

Chairman's Report

Since the last AGM we have had a year of steady progress on the maintenance and upgrading of the building.. We now have an accessibility-ramp and handrail; the main Hall floor has been sanded and varnished. Thanks to a grant of some £9,000 from the Community Foundation/Vattenfall Ray Wind Farm Community Benefit Fund Small Grants, repairs have been made to the supper room floor, the doorways to both Hall and Supper-room have been widened, meters have been replaced and re-sited, electricity services to the kitchen have been improved and a new cooker has been installed.

In February 2019 we were offered and have accepted a grant of £42,000 from The National Lottery Community Fund/CAN Northumberland Village Halls Partnership, which must be spent by 29 February 2020. This will enable us to proceed with refurbishing the toilets, with provision of wheelchair access, emergency lighting, frost protection, insulation of walls and roof-space, also upgrading of heating in the Supper Room and, in the kitchen, provision of water-heating along with other improvements.

Further work has yet to be agreed, but may include changing the heating in the main hall and insulation of the whole building. It may be necessary to make further grant applications to progress this work.

Sadly, this year has seen the end of the Corsenside Ladies' Fellowship after many years of meetings, demonstrations and talks.. It is a real shame to see a long-running locally organised community group go and, although the Hall will benefit to the tune of a clock, we have lost another user-group.. As one of the four user-groups named in the Charity Commission scheme of 10th November 1997, the Ladies' Fellowship had the authority to appoint one of four trustees of the Corsenside Parish Hall charity (in addition, three trustees may be elected and up to two may be co-opted during the year. Village halls, long with Parish Councils and other community groups up and down the country are having difficulty finding volunteers and our remaining user-groups are no different. If this situation continues, perhaps it would make sense to reconsider how members of this group of trustees are appointed.

The hall has been open on a weekly basis on Wednesday afternoons (starting in October 2018). This is helping to increase both hall use and total 'footfall,' and the sales of refreshments and second-hand books have made a small but useful contribution to hall income (more than 10% of user-payments for hall services in 2018-2019).

Both hall use and income have risen slightly in 2018-2019 and the shortfall in income to expenditure, standing at around £250, was considerably less than in 2017-2018, in spite of expenditure of about £700 on hall maintenance. This included the floor treatment (with many thanks to Mel Charlton for his work), additional work on the main hall emergency exit, the five-yearly electrical inspection, and dealing with a minor water leak.

We benefited to the tune of £323 from the *Cross the Wannies* concert, an event promoted jointly with the Corsenside churches. Many thanks to Mrs Nairne Cross, all the musicians and entertainers who took part.

Perhaps we can close the gap between income and expenditure with some more events in 2019-2020.

John Clyde, Chairman