things could not be done without a brilliant committee group able to give up their free time to meet 10 times this year as well as their time in hall activities and I very much appreciate this. I also like to thank Colin for maintaining the grass and Jim Coomber for wiring in a socket for the broadband, both voluntarily, as well as Mary and Phil for connecting us to CMNet broadband. There are many other folk to thank who have helped in one way or another and everyone who uses the hall for any event. It's the whole community that keeps it open and running.

Our committee is sad to be losing Angie who takes bookings for the hall and invoices for hires. She also keeps a close eye on the condition of the building and we will miss her.

Thank you for listening and being here. I would like to continue the work for another year if you will have me!

Jackie