

ANNUAL REPORT VBT 2018

Have you ever had those times when you think nothing else can happen to make your life worse and then, it happens and it is worse?

There were times in the past year when it seemed as if the roof had caved in. Firstly the closure of Chestnut Trees Preschool. The school had run for over 40 years and there may even be members of the congregation tonight who played games and appeared as the third shepherd in a tea towel in this very Hall. No more the strains of 'The Wheels on the bus go round' as the children lined up in the Foyer, the smell of cakes cooking, carefully hand-mixed by the children, drifting up the stairs to the Council Office, of course each cake came with a health warning but they tasted fine. The new Ofsted regulations helped to put paid to the continuation of this School but even though we tried to find another means of keeping the school open, it was not to be. We tightened our belts as this was a major loss of income to the Hall and then, the belt was loosened to help with the next crisis.

Dozing in a meeting in the newly decorated school room, now christened the Chestnut room, we were awakened from our slumbers by an alarm. What was that we cried as we rushed outside to the Car Park, No smoke, no timbers smouldering. Don't worry, a false alarm, no conflagration, but a problem with the Boilers. However, the Fire brigade came and carried out an inspection of the Hall and suggested a number of fire safety improvements to bring the Hall up-to-date with new regulations. We were faced with a large expense to carry out the improvements: all the Hall internal doors had to be made fire resistant, a fire door installed in the corridor leading to the Vic Day Hall and sensors brought up-to-date. It doesn't sound much but it required a skilled craftsman and the installation to take place when the various Halls were not being used. I am delighted to say that this work is now complete.

Then the problem with the Boilers had to be fixed; more expense. However, it was found that our 10 year old Boilers were not up to snuff. The increased use of the Hall meant that Boilers were working flat out and would probably not last another year. Simple answer, replace them. Have you any idea of the cost of new Boilers, plus extra building work recommended by the fire Service? It will

be in the region of £10,000. We are looking at Grants and we will probably need to call on our reserve funds and some help from the Parish Council. Rest assured by next winter there will be new Boilers in place.

For a number of years the Hall electricity supply has been rather suspect, at certain peak times it was likely to cut out. Well, it is over 90 years old. A bold decision was taken to install a 3 phase system to replace the existing single phase. The price of this installation had come down and to take advantage of this SPECIAL OFFER the new 3 phase was installed and although there was a great deal of continuity problems, coordinating 3 different contractors, our Secretary Julia Jones remained unfazed and, by staying late, managed to tie up the loose ends. It is here I must thank a good friend of the Hall, Steve Honey who was instrumental in setting up the internal work.

Following a number of complaints about being unable to hear a Speaker, or the Principal Boy in the annual Panto, it was decided to install a new Hall sound System and I hope you can all hear well and not blasted from your seats. I must add that the system was suggested and installed by Lewis Hilsdon our Hall Supervisor whom I am sure most of you will have met and found him extremely helpful. Through Lewie the Hall has gained an extremely efficient system at a fraction of the price quoted by Contractors.

So much for the past, what of the **future**? Plans are afoot to help with the potential demands expected in terms of the capacity of the Hall. With all the houses being built, where will this increased population turn to for recreation and mental and artistic stimulation? Why here of course, and how will the Hall cope with its limited space? In order to achieve this end we have decisions which require a series of moves. First we need money either from Grants or Money from the new developments' contributions to Village facilities. Our plan is to build a sports Pavilion on the Recreation Ground which will house indoor sport and the Cricket Club. With the release of some S106 contributions, an Architect has been commissioned to draw up plans. Now many of you will know that the changing facilities the Cricket Club use in the Loggia are well below par. A separate home for Cricket would have several advantages: good private changing facilities, a better place for the tea without the need to hurry and pack up the tables, and facilities the Club can be proud of. During the week, the

Pavilion is planned to provide space for activities such as Yoga, Pilates, Table tennis, Zumba and accommodate other indoor sports as demand dictates. The move to a new Pavilion will give the green light to a possible extension of the Loggia to make a more usable space. Weddings and large scale events are good earners for the hall. In the past we have lost bookings simply because the Bride's mother was not too keen to meet a large Cricketer clad in a towel on his way to the Shower. Even further in the future, we are going to completely rewire the hall to bring it up to date and make it safe and neater, refurbish and increase the capacity of our Toilets and we are looking at refurbishing our kitchen. Most of these plans are unlikely to come to fruition during the next year but we are hopeful that you will see these changes in the near future.

Here I will pay a further tribute to our new Crew who run the Trust and the Hall. Julia Evans our Secretary, a Lady who works long hours, finds nothing too difficult to attend to in her tight work schedule and always remains cheerful. Julie Sarsons, our Hall Czar, is the first point of contact for anyone wanting to use the Hall, a force to be reckoned with who has put the wind up several people who have not complied with their booking conditions. Lyn Frape our Finance Lady who on the surface is all sweetness and light but don't attempt to fiddle an invoice or a service for you will find a Tigress awaiting you. Lastly Lewis or Lewie to whom I have already referred and who has taken to the task of caring for the Hall and who I know will fall over backwards to make your use of the Hall as easy as he can.

And lastly to the indefatigable Bjorn Watson, who when he is not climbing mountains or building a school in Nepal, spends many hours working on various Hall projects. His great interest coupled with his dedication over the years has seen the Hall over many a crisis. I am sure you know that he had a distinguished career as an Engineer and without his expertise I am sure we would have been in the soup before now. Many, many thanks Bjorn and I hope you will continue to support the Hall through many a year to come.

That Ladies and Gentleman, concludes my report on the Viscountess

Barrington's Trust work for the past year, leaving out the many small and minor matters that crop up and are settled daily by our staff and Trustees. Now if you have any questions, we will try to answer them.