

## Draycott Memorial Hall

### Report for annual Parish Meeting of Rodney Stoke Parish Council

On 17<sup>th</sup> March 2022

There are currently 9 people on the management committee and each person is now responsible for a part of the running the hall, e. g. minor maintenance, electrics, plumbing etc. which seems to be working well with each person reporting back to the meeting any progress or work done during the month. There are 4 officers (Chairman, Vice Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary) and 5 members who are all trustees of the Draycott War Memorial Institute.

We lost one committee member in 2021 and despite efforts to recruit a couple of new members we are still a couple of members short but there seems to be a lack of interest in joining this committee.

The Memorial Hall was affected by the pandemic of 2021 but finally re-opened in June, at all times we had been working to the guidance provided by ACRE via Community Council for Somerset.

During the lockdown we completed the renovations to the upstairs room now known as the Sedgemoor Room making it available to hire out when we re-opened. General maintenance has been carried out including the installation of new energy efficient LED lighting in most areas of the hall. We are at present waiting for our electrical contractor to install new LED lighting to the car park lights – this is planned to be done this week.

During the pandemic we applied for grants that have been given via various government funding available to business who were not able to open during the pandemic. The total amount of funding received was £53k but this was about the equivalent amount that we lost in revenue over the period that the hall was not able to open.

We were very fortunate to receive a generous donation from the family of Jane Thurmand, Jane had been a great supporter of the hall for many years and played a big part in the fund raising for the project to build a new hall back in the late 1990s and early 2000.

We are planning to utilise part of this donation to fund new audio and screen equipment which will be a benefit to the hall in the future, The cost of the equipment has been helped by an application made by the parish council for assistance of £975 which has been successful.

We also changed all the seating we had to a more comfortable static chair and new tables were purchased specifically for the Sedgemoor Room. In addition, 8 chairs with arms have been purchased to assist people with more severe disabilities.

The hall's weekly user groups now are:- Mendip Players, Draycott Bowls Club, Strawberry Tots, Rodney Stoke & Draycott WI, Cheddar Bowls Club, Cheddar Male Choir and Whist Drives. Sessions of Pilates, dance classes and an art class are other weekly run events. The Draycott & Rodney Stoke Village Show, School PTA, Lazy Lunch, Royal British Legion's Remembrance Day are annual events which also use the hall's facilities to run their event.

We are constantly getting enquires from potential new users and have a showcase session planned for April 23<sup>rd</sup> where groups can show off their activities.

We did lose a couple of groups after lockdown when there were not enough numbers to make it viable to continue but like most businesses as one group falls by the wayside, it is replaced by new groups and new activities.

As an attempt to attract more weddings, we have introduced a package price of £650 which includes exclusive hire from Friday lunchtime to Sunday lunchtime and this seems to be well received with 3 weddings (all local residents) planned for the first half of 2022.

The committee applied to Sedgemoor DC for a premises licence and this was granted in December 2021 which means that we can run bars serving alcohol without having to apply for temporary event notices (TENS) – another asset for the hall.

The parish council's have installed a CCTV system for the playing fields which has been positioned on the hall's exterior walls and the control panel in the boiler room, this should help to control damage and vandalism on the playing fields but also act as a security measure for the hall. All aspects of the control and monitoring are under the control of the parish council. There was a theft of 6 fire extinguishers back in November 2021 which necessitated purchasing new ones to replace, however 3 of the missing extinguishers have been recovered which would suggest that the theft was more in devilment than for gain – CCTV may have picked this up at the time but we have it for any future occurrences.

#### Plans for the future

The hall is now over 20 years old and needs regular maintenance to keep it fit for hire, to this end, we consider the installation of the LED lighting in the hall and car park should help us to reduce our costs and contribute towards a reduction in global warming.

We have recently took up an option for an energy survey (recommended via the parish council) through an initiative by Somerset County Council – this is due be done on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> March by MLS Energy.

A maintenance schedule has been produced by a small sub-committee which highlights maintenance which will need to be done or considered over the next few years. Any projects will be suitably funded before being undertaken.

*Stephen Young*

Stephen Young

Secretary – Draycott Memorial Hall Management Committee

14<sup>th</sup> March 2022