

SHRIVENHAM PARISH ASSEMBLY 2022

Report of Chairman of Viscountess Barrington Trust

- This has been a year of recovery! And I am pleased to say that bookings are starting to return to pre-pandemic levels. Then just as we thought we were back on an even keel, like the country, we have been hit by a series of disasters.
- The biggest of these is the energy shock. Unlike domestic energy bills, utility costs for businesses and community concerns are not capped. The impact on the hall budget has been dramatic. The gas and electricity costs for next year are set to triple rising from around £4,500 p.a. to over £11,000. In addition the predicted utility cost for the new pavilion is around £8,000 p.a. putting the total cost up to nearly £20,000.
- Then we had the sad news that Julie who runs our booking system so efficiently has been diagnosed with a serious illness and will not be returning for at least several months.
- All year we have been watching the progress of the new pavilion in the Rec. Elliott and his team at PJE Contractors did a grand job in keeping the construction on track. Then the pandemic induced shortages brought one knock on delay after another and completion which had been planned for last November will not now take place until the start of the cricket season in a couple of weeks.
- However we believe that the wait will have been worth it. Architects A'Bear & Ball have designed a splendid new village venue which will not only serve as a home for the Cricket Club in the summer but will enable us to host a range of indoor sports and activities as well as being a standalone venue for parties and celebrations.
- The main room which we will be calling the Burrows Room in honour of Bunny Burrows who has given so many years of faithful service to the cricket club, has a high vaulted ceiling with views over the Rec with the village and the church tower in the distance.
- Not only that, the pavilion boasts spanking new changing facilities, toilets and a splendid kitchen with all mod cons.
- We plan to hold an open day on Saturday 14th May when we will be inviting the village to come and experience it for themselves. It will also be open during the Friday of the Jubilee celebrations for the party in the Rec.
- A number of Mums with young kiddies have complained about the state of the playground and although it passes its annual ROSPA inspections the equipment is looking tired to say the least. The

VBT has a plan to upgrade the equipment in the future and I am pleased to say that the old kiddies' slide, which had to be removed, will be replaced with a super brand new facility next month. In addition the Fete Committee have kindly volunteered to repaint the tired equipment so I hope that we will have a spruced up play area for the summer.

- I mentioned last year that we had been successful in our application for Section 106 funding to allow us to expand and enhance our existing multi-use games area or MUGA.
- This project is now due to start in May and should be completed by the summer holidays.
- Back at the hall Lewie and Phoebe have continued the work which was started last year to spruce up and revitalise the outside as well as the internal facilities. In particular the loggia has now been redecorated.
- Another unexpected shock occurred when one evening there was a tremendous bang which reverberated through the hall. A lady delivering her children had crashed her car into the bay window of the newly refurbished Claridge Room. For a time it seemed as though the whole of the bay, roof and all, would come down but prompt action by PJE Contractors saved the day by swiftly getting props in place.
- The Claridge Room remains out of service. Insurance assessors have inspected the damage and agreed that the work can go ahead. It will be carried out by PJE who are on site for the pavilion but it is currently held up because the Cotswold stone mullions are almost impossible to get hold of.
- In the office Julia has prepared a strategic plan for the hall which will enable us to prioritise the ongoing improvements that are needed. In particular we hope to be able to re-plan and refurbish the main Ladies and Gents toilets as well as expanding the loggia into an attractive Orangery with picture windows facing onto the Rec.
- Unfortunately with the pressure on the budget particularly from the utilities we have been forced reappraise our charging structure and the charges for both the commercial and community users will inevitably be increasing in the coming year.
- The Hall is coming up for its hundredth birthday in three years time and consequently needs significant care and attention. But we are well aware that it is very much at the heart of the village and we are keen that it remains the splendid community facility that it is.

- I am extremely grateful to Julia and Lyn for all their hard work and for keeping a tight rein on the finances and for preparing a budget for next year. Julie has worked tirelessly over the year to get our booking back to their pre-pandemic levels. With Lewie and Phoebe, we have a great team which will allow us to go forward with confidence into next year.
- Finally we send our love and very best wishes to Julie and hope to see her back in the office very soon.